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A Praxis Redefined

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Dr. Gary Heba, First Reader
Dr. Bill Albertini, Second Reader

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Contemplating New Implications on Popular Theories: A Rebel's Compromise

Fist clenched forcefully, arm raised skyward, the image of a defiant protagonist sticking it to the man is entrenched in my psyche, representative of my recalcitrant spirit. Since I am a child of the 1980's, maybe my penchant for disobedience owes itself to the artistic works—songs, movies, novels—that capture the zeitgeist representative of that rebellious age. Regardless of root cause, that fixed image permanently resides within my psyche, insidiously fostering my natural obstinacy. Though dangerous, this stubbornness serves my intentions well as a graduate student by not only helping me to acquire my degree—Master of Arts in English with a specialization in English teaching—but also by helping me to contemplate a place as a scholar and teacher. Furthermore, other than solely helping me to acquire a degree, and find a place in the field of English, this dissatisfied, skeptical approach further aids in the achievement of my personal academic goal: To attain a mélange of pedagogical palettes that will serve me to paint the perfect curriculum for my students. However, to accomplish the goal of attaining an all-inclusive pedagogical palette of best practices at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) is not as easy as I thought. Consequently, after several years of graduate school, I still ponder a couple of interconnected, significant questions: How do I teach students *to see* language, and what do I teach students *to do* with language?

Because of my desire to paint the perfect pedagogy that will justify the choices I make as an educator, I find myself hindered by what I would call short-sighted, popular theories and methodologies. Naturally, I rebel against these approaches and practices because, to me, the *sine qua non* of an English graduate degree program is a comprehensive, nonrestrictive approach that does not limit pedagogical conversations to a few popular theories that have arisen from Postmodernism. Because BGSU does not restrict pedagogical or theoretical conversations, by

challenging myself to participate in what I would consider 'popular' theoretical discussions while at BGSU, I am beginning to transform from a theoretical outlander into a theoretical negotiator. Consequently, as a negotiator, I must constantly question my rejection of popular theories because I do not want to restrict my own pedagogy due to my own bias. Because of this metacognitive reflection, my view has reluctantly shifted from rejection to acceptance regarding the merits of popular theories, especially Postmodern theories. Thus, the original pieces that I choose to include in this Master's Portfolio show a pattern of negotiation and compromise with what I had originally considered to be a pesky impediment: myopic pedagogy. Formerly, I felt that myopic pedagogy inhibits a pragmatic approach to language instruction, and dictates specific 'Critical' theoretical approaches that one must employ as an instructor of English especially because current popular theories such as Gender Studies, Culture Studies, and Postmodernism are quickly becoming the specialization of choice for English majors. And though I tried during my studies to avoid being inculcated to the ideas of these approaches, I was unsuccessful because as much as I reject these approaches, my work will show that I internalize, accept, and appreciate certain aspects of these theories. With a bit of reflective practice, I realize that part of being an outlander affords me the opportunity to reflect upon how I can synthesize, rather than reject these theories to form a compromise between my own deep-seated beliefs about the value text based theories offer students, rather than those that place the social aspects of texts—an approach that appeals to the masses—in the foreground of curriculum. In a sense, this compromising approach is exactly what Postmodernism is all about: Taking what others have written, said, created, and so on, and creating new ideas that have a global reach.

My rationale for initially rejecting Postmodernism is that these liberatory pedagogies focus on politics, ideology, and social discourse as the *only* way to practice language instruction.

In fact, in *Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World,* Joan Wink advocates that educators must approach reading and writing practices as a vehicle for finding the hidden curriculum, hegemonies, and cultural capital of texts (Wink 44-55). Accordingly, this approach by default discounts the worth of other opposing theories such as Formalist approaches that are often seen as too text-centric rather than texts as culture or gender. If the foremost theory of emphasis used in the classroom dictates that all texts must be interrogated for its ideological and social function, where do we direct students to look to interrogate texts? I would argue with the Formalists that the answer to this question is by looking at the language and the form of the text. Thus, I could never understand why certain critics were against text-centric theories. Accordingly, the substantive essay I chose to include in this portfolio, "The Epic of Style: It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times," shows my frustration with these critics. This essay, assigned by Dr. Lee Nickoson's ENG 6040 Graduate Writing course, enabled me to enter a conversation about writing theories. I realize now that I was ill-prepared to handle this heady topic at the time since I was newly inducted into BGSU's graduate school program; thus, I did not enter a conversation, I entered a one-sided argument.

Consequently, because of my narrow-mindedness, in this essay, I aligned myself rebelliously with classical composition critics who scoff at current composition pedagogy that put an expressionist lens at the forefront of writing pedagogy. Though during the revision process, I moved from a dualist to a relativist by acknowledging and conceding to ideas derived from popular theories. However, I did not entirely shift my claim in the final draft because as a current high school teacher, I feel that an expressionist approach can generate interest in the writing process for struggling writers, yet distinguish that a singular emphasis on Expressionist ideas will be detrimental to students who already lack composition skills. During the revision

process for this essay, I began to turn my attention to presenting a nonrestrictive approach in which teachers should merge expressionist and classicist theories of writing. Firstly, I realized that the structure of the essay needed some work since many of my ideas were in the embryonic stage. Ironically, I had fallen prey to the very methods that I argue in this paper cause students to struggle with conveying their thoughts: Pedagogy that ignores style. Consequently, my thoughts were unintentionally obfuscated because I had ignored the rhetorical aspect of writing to delve into an expressionist, stream of conscious hodgepodge of seminal ideas that I was grappling with at the time. Thus, my needs and methods for revising this text were two-fold: Coming to terms with my ideas, and using rhetorical grammar to effectively convey those ideas. Accordingly, I fleshed out my nebulous ideas by applying the knowledge that I had garnered from my years in graduate school not only to interrogate the ideas of the text, but also to enter a logical conversation rather than an emotional, rebellious argument about stylistics. I then applied the rhetorical grammar skills I had reaped from Dr. Sue Wood's ENG 6220 Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing course to meet the needs of my readers. Two required texts for Dr. Nickoson's writing class helped me to achieve both of my revision needs: Joseph Harris' *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts,* and Claire Kerhwald Cook's *Line by Line.* Harris' text enabled me to approach the text rhetorically through two different approaches. For example, I used Harris's text to *do* things with others' texts by either "forwarding," or to "countering" their ideas to make them my own. In using Harris' text to revise my ideas, I had found the pedagogical epiphany I was looking for. Recall that in the introduction to this analytical narrative, I had mentioned that I struggled with knowing what I should teach students to do with language. I had found one of my answers, and was utilizing it myself: Rewriting others' ideas.

Once I had achieved the goal of revising the ideas of my essay by forwarding and countering others' ideas, I turned my attention to the stylistic techniques that I argue in "The Epic of Style: It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times," is a vital component to the production of texts. Cook's text enabled me to examine the stylistic nature of my own text to determine if I was clearly conveying the ideas I had intended for this essay. By examining, as she would call them, "Loose and Baggy Sentences," including but not limited to sentences with excessive prepositional phrases or nominalizations, I determined where I had previously had gone wrong in my attempts effectively convey my argument. In eliminating excessive prepositional phrases, I noticed that I certainly had quite a bit of unclear ideas due to a lack of effective rhetoric. Thus, I copyedited my own work by not only paying attention to conventions but also by paying close attention to the stylistic techniques I was using. By pruning my dead prose, I affirmed that clarity of thought is linked to style, thus, clarity suffers due to a lack of it. Though some writers posit that no writing is ever finished, I was pleased that my second revised iteration of "The Epic of Style: It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times," exemplified my transition from outlander to compromiser and was a much clearer and stylistically appealing version compared to the original.

Since I have decided to focus on my initial aversion to certain theories that ultimately influence my practices, the essay "A Fallen Monument: A Dead Author" from Dr. Erin Labbie's ENG 6070 Introduction to Literary and Critical Theory course provides a vehicle not only for my own revisionary purposes but also to reexamine how my views have changed during my studies about Roland Barthes' Reader-Response approach. Furthermore, I choose this selection for inclusion because it is the first of the essays that I wrote while at BGSU that reveal a pattern of progression in which I first negotiate, next compromise, and finally accept the merits of certain

theories such as the Reader-Response approach. This conversion was not instantaneous. It took a couple of years to progress to the point where it is now. For example, since Roland Barthes was a ubiquitous presence in my English courses, such as Dr. Gary Heba's ENG 6050 Visual Rhetoric and the Practices of Writing course, I have had numerous chances to grapple with his ideas. Hence, I realize now that I may have misjudged the merits of his theories pertaining to how texts are produced. He posits that we create texts through our interaction with language rather than the text existing as a stand-alone object. Having said that, since I must use close readings in my AP Language and Composition course, I still need to teach students how to examine the language of these stand-alone objects using close reads. Yes, I know that I am reverting to Formalist theories, but I cannot just teach my students one interpretative process or one composition process. Just as I had to perform a close read on my original essay to determine what my ideas were then, how I conveyed them, and where and how I could incorporate my new ideas, I must teach this essential skill to students to teach them how language can create meaning. Language as an art must be grappled with to see how that art operates. This is how I need to teach students how *to see* language.

Since the production of this text, "A Fallen Monument: A Dead Author," serves to exemplify a compromise on my original rejection of Marxist and Reader-Response approaches, I examined the text to determine if there was clarity in my argument. I cannot say that I fully understood these approaches during the time I took Dr. Erin Labbie's theory course. Consequently, my ideas in the first draft of this essay, were a bit muddied by confusing syntax and excessive verbiage probably either because my ideas were not as profound as I thought or my analysis veered on the defiant side. Although after grappling with it further in Dr. Heba's Visual Rhetoric course, I can affirm that I still do not accept fully that the science of textual

interpretation should always be used to reveal social inequalities hidden within the structure of a text. Granted, I realize that at times, the importance of institutions that constrict the voice of others needs to be brought to the forefront of instruction, yet I maintain that ideology should not be the only emphasis in the classroom whether a student is reading or writing. When revising, I realized that though some of the ideas in my original text were nascent due to an unfamiliarity of certain theories. This caused a need for revision using the Known-to-New contract that I learned in Dr. Lee Nickoson's Graduate Writing course. Using this technique forced me to make the stress of my sentences the new topic of the successive sentences. My prose became more powerful and it brought to my attention that my initial stubbornness to accept the merits of Roland Barthes' and Michel Foucault's ideas had turned into a strong desire to counter their ideas. Having said that, because I saw my rebellion in action when reading the unrevised essay, and because I saw myself being a bit myopic because of my refusal to accept Barthes' and Foucault's theories, I challenged myself to use this revision exercise to examine my own shifting theoretical approaches. I determined that what I consider myopic, may just be an approach that I have not fully come to accept. I also chose this essay for revision because it will help me to ask the question: Do I need to accept all methodologies, theories, or pedagogies to develop that pedagogical palette? After grappling with Joseph Harris's text *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*, I now realize that what I consider as being recalcitrant and desirous to counter the ideas of others is not necessarily evidence that I, too, am a bit myopic in my approaches. In fact, Harris's text has shown me that when writers, such as myself forward ideas or counter ideas of others, they are participating in a theoretical conversation and are synthesizing ideas from others to make them their own. This argument about what literary theorists would call 'intertextuality' appeased my conscience and helped me to realize that these other approaches may not be what I

consider myopic, but only serve to exemplify ideas that diverge from the Formalist approach that I had apparently internalized. And though these critic's ideas deviate from my own ideas about reading and writing, they are malleable enough for me to manipulate to open new avenues of discussion. Thus, my revised essay shows a clearer grasp and acceptance of theories that I had originally rejected. As Harris recommends, instead of just rejecting the ideas of these critics, I 'rewrote' the ideas to make them my own. This is what I need to teach my students *to do* with language.

But how do I teach students to use and do something with language that is only based on their own personal experience or ideas? In "Rockin' the College Essay: A Stylistic Odyssey," the pedagogical project I wrote for Dr. Sue Wood's Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing course, I enable students to meet the needs of the rhetorical situation they face when constructing their college essays not by rewriting the ideas of others, but by engaging in writing that is personal and filled with voice. To teach students to meet the needs of this situation, I had to turn to a composition theory that I had previously rejected: Expressionism. Just as I argue is pedagogically necessary in the essay "The Epic of Style: It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times," I merged stylistics and Expressionism to help them both capture their voice and to convey their ideas in an aesthetically pleasing way. The revisions for the college essay teaching project was a bit easier than the essays I have included in this portfolio because I had previously merged Expressionist and Formalist theories to construct my lesson rather than rejecting one of them. Most of rewriting was based on copyediting for clarity and correctness rather than a substantial rewrite of ideas. However, I did make my editing substantial in that once finished, my intended educator audience could better understand my instructions and recommendations. Once again, I did something with language that helped me communicate with

others during my revisions, and in my lesson, I taught my students to do the same by merging approaches. After all, the goal the students have in writing their college essay is to convey what makes them an individual by using the devices of language to construct effective rhetoric.

I now know I can branch out from a Formalist approach to teach my students to use language to reveal ideology, or even just enjoy 'art for art's sake' as the poet Charles Baudelaire recommends. In fact, in the "The Feminization of the Nineteenth Century: Failing to Escape the Doll House of Otherness," a paper written for Dr. Piya Pal-Lapinski's ENG 6800 19th Century British Women Writers course, I chose to reveal ideology—a slant that I formerly rejected. In the original paper, I was proud that I found a compromise between theories of social discourse that helped me discuss the "So What?" or the underlying ideological assumptions of the text, while a text-based approach enabled me to unearth these assumptions in the language of the text. However, since the comments from my professor offered that my approach seemed more of a survey rather than a close examination of several texts, my revisions for this essay consisted of omitting unnecessary texts, so that I could hone in on my interpretations from a few texts to build a better argument. Since this paper was one of the most recent of my papers, I was surprised during my revisions that I did not need to modify my ideas as much as I had thought that I would because I thought I still found myself rejecting the popular idea that female texts are subversive, I embraced a feminist approach, nonetheless. After considering my professor's comments for this paper, I realized that I used others' ideas to construct a seminal idea about female writings. Though my discursive practices for this text reveal that I have shifted from a dualist to a relativist who is influenced by the ideas of others,' I still take stances that differ from conventional approaches, as evidenced by my professor's comments. After I edited my text *Line by Line* as Claire Cook recommends in her text to produce clarity of ideas, I began to apply my

professor's recommendations to prune the amount of texts I used in the essay to avoid it sounding like a survey. Though during my revisions, I realized that it was not just the exclusion of irrelevant texts that made my argument stronger. I buttressed my argument by the implementation of what I have come to realize as a happy marriage between text-based and social approaches.

Let me explain. In the introduction to *The Norton Anthology to Theory and Criticism*, Vincent B. Leitch rejects Formalism in that "it posits an overly aestheticized, narrow theory of meaning" and that it "rules out a great deal, including personal response, authorial intention, propositional meaning, social and historical context, and ideology" and "empties out literary interpretation in order to highlight intrinsic artistic craft and form while ruling out such extrinsic matters as morality, psychology, and politics" (Leitch 3). However, rebutting Leitch, I can say that I used Formalism to construct my claim for Dr. Piya Pal-Lapinski's essay using "intrinsic artistic craft" to forefront my 'interpretation,' that 'ideology,' as evidenced by the texts of female writers serves not subversive measures, but to reveal the unchanging attitudes towards females in the 'social, and historical context' of the 19th century (Leitch 3). Although Leitch's claims are accepted by critics who seek to legitimize the study of language through a social sciences approach rather than an approach that focuses on aesthetics and form, I find Leitch's assertions to be disconcerting to say the least. The reason? Because in teaching students what to *do* with texts, I find that it is partially through a Formalist paradigm that I can engage them with discovering where to find meaning in a text or to find Othering, gender and race suppression, institutional power, and a way to find their voice when writing their own texts. I found my voice in this personal analytical narrative by looking at how art operates. The consideration of form cannot be without merit especially when teaching students how to use form to construct their

own texts. This realization, along with others that I have finally gotten a handle on, is part of the palette of pedagogical practices that BGSU has helped me to identify. Whether that means that Barthes is correct in his interpretation that a text is a process rather than a stand-alone object, nonetheless, that stand-alone object needs to be examined to see how that art operates. This examination of form another thing I want students to *do* with language. The fact that form can reveal, obscure, tease, and create meaning, is what I want students to *ponder* about language.

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ENG 6040

Professor Lee Nickoson

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(Revised)

Prospectus:

This essay will begin with a brief introduction to the research question: Whether teaching style in

secondary or postsecondary classrooms should be implemented. The audiences for this project

are teachers who teachers who sit in coffee shops grading papers, yet are never satisfied with the

stylistic maturity evidenced by their students, and teachers who collaborate with professional

learning communities (PLCs) about best practices of writing. After introducing the subject

matter of the research project, I will explain the relevance of this issue to the assumed audience,

develop the research question into a debatable issue, and explain why this issue is even pertinent

by introducing a brief history of stylistics. I will examine the current rejection of stylistic

curriculum, and examine the newly favored process rather than project centered approach. The

key players in this debate, their approaches, and the implications of their arguments will be

explored to develop a comprehensive look at where we have come, and where we are going

regarding stylistic approaches in the classroom. The knowledge base that my audiences bring to

this metaphorical round-table discussion will vary. For example, first-year teachers may bring to

the table a wealth of knowledge from their undergraduate teaching programs, yet they may lack

the experience in the trenches to engage with any sort of authority in this critical debate. On the

other hand, the teachers with experience in the trenches, working day-to-day with struggling

students, will come to the table with a wealth of experience, yet may lack an open mind when encountering pedagogical changes. I will synthesize logical arguments and recommendations from experts to discuss why many of them should agree to reconsider teaching style. Finally, I will make a move to discuss some basic examples of what that would look like within the classroom and how teachers can revitalize stylistic lessons to benefit their students.

Introduction/Source Overview:

Butler, Paul. "Reconsidering the Teaching of Style." The English

   Journal, vol 100, no 4, 2011, pp77-82.

In *The English Journal* published by the National Council of Teachers of English, Paul Butler,

forwards ideas from new classicist experts, such as, but not limited to Francis Christensen,

Joseph Williams, Edward P.J. Corbett, enabling teachers to arm students with an arsenal of

stylistic techniques to produce compelling compositions. Furthermore, he utilizes interesting

fiction and nonfiction prose exemplars to discuss what makes writing great. He shows teachers

how to provide students the opportunity to imitate and model the stylistic techniques evidenced

within the exemplars. Butler's article from the *NCTE's English Journal* provides a cogent

argument in favor of the research question I propose: Can style be taught? Butler's argument,

that style can and should be taught, is supported by a wealth of specific empirical evidence from

the classroom delineating the strategies students can mimic that are employed by a variety of

experts in the field of writing. Consequently, intense analysis on the student's part as to what

makes good writing and how students can "reanimate style" to exhibit stylistic maturity in their

own writing forms the basis of Butler's approach. The applicability of Butler's arguments to the

research question I have proposed correlates to my own hypothesis that style can and should be

taught.

Connors, Robert J., and Cheryl Glenn. *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*. New

   York: St. Martin's, 1995. Print.

In an often-required textbook for undergraduate and graduate English teacher programs, *The St.

Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing,* a combined approach between Cheryl Glenn, and Melissa

A. Goldthwaite, and Robert Connors, offers teachers theoretical suggestions regarding composition theory. In consideration of whether style should and can be taught, the guide suggests pedagogic stylistics, derived from W. Ross Winterowd's text *Contemporary Rhetoric*. Pedagogic stylistics approaches the issue of style by suggesting that instructors should teach students to recognize and develop style in their own writing. Pulling from eminent theorist Louis T. Milic, the chapter in the St. Martin's text dealing with style called "Teaching Style," distinguishes between what Milic would deem "stylistic options" and "rhetorical choices." Milic posits that "stylistic options" happen unconsciously while the "rhetorical choices" happen when students are in the evaluative stage of their writing. Therefore, the text develops techniques for not analyzing the writing process and what happens during that process, but what the final stylistic product the writing effectively produces. In utilizing this text for my research project, I can provide an objective perspective as to whether style can be taught since by answering the question as to whether style can be taught, the St. Martin's text sets up a debate with no authoritative or biased prescriptive arguments.

Sledd, James. "TEACHING PROSE STYLE TO COLLEGE FRESHMEN". The Journal
    of General Education 5.1 (1950): 31–37. Web.

In *The Journal of General Education* published by the Penn State University Press, James Sledd offers advice on teaching prose style to college freshman. Sledd immediately debunks the argument that style cannot be taught by directly addressing his audience of teachers. He states that "style can be taught." Though through a careful guiding of the audience through an adamant discussion that style can and should be taught, he qualifies his argument by explaining that for these lessons to effectively take place, the student must be ready for them. His assertion is that

students will need at least a rudimentary knowledge of the English Language without having to fully engage in a rigorous study of that language. Without this knowledge, the student will be unprepared to study style. His suggestion is that students should be taught style and can acquire style that will enable them to "adapt language to rhetorical problems" which in the end, is the purpose of having a command of style. Sledd's argument rests on the assumption that if the students have a rudimentary knowledge of rhetoric, they will be able to acquire a stylistic maturity that will serve the rhetorical function of the end product.

Weathers, Winston. "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy." *The Writing Teacher's*
    Sourcebook. Eds. Corbett, Edward. P.J., et. al. New York: Oxford University Press,
    2000. Print.

Winston Weathers posits in "Teaching Style: A Possible Maturity" in *College Composition and Communication*, that though style should be taught, a justification for it should be conveyed to students before engaging in the practice. After students see the justification for the viability of style to the writing process and product, Weathers provides, a modus operandi, for learning style. Though Weather's article, provides another exemplary piece of evidence as to the suggestion that style can be taught. I have chosen this text because his qualification regarding the importance of the justification for teaching style adds an interesting component to the debate. Because he argues that style lessons are a viable option for writing instructors who want to increase the stylistic maturity of their students, I will be able to utilize his essay to construct an examination of his arguments that may possibly provide a serendipitous opportunity to deepen the debate as to whether stipulations must be in place for style lessons to be effective.

Rankin, Elizabeth D. "Revitalizing Style: Toward a New Theory and Pedagogy." The

Writing Teacher's Sourcebook. Eds. Corbett, Edward P.J., et. al. New York: Oxford

University Press, 2000. Print.

Elizabeth Rankin seeks to address the debate over style and whether it can and should be taught

to "revitalize style" considering changing instructional paradigms. Rankin proposes that a new

definition of style must be formulated to meet the demands of writing instruction in a process

centered writing environment. Her main argument is that instructors have abandoned style

lessons due to an overemphasis on panache, yet this "overcorrection" has brought "style out of

style" to the detriment of effective writing instruction. Since Rankin provides the history to

dismantle style pedagogies and formulate alternatives to the complete abandonment of style

lessons, her essay provides a wealth of information that will provide me with support in

constructing a response to my research project. Furthermore, because she does not only forward

ideas from other experts, but also forwards her own ideas, as well, such as that we need a new

definition of style to move forward from old paradigms of instruction, her text will enable me to

examine not just if style can be taught, but that maybe we need to consider new implications to

current pedagogical practices.

Abstract:

Teachers laud Donald Murray and Peter Elbow as heroes of composition pedagogy for enabling students to capture the authorial voice. Granted, they should be lauded for their contributions, yet their over focus on the social nature of texts may lead to false assumptions about the value of a product centered approach. I address these dilemmas in this paper not to defame these theorists, but to critically examine whether style should be taught in the classroom to enable students to effectively communicate. A discussion of the key players in the history of style pedagogy, their approaches, and the implications of their arguments will ensue to develop a comprehensive look at where we have come, and where we are going in regards to the teaching of style in secondary classrooms. Because I am not the expert of this issue, but rather a participant who is interested in best practices regarding the teaching of style, the support for my research rests on the expertise of these composition experts. This paper shows that style lessons is not a worthless endeavor. I try to assuage educators fears by discussing what experts mostly agree upon considering the teaching of style. I make a move to discuss some basic examples of what style lessons look like within the classroom, and explore how teachers can revitalize style. Although I could not come up with hard data or evidence of whether teaching style is possible and effective within the scope of this essay, I tried to synthesize the logical arguments and recommendations from the experts to discuss why many of them agree that there should be a reconsideration of the teaching of style.

The Epoch of Style: It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times

"Good sentences are the sinew of style," contends Thomas S. Kane of *The New Oxford Guide to Writing* (111). No composition theorist denies that good sentences equate to stylistic connective tissue on bare bones sentences. Yet illogically, some of these very same theorists deny that stylistic rhetoric has a place in the composition classroom. Furthermore, they argue that writing instructors should not teach students how to create and manipulate this sinew, or connective tissue, to strengthen the lackluster assaults to the intellect that often embodies what can only be aptly called: "student writing." Because these teachers dismiss the rhetorical value of style, these struggling student writers pursue help from tutors of writing centers begging them to make their prose intellectually and aesthetically pleasing because of its schizophrenic syntax, physically painful diction, and teeth-gnashing solecisms. Unfortunately, they are often only given advice on how to fix grammatical errors, such as subject/verb disagreement rather than given the tools to advance their writing through stylistic maneuvers to advance their form. Is this because style is too difficult to teach? Is this because tutors are ill-trained? Is it because style should not be considered as an element which leads to better writing? Many composition theorists would agree with the latter because they have fallen prey to Postmodern theories. Theories that place the emphasis on the social nature of texts rather than the text itself. Thus, it is not rhetorical grammar that will help students they propose, it is the capture of the authorial voice. Style, they insist, is only language manipulated into fanciful rhetoric completely devoid of meaning, therefore, it has no place in the classroom. Style, they insist, focuses on the final product rather than on the process of writing, and thus, should be removed from curriculum for the writer to find their 'voice,' or to answer to their existential dilemmas. I would argue that stylistic lessons should not be dismissed in lieu of this prescriptive Postmodern approach to

writing since one of the detriments of eliminating style from writing curricula is the recurrent

production of texts that not only lack maturity but also the linguistic effectiveness that will

enable students to find the "voice" that Postmodernist's would argue should be at the forefront of

the construction of all texts. I further argue that a synthesis of text-based lessons combined with

a social approach to writing can provide students with the opportunity to find a voice, yet

effectively convey the intended ideas of that voice.

Before exploring the issue of how and why style should be a vital component of writing

pedagogy, an examination of the "they" in reference, and the root of the current problems with

the teaching of style needs to be examined. Who is this elusive "they" of whom I speak? It is the

"they" who rallied the masses into changing the paradigms of composition theory to replace the

then current emphasis on stylistic maneuvers to an emphasis on voice. These same theorists

suggest that writing instructors need to place *less* emphasis on the rhetorical purposes of writing,

and need to place *less* emphasis on the use of language to "do things" to further communicative

acts. It is the "they" of the new romanticists, and expressionists' brood who clamor for style

lessons to be tossed aside in place of an emphasis on personal voice because to them, voice *is*

style. These composition theorists question the emphasis on the rhetorical purposes of writing,

valuing instead the use of language that leads to social contemplation instead of action. This

"they" of whom I speak, are the patriarchs of expressionism, Donald Murray, Peter Elbow, and

at times, I.A. Richards.

The expressionist regime vanquished the much beloved "product" of writing and replaced

it with an emphatic emphasis on "process" approach that was meant to elevate the authorial

voice that captures the Postmodern emphasis on individualism and plurality of truth. According

to W. Ross Winterowd's analysis of "I. A. Richards, Literary Theory and Romantic

Composition" in the *Rhetoric Review*, the Romantics, led by Richard's Coleridgesque theory of

imagination had "faith in their own voices, their own experience, and their own insights"; thus,

they created a way for writers to usurp the author's truth to fashion their own truth (62).

Winterowd explores how Romantics metaphorically champion in a new renaissance that rejects

empirical thought, and ushers in the utilization of the imaginative capacities to enable the

production of writing that is the aesthetic version of the language of the sublime. For example,

Winterowd explains that composition theorists, such as Ann E. Bertoff sends her students

"invitations" to write and discover their voice in her *Forming, Thinking, and Writing.* Winterowd

explains that Bertoff, "[as] typical Romantic" because "she does not view language as symbolic

action, a way of doing, an action or preparation for an action" (64). Instead, theorists such as

Bertoff argue that the authorial voice is the catalyst to discover and represent self rather than to

convey knowledge or to attempt to communicate. Granted, writing can be a liberating celebration

of discovery, yet this mindset can turn into a double-edged sword thrust into the hands of the

writing instructor whose either lack of pedagogy or naiveté leads him or her to believe that this

lauded process is the only purpose of "true writing" (64). Nevertheless, this pedagogy is not

without its merits because in it, teachers have a tool of engagement and a way for students,

especially Othered students, to write themselves into being. Yet, on the other hand, this

liberatory pedagogy, produces writers who have not been given the tools to survive the

composition classroom, who always struggle to put words into action, who are always confined

by an inner-audience, who always confine themselves to an inner rather than outer audience, who

always lack ideas about what to "do" with writing. To remediate this pedagogical folly, I would

argue that there is still a place for style lessons in the composition classroom. Instead of rejecting

or devaluing an approach to style, we need to consider how "the sinew of style" can function as a

device leading both to contemplation and to action—a perfect marriage of both expressionism and rhetoric. A marriage that can create generations of productive writers who can not only embrace their individuality but also can communicate their ideas effectively.

Writers, confused and lost, in composition classrooms do not realize that there is an interminable war, with no seeming end, over how they should be taught to write. Though they are not aware of the battle over the relevance of stylistic lessons against an expressionist agenda, these students are the collateral damage in this war. These victims represent the new breed of students who exhibit strong voice, yet who produce ineffective writing due to inadequate stylistic skills. In other words, this theoretical war is to blame for the inability of many of these students to utilize language as play-doh, a malleable substance, in order to best communicate what ideas they have grappled with, and wish to convey to an audience---even if that audience is an audience of self. It cannot be denied that stylistic rhetoric has a place in the composition classroom though it does not need to overshadow the social aspects of language by taking its place. In support of a combined approach, *The St. Martin's Guide to the Teaching of Writing* advances the belief that "[E]xperienced writers know that invention, arrangement, and style are inextricably intertwined, that no approach to one can ever ignore that others" (Connors & Glenn 229). Though this approach is reasonable, many instructors are guided by current pedagogical practices that favor a social approach that produces a willful ignorance of or blind refusal of the value of a text-based approach. These critics' argument rests on the questionable assumption that the social nature of texts must be placed at the forefront of the curriculum. Questionable because this emphasis will have significant repercussions for students in that it will cause a general deterioration of students' rhetorical skills. Even the Romanticists agree rhetoric is an important component in the production of texts. In fact, W. Ross Winterowd's "I.A. Richards, Literary

Theory, and Romantic Composition" notes that though the Romanticists have a "distrust of-empirical work," they still "simultaneously have a paradoxical longing to be as rhetorically powerful as the empiricists" (62). Though they may admit to this desire, their practices reveal that they feel that they cannot have it both ways, yet I argue that they can and should. And as teachers, we can teach students that they can and should.

Before discussing stylistic lessons and its relevance within the classroom, a brief examination of the history of stylistics can establish where writing instructors went wrong. In *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook,* Richard Fulkerson's "Four Philosophies of Composition," delineates the fact that underlying modern writing curricula is an tactic that singles out either one approach among the choices of the following: Pragmatic, Mimetic, Expressionist, and Objective modes. The rationale for singling out a lens from which to practice is so that instructors can create a heuristic that exemplifies best practices within the teaching of writing (Fulkerson 3). Though all teachers should be concerned with best practices, no teacher should devalue an approach because of an inherent bias against theories that do not have liberatory leanings such as Postmodernism. The current educational dilemma confronting writing theorists, teachers, and students is that most of these lenses are devalued most except the expressionist approach. This devaluing of lenses causes a push to the wayside a variety of approaches that can be synthesized to produce mélange of theoretical conversations that can be offered to the student of writing. This restrictive approach is troublesome enough, but a devaluing of text-based approaches puts less emphasis on stylistic lessons that further communicative acts to emphasize the importance of finding one's voice. Granted, using the production of texts to find an authentic authorial voice of one's own is not a ludicrous notion. Nevertheless, I would posit that there is danger in instructive methods that emphasize a capture of authorial voice while ignoring the communicative purpose

of writing. Case in point, one of the champions of the expressionist approach, Peter Elbow, advocates ignoring the audience completely "to make meaning to oneself, not just to others" (345). An emphasis on finding the self through the act of ignoring the audience, enables the writer to come to terms with what he or she intends to say without being inhibited by audience concerns. This action while composing, it seems, is the pinnacle of success through the eyes of Elbow. The problem therein, in rejecting most approaches to favor a single approach, is that educators form a narrow-minded vision of what works best in making better writers and better writing if they over emphasize his methods in their classrooms. This subjective theoretical lens does not work in the students favor since by placing emphasis on finding voice, as a liberation of self, and to engage in identity politics, is that writers can become stylistically impotent. Education has progressed to the point where no reasonable person can say that a certain approach to learning reaches all students, and produces the same positive result. Thus, no composition theories should be mutually exclusive to one another, but rather mutually beneficial. The question then: How do we marry these mutually beneficial pedagogical theories to produce effective pedagogy?

Ironically, we can begin returning to Expressionist Peter Elbow. In his "Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Argument," an essay in *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, he reveals that once we find our voice, we can then "adjust our words and thoughts to our intended audience" (337). He states that at a certain point, a writer may then turn his attention to his audience through the manipulation of style, and states that "writer-based prose" is better than "reader based prose," because writers must ignore their audience to find the meaning of what they want to say. This concession creates an opening for teachers to synthesize other approaches, especially a stylistic approach that meets the needs of the rhetorical situation (338-

339). Elbow's words show that he would agree that theories are not mutually exclusive to one another. Thus, he may agree with my argument that the problem with current writing pedagogy is the overemphasis on what he would call the expressive, invention process that most instructors embed into their writing curriculum as an all-or-nothing proposition. This hyper-focus limits the writing potentialities of student writers because it does not marry a text-based approach with a social approach. In other words, Elbow's reasonable justification for waiting until we find our voice before addressing stylistic concerns establishes a sound argument that seems to merge two conflicting pedagogical practices into a marriage of writing as voice and as action. Nevertheless, many writing programs currently focus on pushing Elbow's act of invention and the writer's voice as an end to itself.

Consequently, a call to action is heard by writing teachers to recover the loss of rhetorical maneuvering. The warrant supporting this call to action? The lackluster attempts by student writers that capture authorial voice, yet lack stylistic rhetoric to mean anything beyond an audience of self. Since narrative modes of writing are not the only modes covered in composition classrooms, a need for stylistic rhetoric forced this call to action. Fortunately, this call to action was heard by a set of rogue agents operating within the domain of composition and rhetoric, such as Francis Christensen, Winston Weathers, and Paul Butler. These rogue agents share a common argument that Elizabeth Rankin's "Revitalizing Style: Toward a New Theory and Pedagogy" in *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* exposes. Rankin reveals that these theorists agree that "style is teachable art" (379). By answering in the affirmative that style should have a place in the composition classroom, these theorists have answered the distress call of many distraught students and writing teachers. Rankin agrees with the notion that style can and should be taught and further posits that if curriculum is designed in a certain manner to consider the nature of

language and reality, "we may be able to bring style back into style" (383). Indeed, Rankin shows how these agents of change have brought style to the head of the writing classroom without castrating the authorial voice in the process.

Ushering in a new paradigm, or technically a reanimating an old paradigm, these rogue agents enable composition instructors to help students navigate between the Expressionist mode of writing that values the voice and inner-audience of the writer vs. the Objective mode that values stylistic rhetorical maneuvers. This much-needed recall to life of "style" has provided teachers with the means to teach students how to find out what they want to say, and how to find the best means to communicate what they want to say in a rhetorically effective manner without sacrificing authorial voice in the process. Ironically, many Romanticists and Expressionists devalue rhetoric as an art, and place value instead on writing meant to express self. They do not envision writing as a means to communicate with others or even as an art form of aesthetic pleasure. However, many of them, such as Elbow, consider themselves a rhetorician in the end. I would argue that style makes writing poetic and thus, poetic writing communicates by making the meaning more palatable to the appetite. Therefore, there is still a place for style lessons in the composition classroom and instead of rejecting or devaluing an approach to style, we need to consider how "the sinew of style" or Kane's "good sentences" can function as a device leading to both contemplation and to action.

I suggest a perfect marriage of a sort between form and content within the writing classroom. With this perfect marriage, there can be a light in this age of darkness. A recall to life of style lessons can create a paradigm shift bringing composition studies back from the over-reliance on Expressionism back to its Aristotelian roots of rhetoric. Style lessons can help struggling students find the voice that Elbow would laud as the end of good writing, and the

action that rhetoricians find at the root of all good writing. In fact, in "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy," another paradigm changing essay in *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, Winston Weathers stresses that writing instructors do their "discipline a disservice" if they do not make style a "viable subject matter" and "make it real because of [their] own stylistic practices" (369). Style can and must be taught to blend "reader based prose" with "writer based prose" to teach writers an array of rhetorical concerns. Of course, teachers must practice what they preach by modeling these writing practices to students.

Before delving into how and why style can be taught, an understanding of what is meant by style needs to be explained. Even the definition of style "is" complicated by composition theorists. For example, in *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*, Louis Milic posits a few interesting ideas about style in "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition." The first theory he proposes is the individualist theory, a theory that supports the notion that style is intrinsically connected to personality (254). Romanticists support this theory and therefore rest their arguments on the case that style cannot be emulated because "no two life experiences are the same" and that therefore teaching style is not only futile, but unnecessary (254). Weathers speaks directly of this in "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy." He counters that "style is a writer's revelation of himself" and that "style is the proof of a human being's individuality" (369). Weathers posits that it is through style that a person expresses who they are. Though Milic and Weathers seem to agree on the issue that people do not have the same experiences, Weathers does not use this theory to state that style then cannot be taught. In fact, he supports that we can have not one style, but a plurality of styles and that a writer can examine and emulate the style of others to develop their own style or to choose a style that best meets

audience concerns or at least, serves the rhetorical purpose for the piece of writing (369). Thus, he merges a social and text-based approach.

Don Killgallon and Francis Christensen also reject Milic's argument and counter further that style can be emulated and internalized. In fact, they both propose that students emulate the style of successful authors to develop a style of their own. Though Milic is not the staunch theorist launching invectives against the teaching of style that he appears to be, he does approach the teaching of style in a manner that may lead some to believe that style lessons are a worthless endeavor. In the end, he does not entirely reject style. He makes specific distinction between "stylistic options" or the unconscious language-generating mechanism and "rhetorical choices" or intentional stylistic acts to delineate what considerations should dominate classroom discussions about the differences between style and rhetoric. He suggests they must embrace his third theory of style which is rhetorical dualism. Rhetorical dualism, per Milic is that "ideas exist wordlessly and can be dressed in a variety of outfits depending on the need or occasion" (254). It is these rhetorical choices that Milic concedes style can be taught and adopted consciously. This concession speaks volumes.

In fact, Edward Corbett's "Approaches to the Study of Style," as referenced in the *St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, further expounds on the notion that "certain rhetorical choices can become habits of mind and thus stylistic options" (255). Corbett advocates that through examination of style via reading and the emulation of style via writing, that a student may successfully internalize and unconsciously emulate the effective stylistic maneuvers that will create not only voice, but meaning. Although this theory sounds reasonable, is it realistic given the constraints of pedagogical practice and time management issues? I agree with Milic that time may not favor the teacher of writing. Nevertheless, I maintain that something can and

should be done to provide students with the much-needed tools to create engaging and thought-proviking meaning from the tools of language. Writing instructors need not have a fatalistic attitude that considerations of style will "go down the drain" because they do not have adequate time within the classroom for the students to effectively internalize these lessons. Teachers need only realize that stylistic lessons need to start earlier and be done consistently for students to derive benefit. Even Milic does not entirely reject the teaching of style, but instead cautions that since writing is linked to reading, teaching style may take many years while many teachers try to fix stylistic issues within a few weeks (255). Though Milic may be right in his analysis of the inordinate amount of time it may seem to teach style, does this mean that empirical data should be disregarded that students can internalize style? Does it mean that we should have a fatalistic view of our pedagogical efforts to teach style? I suggest, no. We need to develop a systemic plan for teaching style earlier, often, and with rigor and relevance.

What I propose, is exactly what Winston Weathers proposes for increasing the stylistic prowess of students: practice. By engaging in stylistic practice with our students under the tutelage of the classicist masters, such as Winston Weathers, Francis Christensen, Don Killgallon, and Richard Lantham, we can find a way to offer our students a way to find that voice that Peter Elbow equates with style, and we can find a way to add to the stylistic repertoire of our students by enabling them to create writing that can indeed "do something" beyond merely expressing voice. Weathers makes it a point to mention that "style comes not by osmosis, but through exercise" (146). Students need much practice to develop style, yet what does that look like in the classroom? Although some of the techniques offered the classicists to increase style have caused debate over pedagogical effectiveness, empirical data cannot be denied that these strategies become a weapon of power in the students' hands. For example, Weathers does not

just give lip-service to stylistic lessons, he offers many specific techniques as a panacea to the "bad" sentences students normally produce. For example, in "Grammars of Style" he rejects the prescriptive approach to grammar which he calls Grammar A since many students utilize this proper, prescriptive grammar to produce lackluster writing that only an old schoolmarm would agree is "good" writing. Grammatically correct? Yes! Good? No! Instead, he offers an alternative or a Grammar B, which consists of "breaking the rules" to produce rhetorical effects, such as the labyrinthine sentence, the collage, and the double voice among other rule breaking techniques. When students begin to see language as malleable play-doh, they find both the voice that Elbow lauds, and a way to create meaning from language. It is through the manipulation of style that enables this birth of voice as Weathers proposes. As I propose, a birth of voice is enabled by a combined Expressionist approach and Classicist approach. Even Peter Elbow cannot deny this manipulation of style as a 'best practice' for writing instructors since it brings to fruition, a birth of voice.

Winston Weathers, Francis Christenson, and Richard Lantham provide the tools to practice this combined approach. They have students creatively manipulate rhetorical grammar, by imitating the techniques of master writers. They also have students analyzing the effective syntactical and literary techniques of effective writers be it student or professional. Though it would be beneficial to highlight each of the critical theories from these Classicists, and it would be beneficial to explicate upon the strategies that each of these theorists offer, unfortunately, the limitations of this specific piece of writing does not allow for a thorough examination of each of their techniques. Consequently, I would like to provide a cursory look at Don Killgallon's sentence composing strategies to propose a model of what can be done to "adjust our words and thoughts to our intended audience" as Elbow suggests we do after we come up with what we

want to say. This offering is an example of a merging of form and content to address authorial concerns rather than reader concerns. Though Killgallon gives credit to Francis Christensen's *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric,* in his *Grammar for High School: A Sentence Combining Approach*, he devises a curricular resource enabling students and teachers to examine the effective syntactical techniques of professional writers and within their own writing. Killagallon makes it a point to teach writers how to use grammar rhetorically so that they can develop their own style. He does so by having students examine sentences from various texts to analyze how words, phrases and clauses make up sentences. He then has the students identify the various parts and mimic those parts in order to synthesize an original sentence of their own. Though he does not prescribe that students must use a certain order of clauses or phrases, he offers them a wide array of opportunities to create interesting syntax by showing them how certain authors may order their own phrases and clauses and how that reordering of form can add interest, depth, and meaning. For example, he creates opportunities for students to place emphasis at the beginning, middle or end of their sentences by the manipulation of syntax. After the students are comfortable with the basics of sentence combining, he has them mix the tools to create the sinew of style that Kane suggests is at the heart of good sentences. Some examples of the mixing of the tools as he calls it is as follows:

Opener Mix (*before a subject and its verb*) Scrawny, blue-lipped, the skin around his eyes and the corners of his mouth a dark exploded purple, he looked like something an archeologist might find in the burial room of a pyramid. (*Opening adjective, past participle, absolute phrase*) ---Stephen King, *Bag of Bones*

S-V Split Mix (*between a subject and its verb*) Houston, a tall spare man, wind-blackened, with eyes like little blades, spoke to his committee. (*Appositive phrase, past participle phrase, prepositional phrases*) ---John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Closer Mix (*after a subject and its verb*) Seabiscuit's jockey Red Pollard was an elegant young man, tautly muscled, with a shock of supernaturally orange hair. (*Past participial phrase, prepositional phrases*) ---Laura Hillenbrand, *Seabiscuit*

Other Mix (*two or more different positions*) There, placed on one of the hooks above the wood box, was my high-school jacket, the one with the big white GF entwined on the breast. (Opener: *opening adverb, past participial phrase;* closer: *appositive phrase*) ---Stephen King, *Hearts in Atlantis*

After examining the effect of the syntax, the students then emulate these rhetorical patterns by constructing sentences that follow the same pattern. The goal is for the students to internalize these techniques with repeated practice. Some critics of his work may suggest that the writing is not authentic if the students are just imitating professional authors, yet Killgallon counters that children learn to talk by imitating others. I counter these critics by arguing that students can produce their own sentences through imitation that even capture Elbow's authorial voice. They then they can experiment with form by using the techniques of Killgallon or other Classicists, such as Weaver and his labyrinthine sentence or double voice technique. Internalization takes time, but I have seen the results in the classroom. Form can not only aid content, but also add to content in ways that might be totally unexpected. In fact, Murray, Elbow and other expressionists may appreciate that manipulation of style because it effectively becomes a form of invention that may add further depth and interest to that authorial voice that they so admire and hold accountable for all "good writing." In fact, Donald Murray in *A Writer*

Teachers Writing asks "Why write?" only to answer his own question with: "To be surprised" (7) Although his question and answer support that writing should express self and even surprise self, he then quickly qualifies that writing also *does* things such as, to inform or to persuade. Students should be engaged in some type of language manipulation to explore the possibilities of form and where it can take their content. Though this debate over authorial voice in writing and style may resonate with literary critics with their incessant debate over whether it is the language that speaks or the writer that speaks, writing theory that supports stylistic maneuvering does not inherently support Barthes's notion that there should be the "Death of the Author" with the birth of the reader just because style is being manipulated. In fact, the reader has more to engage with to produce their own texts through an intertextual engagement with theoretical conversations.

There is needless paranoia about whether stylistic emphasis "kills" the personal voice of the author. Instead, pedagogical assumptions about style need to be approach in a rational manner and in consideration of Milic's rhetorical dualism in that "ideas exist wordlessly and can be dressed in a variety of outfits depending on the need or occasion" (254). Because of recalcitrant views rejecting the need for stylistic pedagogy and the over emphasis on process rather than product, writing instructors have done struggling students a disservice. However, it is not entirely their fault. The crux of this pedagogical problem is that teachers of struggling students have often taken classes in undergraduate studies that value expressionist writing, have participated in professional development workshops that encourage them to value process over product, and have developed writing pedagogies that are reminiscent of Romanticism and Expressionism that advocate an expressing of self instead of style. Thus, with teachers rejecting style lessons in favor of a Romantic or Expressionist approach, students become impotent writers who have not been give them tools to survive in the composition classroom. There is a light in

this age of darkness, some would argue. Fortunately, a much-needed recall to life of the teaching of style has led a new generation of teachers with the means to teach students to find out what they want to say and to find the best means to communicate in a rhetorically stylistic manner. In the end, pedagogic focus must focus on teaching students to make rhetorical choices. Style should and can be taught. Style is a viable option for the composition classroom and students need to be instructed in a way that makes them realize this viability while simultaneously showing them what to do to increase their stylistic prowess. Having said that, I would like to end with a few cautionary words from Winston Weathers in his "Teaching Style: A Possible Anatomy." Though the student may learn stylistic techniques from the masters and can even label at times the "Hemingway Verb" or "The Faulkner Paragraph," Weathers cautions that stylistic analysis does not equate to the mastery of style. "The knowledge [of style] must be converted into performance" Winston argues (371). Furthermore, Winston also warns that the student must not be left in the "lurch" when being instructed on rhetorical choices. He or she must have a rationale for using them. Winston thus asserts that "a student has the legitimate right to ask, 'Now what do I do? I know how to recognize and compose a tricolon, but what do I do with one?'" (371). It is up to the composition teacher to help the student internalize how and why they should make these rhetorical choices. If a student already possessed some internalize stylistic prowess, he or she would not have to ask this question in the first place. Therefore, there is a need for the pedagogical prowess of a composition teacher in answering these questions. Sounds like there is a legitimate reason to teach style in the classroom, and it sounds like we can and should teach style.

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PROBLEMATIZING THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR

Abstract

Roland Barthes, French Structuralist, challenges conventional wisdom that asserts that authors
should command a Godlike presence within theoretical conversations. Forwarding ideas from
others to push his argument that authorial intent should not command center stage in textual
interpretation, the main crux of his argument relies on a Structuralist lens. It is language that
speaks, he argues, and thus, readers should be given the power to displace the Author-God when
creating meaning from a work. His argument gives birth to a Reader-Response criticism in which
the process of interpretation by a reader creates a text rather than the text existing as a separate
entity to be examined. There is nothing outside of the text for Barthes, thus, the Author-God
entity is irrelevant in theoretical discussions of meaning. On the other hand, Michel Foucault
asserts that there is something outside the text that functions as an agent of discourse exercising a
powerful tool: Subjects who wield ideology. Thus, this paper seeks to examine both Barthes'
Death of the Author, and Foucault's ideology wielding subject, to determine the reason why
authors need to be problematized. "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner will be used as a text
exemplar to briefly to determine why an author must be problematized in literature. Furthermore,
I will challenge Barthes notion that the author is dead and argue instead that the presence of an

author will always exist even if that author is a person constructing a text through the

interrogation of a text.

A Fallen Monument: A Dead Author

Antiestablishment uprisings often occur within academic contexts-- paving the way for new ideas, new ways of seeing, new critical inquiries. This newness not only produces hotbeds of conflict altering entrenched paradigms of theory but also serves to invigorate and complicate theoretical conversations. No stranger to these theoretical uprisings, Roland Barthes, French Structuralist and rogue agent of change, participates in uprooting fixed theoretical conversations with his seminal essay "The Death of the Author." The fixed paradigm that Barthes shatters is the assumption of the presence of an Author-God who retains all authority in regards to the meaning of a text. With this shattering, gone is authorial intent. Gone is the singular solitary meaning of a text. Gone is the "explanation of a work…. sought in the man or woman who produced it" (Barthes 1322). Innovative Structuralist at heart, Barthes dismantles one of the most deep-rooted assumptions of literary theory when he hypothesizes that an author serves as an absentee scriptor rather than an Author-God. In fact, Barthes argues that when a specific text becomes attributed to a specific author, the meaning of that text often becomes confined by critics who find meaning only from the person who gave the text its life---the author. Although giving readers the power to produce texts sounds enticing and invites in a Reader-Response method, his supposition rests on the questionable assumption that once a producer of a text has been removed from the foreground of analysis, nothing will replace this Author-God.

Since his shaky assumption challenges those who advocate an analysis of language through a determination of authorial intent, I will address what I see as a flaw in Barthes' argument. Firstly, it can be argued that Barthes' absentee scriptor then shares similarities with Charles Baudelaire's flânuer. For example, Baudelaire in "The Painter of Modern Life," posits that a flânuer is a man about town who puts his soul into the art and then "diminish[es] like a

figurine at the far end of the literary stage" creating art for art's sake (Barthes 1324). Rejecting classical notions of interpretation that place the authority and meaning of text to the single voice of an author and relishing the transcendence and beauty of art, this highly aesthetic lens seems to mesh with Barthes' notions of an absent author. Since Barthes' author, once removed, no longer lays claim to the hegemonic reality constricted by the text, who holds claim to the meaning of the text or what is done with the text? Barthes reasons that it is the act of reading that produces a text. Although his reasoning is quite sound here, I would argue that this Reading Response in action becomes the real text, thus, the power to create texts has been appropriated by the actions of the reader who then becomes the author of the text.

It is the reader who creates the text in a dynamic exchange of signifying practices not "directly [acting] on reality but intransitively" by a Shamanistic person who becomes a mediator of language (Barthes 1322). Here Barthes sets up an exchange in which the author only serves as a "mediator" of language which sets language at the foreground, the author in the background. Thereby, Barthes challenges deep-rooted paradigms of theory that place all power for the text in the hands of an author. Yet, since the reader becomes the author according to Barthes,' are we exchanging the power for the text from one author to another? I would argue for the affirmative, yet before I discuss Barthes' vision of textual signification practices, and challenge his necessity of removing the author from the meaning making process, I will introduce another cutting-edge critic who takes advantage of the opening that Barthes creates. Michel Foucault with New Historicist visions steps in and both to forward and challenge Barthes' ideas about authorship and how "texts" are produced. Foucault does not wish to 'remove' authors, as Barthes recommends. Instead, he proposes a reconsideration of authors' place in discursive situations because what he considers the core of theoretical conversations: That language creates subjects

who then use language to employ power, has powerful implications for literary studies. Ultimately, though they espouse divergent beliefs on the nature and function literature has in the relation to an author, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault seek to answer the unanswerable: What is an Author? Can there be actual authorial intent? Is an author the author of his own work? Is reading a collaborative act? Does power reside in language? What is the author-function within the domains of discourse?

Although at times Barthes and Foucault seem to agree to the same answer for some of these questions, their opinions diverge enough to provide an opportunity for me to participate in a critical inquiry of their ideas. When examining Barthes' "The Death of the Author" and Michel Foucault's "What is an Author," I noticed an interesting paradox. Though Barthes claims that a reader replaces the dead author by becoming the subject or agent of discourse as Foucault would call the reader, I would argue that this exchange produces an author who is never "dead" because the agent of discourse as a subject becomes the author. The author then exists within and without the text even if that author/reader consists of Barthes' notion of a person producing a text. To interrogate these conflicting theories, and test out my own theory, I would like to examine William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" to problematize the death of the author in the context of the death of the American Old South to see why the author of a text needs to be contested, to see how a New Historicist, such as Foucault, determines an author-function, and to determine how a reader becomes an author by proxy. This rebirth by proxy, when humans construct reality through language, replaces the original author with a cultural construct. Therefore, I claim that Barthes' dead author is an impossibility because the reader, as the new author, will replace this construct through the act of interpretation or what Barthes' would call the production of text through the process of reading.

In starting with "The Death of the Author," I offer a context in which to discover Barthes' beliefs that the explanation of a work should not be the teleological means of discovering "the man or woman who produced it" (Barthes1322). In other words, he posits in his essay that author studies should not be the primary concern of a literary critic. Instead, he boldly argues that the goal of literary studies should not be to find an author because a work has no author. He argues that writing not only has no author, but also "is the destruction of every voice." He posits that the act of writing removes the agent and though I agree with Barthes that determining authorial intent should not dominate textual interpretation, I posit that Barthes overlooks that a new voice is birthed through the process of textual production who in essence replaces his dead and removed, Author-God. His argument about the importance of a reader to the creation of a text hinges on the acceptance of a Reader-Response method for analyzing language, yet what if a different lens is utilized? (Barthes 1322). If so, does Barthes' theory still stand? I would answer, no. However, though he favors a Reader-Response method for textual criticism, he also aligns himself with the Formalists, by forwarding Stephané Mallarmé's ideas that it is "language which speaks, not the author" (Mallarmé 1323). On this point, I would agree with Barthes concession that language creates the occasion for the text to speak. However, he complicates this idea when he rebuts that language only speaks when being interrogated by a reader. What about the reader who then participates in the reading of the text? Does this reader not effectively become an author by proxy even if it is through the transitive act of 'interrogating' language? I would contend yes; however, Barthes' movement from Structuralism to Poststructuralism needs to be traced first for this assertion to make sense. Furthermore, I will make a move to discuss Foucault's theories to ascertain an answer the following questions: If language speaks, how does it speak, who does it speak for, and whose interests does it serve?

As Barthes moves towards Poststructuralist theory, he develops some of his ideas based on Surrealism in that this mode plays off the idea that language is a code that one cannot decipher, but yet instead, play off of. Furthermore, the Surrealist technique of providing the 'jolt' by which the hand quickly writes what the head is not aware of provides a "disappointment of the expectations of meaning," thus, authorial intent becomes a moot point (Barthes 1322). Consequently, he furthers that there is no set meaning from any source, especially an Author-God. This excess of meaning serves in his explanation that the point of a text is subjective and therefore authorial intent is a futile goal to achieve (Barthes 1323). If authorial intent is removed from theoretical conversations providing the reader with the power to determine the meaning of a text, we enable the birth of the reader with the death of the author. He makes it a point to note that the act of writing does not induce the death of the author, but rather it is the transformation of text through this interaction of author and text. It is the text that is transformed into a medium or an "ever shifting collage" providing possibilities of interpretation for a reader, eliminating authorial intent, and thereby, bringing a metaphorical death to the author and I would agree, a rebirth of an author/reader.

To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified to close the writing" Barthes vehemently claims (Barthes 1325). The problem, therein, he proposes is that a "text's unity likes not in its origin but in its destination" which is the reader; thus, he sets forth a call to action for all to accept "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (1326). I would like to further Barthes claim by proposing that it is at this junction, I claim, that the reader becomes the author of the text, thereby, creating a voice and ironic antithesis to Barthes voiceless author. Acknowledging that Mellarmé first proposed the idea that the audience produces a book by a form of active reading or criticism, Barthes

nevertheless demands an authorless text. Yet, if the reader becomes an author by proxy, as I recommend, what makes this exchange possible? Exploring Barthes approach to language helps to make sense of this incongruous process.

For example, in Barthes' hands, a work becomes an artistic production. During the creative process by which a text is produced, a reader participates in the construction of reality through language. A text is a process, rather than a product by which the reader negotiates the symbols or signs of the text. Thus, the text is not a product that can be held in the hand by a Formalist for example to examine the form for unity. A text, for Barthes is what happens between the author and the reader rather than existing as an entity. A work is what can be held in the hand while a text is produced through a dynamic relationship in which readers decode the signs within a text. Therefore, Barthes analyzes language, through a Structuralist approach, to identify what makes a text take form. This form metaphorically consists of a network of intertextuality, symbols, signs, and binary oppositions.

This sword of interpretation brandished by readers, annihilates the author as a source of meaning. In fact, the identity of the author becomes irrelevant when confronted with meaning making that takes place for audiences. It is the symbiotic relationship between an author, the text, and the audience that makes a text flourish. But exactly how is meaning made when the audience participates in a text? What is in these codes that the audience deciphers? An answer to the latter will be discussed later in response to Foucault's theories. An answer to the former can be found in Ferdinand de Saussure's *The Course in General Linguistics*. Another rogue agent of change, and a definite influence on Barthes, Saussure determined that linguistically, a language is "functionally split into two parts: a signifier (sound image) and a signified (concept)" (847). The relationship between the two is completely arbitrary to Saussure. In fact, the symbol or what is

represented by the sign is "established in the linguistic community" and provides another level of analysis possible for a work of literature (854). Though another theoretical conversation arises in response to engagement with codes. For example, who makes these decisions on what symbols mean in society? According to Saussure, there is no natural connection between the sign and the signifier, therefore, people must agree upon what the signifier represents. Thus, the meaning of these codes are derived from Reader-Gods who participate in discursive practices. Agreement about the meaning of codes is produced through the discursive practices in cultural practices. For example, if a rose is deemed to be a symbol of love within a culture, a connection can be made to the cultural construct of a rose. Why is a rose a symbol of love? Can it be a symbol of death, as well? Depending on one's culture, the answer is yes. Saussure, as a Semiotician, explains that culture determines how we interpret not just perceive signs. Codes are effectively created in culture, by culture, and for culture. Barthes, in forwarding ideas from Saussure posits that binary oppositions provide an interesting connection to how codes are created in cultures and interpreted by cultures. In fact, he recommends that symbols should not be analyzed for meaning, but how they function. If Structuralist's, such as Barthes determine that it is how a symbol functions that is important, and not just what it means, what implications would that have for the study of literature? To determine a satisfactory answer to the question posed would demand an examination of not only binary opposition, but also another one of Barthes paradigm changing assertions, intertextuality.

A text for Barthes, is not a work derived from an Author-God that has a distinct meaning, but "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash (Barthes 1325). This "intertextuality" demotes the author from the Author-God to a weaver or 'scriptor' of language. However, I still maintain that this 'scriptor' is still an author

constructing a text with authorial intent. Is it possible that there is an excess of meaning that the author did not intend? Yes. Is it possible that others can use these ideas to create new texts? Yes. But, these producers of texts are still authors. Per the Oxford English Dictionary, a Text or textus derives from Latin meaning the "tissue of a literary work" or "that which is woven". The etymology of text is quite interesting when juxtaposed with Barthes' revolutionary notion that all texts consist of words stolen from other texts. Not only does the text not represent a "single 'theological' meaning," but also where the actual meaning of a text resides has implications, as well. The text, as a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture" becomes a vehicle for the reader to produce the text (Barthes 1322). When "this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters his own death" and "writing begins" only when the reader transacts with the text (Bathes 1322). This radical notion serves to sever language from its origin, to place emphasis on language itself, and to provide power to the reader to create the text.

Rejecting the classical system for reading, Barthes rejection of the interpretation of a text as a finite act derived from the authority or author of the text enables language to become a site of plurality of meaning. Thus, when language is then consumed by the reader, a metaphorical birth occurs in which a reader is born. However, with this birth, do we then create another author, by proxy, whose words speak from larger social forces that create "the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses with a society" (Foucault 1481). I would like to use Michel Foucault as a springboard to discuss my theory that with the birth of the reader and the death of the author, we have only replaced the author by another type of author even if I concede that this author speaks from larger social forces of institutional power as Foucault would maintain. This Reader-God creates another author that is a cultural construct that has the power

to utilize ideology to create other texts. If codes are constructed by culture, and language represents culture, what is this 'culture' saying? Whose interests does it serve? Foucault seeks to answer some of these questions.

What Foucault did from a theoretical standpoint was to explore the paradoxical existence of an author-function asserting that authors are made by culture and these authors function to participate in the discursive practices of society. The identity formation of an author, both organic and troubling, particularly interests Foucault. Connected with a New Historicist approach to literature, Foucault examines texts in a way that must be explained before discussing his methodology or before connecting this methodology to the Author-Reader that I assert replaces Barthes dead author. Per Charles E. Bressler's *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, New Historicism stands in opposition to the Old Historicism or the Formalist methodology that relegates history to background material, and the text in the foreground, as the artists' representation of a mirror of that time.

Foucault aligns himself with the New Historicism rather than the Old Historicism that "declares that all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past" (Foucault 238). New Historicism aligns itself with Cultural Poetics in that history is a discourse "or ways of seeing and thinking about the world" (Foucault 238). History is given shape by language. If Saussure supposes that there is no natural connection between the signifier and the signified, then who decides on this arbitrary meaning becomes a Reader-God who speaks through culture. Although I concede that the postmodern collapse of meaning that determines that not even language can represent truth or a fixed reality makes sense on many levels, I still insist that the collage of meaning or the "tissue of signs" that a text creates provides a way for readers to become Author-Gods.

Though Foucault agrees with Barthes that the Author-God should determine the meaning of a text, Foucault does not advocate that we ignore the author in structuring theoretical assumptions about a work. Instead, he will challenge antiestablishment notions of Barthes' "Death of an Author," and characterize new ways of seeing the author-function as "new groups of discourse. Therefore, the "subject should not be abandoned, it should be reconsidered to seize its function, its intervention in discourse" (Foucault 1481). This 'intervention in discourse' serves as cultural capital, as a way for upward mobility, a way to create new discursive practices, new identities, new ideologies. Cultural poetics finds a champion in Foucault in that he supposes that "historians must expose each layer of discourse that comes together to shape a people's episteme" (Eagleton 242). By analyzing how authors construct reality and readers interpret that reality, I assert that language produces a different type of reader who becomes, as Foucault would rationalize, a projection of the text. This projection becomes another reader who functions as an Author-God who imposes his own limits on the text depending on his interpretation of the text. Though Barthes warns we must not affix meaning, does not a reader affix meaning through unconscious discursive practices? Even though there is ample evidence that history shapes identity, I do not fully endorse that an author imposes limits on a text. On the other hand, I do agree that the author of a text needs to be questioned and problematized to determine how authors function to determine what ideas they are intending to author.

Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author" seeks to explain this authorial function. In discussing the function of discursive practices, he proposes that history consists of many discourses or ways of seeing or thinking about the world and that these discursive practices are veiled attempts to wield power. In his essay, he first acknowledges the trend in literary theory of negotiating Barthes' "Death of the Author." Dismantling these assumptions and beginning to

establish a new practice which establishes the author as an important part of the discourse practices of a society, Foucault maintains that "the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society" (Foucault 1481). These discourses are culture in action or power structures that exists to take up the space that the author has vacated and it is in this space that Foucault argues that "we should reexamine" (Foucault 1479). Though I agree with Foucault that we should at times examine these empty spaces or these as Barthes would call it, authorial deaths, I wonder if the reader, as the new author, serves as one of these 'institutions'? He maintains that the author-function is tied to "legal and institutional systems" that create the realm that he would call "discourse" and at the same time, "hidden power structures of ideology" (Foucault 1485). For example, if we must look at a text in a certain way because it has a certain author, there is an implied ideological structure that underlines that text, and this, is what Foucault would say needs to be examined. This 'I' or this author of the text is the embodiment of ideology. Are we then, as 'I's' the embodiment of ideology.

He proposes an intriguing notion that "a person can be the author of much more than a book" (Foucault 1485). What is interesting about this notion is what is not said. What then could a person be an author of? Either way, although this notion seems like a democratizing act, he admonishes that the book the person is authoring is no more than the power structures that served to create and subjugate that author. At bottom: ideology. He counters that the consumption of ideology through discursive practices maintains that the function of an author moves beyond the creation of the text. Instead of looking at what literature is, or how an author dies at the creation of the text, Foucault looks at how literature is created and the power structures that inherently lie within. Seldom do we see quantifiable data beyond the text Structuralist critics assert, yet

Foucault's cynical New Historicist eye will determine that there is always something outside of the text. The fact that there is something outside of the text functioning in a certain way, establishes the need to problematize the author. If the author is a projection of the text, as Foucault suggests, what is the text saying through this Author-God?

He emphasizes "écriture" or that which is required for a speech act to take place from which to begin our study of literature. Humans attempt to utilize language to represent reality not only producing art, but also producing culture in action, as Barthes also would assert in his coding of discourse, thus establishing not only an authorial presence but also a myriad of authorial presences circulated throughout culture or ideology. I previously asserted that the birth of the reader at the cost of the author only birthed another type of author. This selfsame author is the product of culture as New Historicists would assert. Therefore, if one determines there must be a death of the author for language to speak, I would argue that the reader, then wields the power to create other types of discursive practices, as well. Yes, there is an excess of meaning within text, or as Barthes would assert, a plurality of meaning not predetermined by an Author-God. The problem with this plurality is that it "gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions" (Foucault 1485). Nevertheless, giving power to the reader to create the text, and limiting the Author God, to a "plurality of egos" gives birth to new authors. Though Barthes contents that the author is dead and Foucault contends that the author functions to intervene in the discursive practices of society, I contend that the reader replaces the dead author becoming the subject or agent of discourse thereby establishing that an author is never "dead" and exists within and without the text as an ideological manifestation.

I would like to briefly examine William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" to further my idea, and to examine how the death of the author functions in the context of the death of the

American Old South to see how a reader can function as another type of ideology wielding author. After discussing the Barthes' and Foucault's approaches, a question arises: How would these men determine who the author of a text is such as the author of William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily"? Does the reader produce the text through interpretation that exemplifies culture in action? Does this action become the author, or is it Faulkner, the reader, is it culture? Starting with Barthes' notion of examining a work's binary oppositions and ignoring what is without, that is the author, the text becomes the vehicle for the birth of the reader to produce the text, not as an object, but a process. This process is what happens when a reader interacts with a text that creates the text. Likewise, Saussure states that "language is a form and not a substance" (Saussure 863). If so, then how does this form function in discursive practices?

In examining how this form functions in "A Rose for Emily," a Structuralist approach would acknowledge the underlying structures, that is, the binary oppositions within the text. To problematize the death of the author in the context of the death of the American Old South, it is necessary to begin where Barthes leaves off in examining those structures. In Faulkner's Antebellum tale, developed through several flashback sequences, the life of a young girl is depicted through her repression by her father and by a patriarchal society represented by the Board of Alderman and their "modern ideas" (Faulkner 99). This society is determined to sublimate her into accepting the new ways to reject the old Southern ways. In a Structuralist move to examine the binary oppositions of the work, resonant of Barthes, I have determined that Emily, represents the old, broken, murderous, delusional and a "fallen monument" of the old South indicating that she exemplifies the negative components of the binary pair of supreme newness/perfection/absolute dysfunction (Faulkner 99). She is a paradoxical symbol functioning as both a representation of the strength and decay of the Southern Pre-Antebellum psyche. She

is as derelict as the Old South's bourgeois ideology that represses women and maintains the status quo. This binary opposition foregrounded by the use of symbolism sets up the death of the Southern way of life and all its trappings, such as Emily's house, a now derelict "eye sore among eye sores" sets up an interesting signification practice (Faulkner 99). These signifiers connote that Emily is a relic of the past. Yet whose vision is this? Is it Faulkner's? Is it my own?

This is why it is necessary to problematize, or question the presence or necessity of an author. Barthes suggests that it is necessary for authors to be distanced from the text for the creation of a text to take place, yet Foucault would maintain that there is always something outside of the text in this distance. While it is true that something is outside of the text, be it ideology or otherwise, it is not always apparent what Foucault maintains. I would argue that he maintains a notion of the "author as a function of discourse" and with a skeptical eye, it will be apparent what type of discourse we are functioning with (Foucault 1481). The author for Foucault is not dead, but alive and well, and even existent in the reader we supplanted the author with. The agent of discourse, the Author-Function, of "A Rose for Emily" resides in the ideology which can be parsed from the text through the examination of binary oppositions. For example, Emily refuses to give up her traditions, her way of life, and her dignity to a general bourgeoisie rise to power. As a symbol of the Old South, she is the binary opposite of power—impotence. Thus, though she refuses to give up what she thinks is her power, it has already been taken from her, just as it has been taken from the ways of the Old South. She eventually kills her lover, a Northern laborer in an ironic twist, and resolutely refuses to acknowledge that her dad dies. It is only at the end that it is revealed that she slept with her lover's corpse for many years because she refuses to let him leave her. Thus, another example of how her demented mind represents a Southern refusal to give up old ways. Only through the examination of binary oppositions, can it

be determined that the Death of the Old South is the author of this story, and can be attributed to

certain ideological assumptions about that way of life. In fact, the old, in "A Rose for Emily"

refused to acknowledge the "mathematical progression of time. Instead, they believe the "past is

not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches"

(Faulkner 104). Metaphorically, this refusal to change speaks forth from the now defunct

Southern institutions that Emily represents. And what the reader interprets through the symbolic

elements of the text.

When it comes to problematizing authors, Barthes' and Foucault's agreement usually

ends after deciding that the presence of the author should not limit the meaning of a text. Though

both critics acknowledge that we must problematize authors, their reasons differ. Case in point,

the author must be contested, Barthes demands, because "to give a text an Author is to impose a

limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" (Barthes 1325). Though

I agree that the reader should have the power to continue the writing, his argument is flawed in

that readers become authors, thus, the writing is never closed through signification practices. The

conversation will go on. Foucault on the other hand, asserts that the "subject (author) should not

be entirely abandoned. It should be reconsidered…" to determine its power and importance in

culture (Foucault 1488). With Barthes' authorial death, Foucault brings us a birth of subjects

who function as authors. Since these births require examination by other authors, authors are

never entirely removed. Although I understand where Barthes is going with his dead author

concept, and though I know that he wants to limit interpretations based on authorial intent, I side

with Foucault in that there is always a presence outside the text. Thus, I maintain that the

Barthes' author is never dead because replacing that author with a reader who functions to

"intervene in discourse," only generates an author by substitution. Therefore, authors, even one's

that participate in discursive practices to create meanings from what is signified from texts, or

authors that function as culture in action from the ideological forces outside texts, are authors

nonetheless.

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(Revised)

The Feminization of the Nineteenth Century: Failing to Escape the Doll House of Otherness

Florence Nightingale, Victorian nurse is famously quoted as musing, "Why have women passion, intellect, moral activity, these three, and a place in society where no one of the three can be exercised?" In *Reclaiming Myths of Power: Women Writers and the Victorian Spiritual Crisis,* Ruth Y. Jenkins explains that, Victorian writer Mary Ann Evans not only sides with this sentiment, but also furthers this argument stating that "man has appropriated religion, so that the sanctioned codified beliefs, stymied individual development and fostered individual pain" (123). Of course, the referenced "stymied individual development and individual pain" occurred quite often to females who were stereotyped into assuming the role of the ideal female. In the nineteenth century, Victorian women increasingly began to challenge these "codified beliefs" via a new religion--writing. Females used this new religion to subvert ideas about ideal femininity, ideas about a female's proper place in society, and ideas where women exemplify the 'weaker sex.' In fact, Mary Ann Evans, known by her *nom de plume,* George Eliot: "the voice of the century," as referenced by biographer Frederick R. Karl, speaks to a general zeitgeist of this "feminization of the nineteenth century" that she herself was "an essential part" (xx). Other females who took part in this "feminization," include, but are not limited to, Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and even Jane Austen. Though Austen's writing precedes these others,

it serves as a harbinger of Victorian ideals and vicissitudes that problematize female's changing

gender roles and anticipate negotiations between gendered stereotypes and images of the femme

fatale. Conventional wisdom dictates that gendered writing and gendered reading creates a

vehicle by which marginalized females challenge a patriarchal control of discourse. Hence,

female authorship and female readership, subvert or challenge gender roles by giving females the

power to situate themselves in literature and in life as they see fit. Though I would argue that

although Eliot, Braddon, Austen, and Gaskell control a form of discourse with the power to alter

historical perceptions of femininity, and thus, current perceptions of women's place in society,

their work only confirms the social marginalization and perpetual Otherness of females.

 This Otherness is often criticized in fictional texts, or literature that Matthew Arnold

would call "a criticism of life" (691). This type of criticism supports the social, ideological

aspects of language to explore humanity and the reality that is created through language and

spread through culture. A language that humans create and alter using various communicative

acts such as language and texts. This power of literary language is explained in the introduction

to Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* as, "usurping in many respects, intentionally

or unintentionally, a portion of the preacher's office" (xiii). Such is the burden and pleasure these

female authors had on their shoulders in "molding the minds and forming the tastes and habits of

[their] generation" and in criticizing life as it was for women to be an Other, or in other words, a

castrated social outsider (xiii). Nevertheless, I would argue that the depictions and assumptions

about women codified in these texts neither persuade readers to reconsider ideal femininity nor

confirm notions that women should have a more favorable standing in society. Having said that,

Brantlinger's "What is "Sensational About the "Sensation Novel?" confirms the use of discourse

and "sensation novels….to exploit public interest in these issues" (6). If anything, though class

and gender roles were in a constant flux during the Victorian period, the issues confronted in these texts confirm the existence of a multifaceted female psyche, and confirm the struggle and powerlessness of females in a patriarchal society. Consequently, an underlying attitude that seems to pervade these texts support a view of women as mere aesthetic objects that men must exalt power over. This female repression creates both a metaphorical inner asylum and an outer asylum to contain their "madness" seeking to control female autonomy. Madness, such as seen in *Lady Audley's Secret* by Elizabeth Braddon, is symbolically represented through a double consciousness. Furthermore, women in these texts are often seen in binary oppositions of either beautiful or ugly, good or bad, or evil or angelic. While women in these texts are exposed as having layers of feminine complexity that defy societal expectations, the men in these texts are often obsessed with controlling and repressing this complexity and making women conform to societal expectations. This subversive critique by female authors only seem to affirm the power of males. Does this mean that their writings had little power to control societal ideas about femininity? Not necessarily.

Eliot, Braddon, Austen's and Gaskell, as female authors, share an affinity for writing that exemplifies a particular form of social criticism that capitalizes on the trope of the ideal female whose behavior and morality challenge bourgeois conceptions of ideal womanhood. Though each of the aforementioned authors experiment with popular nineteenth century literary conventions, such as Realistic, Gothic and Sensation Novels to achieve this means to an end, their work shares similarities in purpose: To critique societal views of femininity. In their desire to critique how women are seen in a negative light by society, these writers share similar literary conventions such as motifs of fiends, doppelgängers, and villainesses with angelic outward beauty. These conventions, through common use, have some power to alter perceptions of

femininity, and though these authors are ultimately successful in this endeavor, an unintentional theme arises through this altering: the confirmation of females as socially marginalized, and perpetually Othered. In the chapter on "The Weaker Sex" in *Victorian People and Ideals* by Richard D. Altick, it is Victorian writers who are described as "frequently mount[ing] an outright or covert attack on the unrealities and perversions of the prevailing womanly ideal" (56). Certainly, Eliot's, Braddon's, Eliot's, and Gaskell's works seek to attack these 'unrealities and perversions,' yet Altick confirms females had little chance of escaping the "doll's house" of the womanly ideal due to "two reigning assumptions: the female brain was not equal to the demands of commerce or the professions, and women simply by the virtue of their sex, had no business mingling with men in a man's world" (54). Unfortunately, at the same time these authors debunk these reigning assumptions, they also unintentionally support them.

For example, George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil," offers a woman who does not fit into the "doll house" of the womanly ideal. Bertha, the protagonist, is not the feminine type that the narrator, Latimer, desires. In fact, she is "opposite" in fact, "of the ideal woman" to Latimer, despite his having an attraction to her, and despite her having "strongest dominion" over him (22). Part of his frustration with her reveals his sexist attitudes about females, and serves as his excuse as to why she has 'dominion' over him. For example, he describes Bertha as a stereotypical female who can 'besot' men with "[a] half repressed word, a moment's unexpected silence, even an easy fit of petulance" which he describes as serving as "hashish for a long while" to a besotted man (44-45). These actions serve as sexual markers of dominance though in reality, these females are shown to be devoid any real actual power. Bertha may seem as if she has dominance over Latimer, yet her power is only an illusion, as Latimer discovers when he finally reads into her mind and discovers her disillusion with life.

In fact, he foreshadows the power of illusions over people when he says that "[o]ur sweet illusions are half of them conscious illusions, like effects of colour that we know to be made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags" (45). The illusion in this case is Bertha's coquettish, ideal womanhood, yet she is only shown to have a lack of control in a man's world. In this text, as well as others from Austen, Braddon, and Gaskell, social criticism brings to the forefront issues of gendered Othering manifested through the motif of the double, or the doppelgänger and by the objectification of females as being monstrous, fiendish, or witch-like. Women who did not fit into the womanly ideal in Victorian fiction, especially Gothic or Sensation fiction, are exhibiting monstrous behavior which complicates the purpose of these texts. For example, in "What is "Sensational" About the "Sensation Novel?," Patrick Brantlinger posits that the popularity of sensation novels could be attributed to its likeness to melodrama. For example, "violent and thrilling action, astonishing coincidences, stereotypic heroes, heroines, and villains, much sentimentality" and the usual "virtue rewarded and vice…punished" (5). It is the latter that brings interesting implications to the texts of these authors. For example, though these authors place these characters in domestic, familiar settings, these settings serve to estrange women's unconventional behavior even more so especially when their behavior does not conform to societal expectations. This monstrous behavior, exhibited by female characters tarnishes their image as an ideal woman, and leads to disastrous consequences bringing to light that their behavior is vice punished rather than a demonstration of normal human behavior.

Hence, a commonality with these texts are that men often wield seemingly justified misogynistic epithets, considering unwomanly behavior towards women who like Bertha in Eliot's "The Lifted Veil," defy notions of femininity and ideal womanhood. In fact, when Latimer, the narrator, struggles to lift the metaphorical veil of a woman's (Bertha) soul to reveal

her double consciousness, he is blocked by "the witchery of her presence" though he is a self-professed clairvoyant (30). After all, only a witch, a fiend, a monster, could possibly exert power over a man. It is women in these texts, who metaphorically torture men by their refusal to submit to whatever will they wish to exert upon them, which sets up an interesting paradoxical exchange of power. Though what each of those female submissions looks like, varies with each text. For example, Latimer states that he is tortured with a "disease" that enables him to read the minds of others, but his actions reveal that it is Bertha's refusal to submit to his powers of insight, and her mysterious nature that tortures him. The narrator, frustrated with "the witchery of [his wife's] presence," cannot see into her soul; her body is not open to him and this frustrates the self-professed clairvoyant (30). Interestingly, Latimer, is only able to lift the veil or "shroud of concealment" into female Otherness after marriage supporting the fact that conjugal bliss is only an illusion that is possible when females buy into it (58-59). Once he possesses Bertha, he sees through her 'shroud' to see her lack of power. In fact, he states that "she found herself powerless with me" because he had "no lever within her reach" or "no influences" as she was wont to have such as "worldly ambitions" and "social vanities" (50). Latimer, by aligning himself as someone who has no need of these things because he is a man, aligns Bertha with social climbing females who lack virtue and must be punished by vice.

He repeats several times that he has a "double consciousness," yet it is entirely unfathomable to him that Bertha may have a double consciousness, as well (66). He sees her as he wishes to see her, as the coquette who only loved him and not his brother, as a woman pleased in her domestic tranquility, not as a woman whose secret, once revealed by her maid, reveals that she wanted to murder her him (65). It is alluded to, that Bertha secret is obscured when she takes on the likeness of a fiend in his eyes, a "glittering serpent, like a familiar demon," blocking his

ability to see what is in her mind (53). This blocking by Bertha, Latimer argues accounts for his

powerlessness in her presence. Yet, though Bertha has a fiendlike power, she is not powerful he

remarks, but "powerless" because he "could be acted on by no lever within her reach" (50).

These levers are described as "worldly ambition" and "vanity," thus, implying that worldly

ambition and vanity are distinctly primitive female needs that men have no desire for. In fact,

because he cannot see through to Bertha's soul, and because he mentions that he gets "weary"

with those whose mental life is but "worldly ignorant trivialities," it appears he is implying here

that a female mentality is one dominated by these 'trivialities' which shows his misogynistic

tendencies (53). When he finally exerts his power over her fiendlike abilities, her "soul is laid

open to [him]" and he sees the disillusion that is her life, her double consciousness, and the

confirmation her perpetual Otherness that serves as a form of alienation from him (49). Perhaps

this alienation confirms the perpetual Otherness of females, especially those who act on their

double consciousness.

The confirmation of the marginalization and perpetual Otherness of females, especially

by those who do not fit neatly into the doll house, can be found in Elizabeth Gaskell's gothic

ghost story, "The Nurse's Story." Though this text explores themes divergent from

doppelgängers, and double consciousness's, the texts serve as a backdrop to social criticism on

female powerlessness in a patriarchal society. For example, an interesting covert literary

technique—symbolism--attends to uncovering female powerlessness against patriarchal control.

As an example, in "The Nurses Story," the depiction establishing the impropriety of females and

the tyranny of males is controlled by the nurse Hester's point of view. Hence, the Gothic setting,

coupled with Hester's biased point of view adds the malevolent depiction and subsequent

symbolism. A symbolism that will reveal female powerless in the presence of a tyrannical male,

yet also serves as a warning to females who chose to defy social convention. Does this inclusion imply that Gaskill wants females to toe-the-line to male expectations? I would argue that this is not Gaskill's intent, yet is an unintended consequence of symbolism that shows female powerlessness.

Accordingly, another part of the ghost story that reveals female powerlessness is the phantom child, the offspring, of the Lord's daughter. This daughter and her child were exiled into the cold by Lord Furnivall when he realized that "his daughter had disgraced herself" by secretly marrying and having a child with a foreigner (28). This action earned her a removal from the house and caused the subsequent death of her child. Though is seems as if the child died due to a blow on "its shoulder" by Lord Furnivall, Dorothy will reveal that what killed the child "was the frost and the cold" (28). I would argue that this frost and cold, and descriptions of the house, and inhabitants symbolize the racist, tyrannical Lord Furnivall whose daughter did not live up to societal expectations for females when she secretly married and had a child with a foreigner. This incident seems to serve as social commentary by Gaskill for females who do not toe-the-line to remain in a powerless state. Gaskill diction and imagery develops this symbolism further to create a tyrannical setting that dominates females who do not toe that line. For example, she describes the house as having "no fire" and as exemplifying a "dark and gloomy" abode that no reasonable soul would want to inhabit (14). She develops the idea further with her description of the maid who is described as "cold, grey, and stony" (15). Furthermore, Hester describes how this "wilderness of a house" commands fear for the inhabitants, and even the Nurse knows that there are "some ugly places about the house" even though she dismisses these notions at first (15). Though this stacking of imagery to describe the setting only seem to add to the atmosphere of the ghost story, I would argue that the setting serves as a symbolic rendering

of the master of the house. Thus, this form of social criticism shares similarities with Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* by establishing the powerlessness of females in the presence of a tyrannical male.

By using the supernatural element of a "ghost" through the Gothic setting, Gaskell can covertly comment on the perils females face when confronted with male dominance. At times, she seems to disapprove of this powerlessness. At other times, she seems to imply that females should hide their power from a society who can only see the manifestation of female power as evil. Even the ghostly organ, "broken and destroyed inside," just like the females of the house, can play at will signifying the sadness and power of the old lord who wreaks havoc on his daughter and her child because he deems her relationship a disgrace (18). Ironically, females are not only seen as powerless, but as wicked as well. A wicked female motif exits in this story via the child apparition who tries to lure Miss Rosamund to her death. For example, Hester is warned to keep her charge from the "wicked, naughty child" (23). The fact, that the ghost is wicked, even though the child was a victim of societal expectations, confirms that punishment is meted out to women who do not conform to notions of female respectability and these punishments will be meted out to their children as retribution. These motifs serve as a strategy for Gaskill's cautionary tales against females who wish to intentionally subvert societal views of femininity.

Another author whose females who do not conform to societal expectations is Mary Elizabeth Braddon. *Lady Audley's Secret* by Braddon is another work that can be analogous to a preacher's sermon in that it has the power to rebuke the public for immoral behavior. In this case, the immorality of placing unrealistic expectations upon women. Lady Audley, the protagonist and titular character exemplifies the extremes that women will go to create an identity for themselves and in their extremes to negotiate these expectations. Braddon's

construction of a plausible, yet titillating mystery shows how unrealistic societal expectations can force those on the margins of society to behave in a manner unbecoming of a lady. Consequently, Lady Audley earns the monikers of fiend, witch, deceiver, artful and wicked because of her unlady like behavior, or at least unlady like in Victorian societies' eyes. Just as in Eliot's "The Lifted Veil," it is a man, bound and determined, in *Lady Audley's Secret* who not only seeks to find out what secret Lady Audley is but also desires to expose her true nature to a judgmental society. Ironically, though he accuses her of being mad due to her unconventional femininity, he is driven to madness in his need to control this unconventional femininity. When he figures out her secret, his diction reveals not only how he feels, but how society feels about women who refuse to stay in the doll house of ideal femininity. For instance, he rants that "a conspiracy concocted by an artful woman, who had speculated upon the chances of her husband's death, and had secured a splendid position at the risk of committing a crime" is the secret she has been hiding (266). He goes on to use words and phrases, such as "game of chance, best player, calculating" that when combined with his use of "speculated" brings connotations of exchanges in a consumer culture that only men were deemed worthy of acting within (266). According to Altick in *Victorian People and Ideas,* a woman is "limited to the polite accomplishments which were calculated to help her first to win a husband and then, after that primary goal was reached, to infuse her household with an air of the softer graces so as to maintain its separation from the gritty world of affairs (54). Certainly, this "fiend" or "witch" has chosen an extreme entrance into 'the gritty world of affairs' to 'secure' herself a husband. Since she is ultimately punished for her vice, the question arises, does women's literature offer a rebuke to women who chose to enter manly consumer culture?

In fact, even male writers "exploit public interest" in issues of femme fatales who enter this consumer culture to secure a place for themselves. Furthermore, in *The Femme Fatale in Victorian Literature: The Danger and The Sexual Threat,* Jennifer Hedgecock theorizes that male writers "use the femme fatale motif" not to necessary move women from the margins, but to "empower not only the image of women, but also of this limited false view of women that only cripples their nature and their character (105). Male authors seem to offer a subversion of the female stereotype that at least may validate the idea that ideal femininity is a social construction and an unrealistic assumption. However, it seems that the female writers in question validate that females who choose to buck the forces of society that confine them and stereotype them, will be threatened by dangers not lurking in the woods or the halls of gothic mansions, but in the dangers lurking in expectations for females in society.

For example, Braddon creates in *Lady Audley's Secret,* what the back cover describes as "one of the great villainesses of nineteenth-century literature" who bucks the stereotype of the ideal woman. By bucking the stereotype, this villainess challenges what Altick describes was assumptions that women cannot use their brain, nor compete in a man's world. She uses her brain and competes well when her husband abandons her, and her young child. Granted, what also makes her a villainess, is her implacable nature and ability to do whatever it takes to secure her place in society be it bigamy, adultery, or murder. These actions subvert the socially constructed persona of the ideal woman, and create a doppelgänger of a sort, of a femme fatale. She not only acts out the femme fatale role, her story is like a subverted fairy tale in which she takes on the role of the big bad wolf. In one particularly intriguing moment in the novel, her child, who does not know that she is his mother asks an innocent question of Robert Audley, Lady Audley's tormentor. The young child asks him, "Are there wolves where you live?" (176).

Apparently, young George's grandfather explains to him that he needs his gold watch "to keep the wolf from the door" (176). This is quite the apt metaphor to describe the tax collectors and claimants of debts that young George's grandfather must deal with daily. Nevertheless, the insidious wolves in question are not merely tax collectors, but the very people who live a double life to secure a place in society, or who live beyond the stereotype, mostly women of course, and in this case, Lady Audley. Confirmation that this wolf, or fiend, will always be marginalized or Othered is the fact that vice is not punished in the end, but rewarded. For example, it is Lady Audley only who is punished for her actions by being removed to an asylum, not Robert—the true villain or man driven to madness to control female power. This discourse of femininity enforces a narrative that confirms that otherness of females, thus implying that female narratives are impotent.

Elizabeth Langland in "Enclosure Acts" seems to think that Foucault is missing an important element in the way sexual discourse flows from the classes, that women's bodies must be seen as "childish," and certainly Lady Audley's description of being childish is often coupled with descriptions of "a pale halo round her head" supporting the fact her femininity serves to entice men with its "bewitching air of innocent frivolity" (13). Yet, Robert's use of "bewitch" or "fiend" or various witchlike epithets contradicts this childishness connoting a double consciousness. Just as Latimer pictures two Bertha's, Robert is beginning to see that Lady Audley's secret is bound within her double nature. Interestingly, the image of the halo is often juxtaposed to a description of her "bewitching" nature, and of having "dominion" over Robert, as does Eliot's Bertha over her husband. Robert describes himself in love with her because of her "blue eyes, such ringlets, such ravishing smile, such a fairy-like bonnet" (59). The ability to be cherubic, lamblike, while appearing wolfishly bewitching supports that class distinctions

negotiate sexuality. These works show that females are seen in binary terms, either good or bad, evil or angelic. The works also create a vehicle that exposes the dangers to women for revealing their double consciousness. For females, there is no good or evil, only self.

In the second part of the introduction to *Lady Audley's Secret*, Jenny Bourne Taylor, along with Russel Crofts describe the Victorian fascination with madness. They explicate upon Victorian attitudes towards '"' double consciousness'" and how this concept "offered a clue to the complex workings of the mind" (xxv). Braddon's text certainly offers a look into the concept of double consciousness via the heroine turned villain, Lucy with her childlike beauty exemplifying the epitome of femininity. In fact, the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood would describe her beauty as "bewilderingly beautiful" when juxtaposed next to her "gorgeous surroundings" (292). This beauty disguises her double consciousness, this "wretched" state that consumes Lady Audley after she lets "three demons of Vanity, Selfishness, and Ambition" essentially "become her rulers" which in the end, reveal her double consciousness (294). And though Lady Audley is seen as the madwoman with a double consciousness, Robert himself reveals his own double consciousness. This obsession propels this "lazy, selfish Sybarite, who cares for nothing in the world expect his own ease and comfort" according to Alicia, into a justice, driven monomaniac (275). Yet a double standard of madness depicts Lady Audley as a villainess and Robert as the hero who seeks condemn a woman who he describes as wicked, artful, bewitching, deceiver, fiend, and who threatens class boundaries. The diction he uses to describe Lucy, along with the fact that he aligns her with Eve and her "horrible things" that she did to man, shows his sexist attitudes and his internal conflict on how he feels about Lucy (271). At times, he calls her spiteful names, at other times he professes his love for her, describes in detail her beauty, and even suffers a "dull anguish which gnaws [his] vitals" as he talks to this "helpless woman"

during their most heated argument (270). Roberts double consciousness gives clues to his mindset and reveals the tensions between Victorian attitudes towards women who "speculated" or worked by design to improve their lot in life. If this "madness" connotes an instability of the mind, certainly, Lucy with her femme fatale ways certainly shows a stable mind with her dissimulations and her devious plans.

Female myths and stereotypes are certainly brought to the forefront of these texts. Nevertheless, does nineteenth-century women's literature negate the myth of woman through the motif of the femme fatale? Does this negation, accordingly, change perceptions of static femininity? Or, does this negation confirm the social marginalization and Otherness of females who refuse to stay within the confines of the doll house. I would argue that the negation does challenge the image of the ideal female even going as far as creating a plausible motif of monstrous females who threaten class and social boundaries. Yet, since these females are punished, or considered "insane" due to their deviation from feminine instincts, this negation paradoxically expels the myth of the powerful, yet angelic woman, creates in its stead, a marginalized and perpetually Othered female who follow natural instincts threaten social and class boundaries. It is not the nature of the femme fatale that is an insidious presence in these novels, it is the insidious presence of a socially constructed myth of woman. This ideological manifestation of culture, this 'insidious presence of a socially constructed myth of woman' is what Foucault would call the Author-Function of these texts.

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English 6220

Professor Wood

12 December 2015

(Revised)

<div align="center">Rockin' the College Essay: A Stylistic Odyssey</div>

Rationale:

Since I am a high school teacher who is already in the process of using grammar to teach writing, yet often fall short when it comes to teaching my 12th grade students how to employ rhetorical grammar to enrich collage essays, I have consequently chosen to capitalize on the option of constructing a unit plan. Furthermore, since it is a requirement of all 12th grade students at my school to write college essays, I argue that the teachers at my school need to construct lessons that will not only provide effective guidance and tutelage on how students can capture their "voice," a necessary component of these essays, but also can provide explicit instruction on how students can use rhetorical grammar to communicate effectively. The English teachers at my school often delve into style to explore how an author constructs meaning within literature through the careful manipulation of language. Therefore, teachers can use this literary exploration as a jumping off point as a natural pedagogical progression to examine compositional manipulation of language. By examining effective uses of language in the students' own writing, it can provide meaning and interest to something of utmost importance to them during their senior year: The College Essay. Since we have so many students at the beginning of their senior year who feel as if a good writing is representative of the five-paragraph essay with a three-pronged thesis, these lessons will serve as a way for students to

question these previously internalized structures, and to experience a less constrictive personal mode of text: The Personal Narrative. A logical place to start to get these students analyzing what makes language work, and what they can do to manipulate this malleable substance to enliven their writing is with the college essay. My pedagogical goal for this unit plan is to produce an effective stylistic lesson that will enable the students to use grammar in a rhetorical manner that will serve as an epiphanic revelation that writing can be used to "do" things. Furthermore, I want them to know that the more they manipulate language, and make effective rhetorical choices that meet the needs of the writing situation, language can "do" things that will benefit them. The lessons to follow will consist of a three-week sequence in which students will follow several writing processes with an emphasis on revision.

GRADE 12 FLORIDA STANDARDS:

Conventions of English:

LAFS.1112.L.2.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. a. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's Artful Sentences) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

LAFS.1112.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested. LAFS.1112.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

LAFS.1112.W.2.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. LAFS.1112.W.2.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Text Types and Purposes:

LAFS.1112.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. a. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters

GRADE 12:

Lesson Purpose: To be able to construct an effective college essay by utilizing rhetorical grammar to reach a real audience

- Big Ideas: Language can be a malleable substance that can intentionally manipulated for not only expressive, but also rhetorical purposes.
- **Essential Questions:** When is it appropriate to follow prescriptive grammatical rules? When is it appropriate to break grammatical rules? What is inherent about language that makes it a malleable substance?

Academic Vocabulary: Rhetoric, Audience, Formal and Informal Tone, Syntax, Phrases, Clauses,

Text(s) Used: "No Longer Invisible" a college essay text exemplar from *50 Successful Ivy League Application Essays* **(Please scroll down to examine essay)**

Lesson Purpose: To examine the rhetorical choices made within successful college essays to determine how an author's craft develops the meaning and effect of the essay

 KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS (Lesson Phase One: One week or Two block periods):

Goal:

Students will be able to understand how style contributes to meaning and impact and how authors effectively manipulate language for rhetorical purposes

Hook/Anticipation Guide:

- ✓ Students will answer the following questions: What writing strategies do you use to make texts interesting to read? Can grammar rules be broken to produce effective writing?
- ✓ An informal assessment could be garnered from student responses at this point while students discuss their findings with the class.
- ✓ Analyze the answers given, to monitor and adjust the lesson plan accordingly. For example, if the students seem to recognize that good writing sometimes breaks the rules, no frontloading will be needed to further instructional practices on why it is sometimes desirous to break grammatical or writing conventions.

Guided Practice:

- ✓ After bell work, lead students in a reading and model annotation. Annotations should reveal the writer's strategies in the first paragraph only of the college essay sent to the

University of Chicago entitled "No Longer Invisible". Although each essay found within *50 Successful Ivy League Application Essays* includes a full analysis of what the publishers find effective about each essay, this component should not be provided to the students at this point in the lesson so that they can use an inductive, annotative approach to examine rhetorical choices.

- ✓ Accordingly, use some type of whole class dialogue to determine what the students find effective by not only focusing on how effectively the student who wrote the essay conveyed who they were, but also how they utilized strategies to do so.
- ✓ If the students have enough knowledge at this point to label specific strategies, such as inversion or anaphora, allow them to do so to build a common language to discuss what rhetorical choices certain authors sometimes make. Only cover a portion of the essay in class since the students will finish annotating and examining the rest of the essay independently to give them think time.

Independent Practice:

- ✓ Direct the students at this point to finish annotating and labeling what specific rhetorical choices the author makes and how they are reveal who they are to the college admissions board. Determine if they are intentionally breaking any grammatical or writing convention rules.
- ✓ After an appropriate amount of time, provide a chance for students to either think-pair-share or use some other type of collaborative strategy to discuss their findings with a partner.
- ✓ Discuss as a class their findings by calling upon students to share their partner's findings to expand the conversation. Guide the discussion if possible helping students to realize that if writing is rhetorically effective, it will reach a wide range of audiences. Explain to them that this may explain why some of their annotations or realizations may be the same.

Closure Activities:

- ✓ Students discuss the following question designed to lead into the next lesson: Some theorists posit that style cannot be taught and has no relevance in the writing classroom. Do you agree that style cannot be taught? If so, does that mean the author of "No Longer Invisible" just has a "good writing gene" that enabled her to know when to break the rules or how to make effective choices?

STYLE AND CRAFT (Lesson Phase Two: One Week or Two Block Periods):

Lesson Purpose: To develop ideas for the construction of a college essay by first ignoring audience concerns to capture authorial voice and addressing what is most significant to include in the narrative

Hook/Anticipation Guide:

Students will answer the following questions:

- ✓ Stéphane Mellarmé asserts that poetry communicates an inaccessible reality and that "poetry makes up for the failure of language" to express that reality. What do you think he means when he says that "poetry makes up for the failure of language"? What does poetry inherently have that correct prose often disallows?
- ✓ During this discussion, the students may discover that poetry breaks the rules while trying to convey a large amount of meaning in a small amount of space. Make a cognitive transition into a discussing how poetry conveys essential meaning which they will do in their college essay.
- ✓ Discuss how meaning is often best conveyed through avant-garde techniques rather than strict adherence to a formulaic model. This is where a discussion of rejecting the five-paragraph essay comes into play and how language is a malleable substance that needs to be manipulated to convey a large amount of meaning.
- ✓ Furthermore, have them make the connection that style will reveal who they are as a person, which is the goal for their college essay.

Guided Practice:

- ✓ At this point, each student should have the prompt that their college or university of choice requires.
- ✓ Model how students write in a stream of consciousness manner to find their ideas. Begin by modeling on an Elmo or another overhead the free-write response to the prompt.
- ✓ Only complete a paragraph of this free-write and implement a gradual release so that the students may follow your lead.

Independent Practice:

- ✓ This stream-of-consciousness writing should be implemented in a way that during the independent practice portion, the students are only thinking of ideas to put down rather than strict adherence to form or authorial concerns.
- ✓ Have them complete a full draft since the college essay is often confined by a specific word count. Most word counts are manageable and should not require a lengthy effort to get down some ideas that you can segue into teaching them how to approach making rhetorical choices to improve upon the writing.
- ✓ The goal is to just get down what they want to say for a complete rhetorical revision.

Closure Formative Assessment:

Students will complete a 3-2-1 exit ticket in which they write a response to the following:

Three things I learned, Two things I have a questions about, One thing I made a connection with

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS (Lesson Sequence Three: Two Weeks Including Homework)

Lesson Purpose: To control and manipulate textual elements in writing to clearly and effectively convey an idea

Goal:

Students will be able to understand how style contributes to meaning and impact and to make effective choices by manipulating syntax for rhetorical purposes writing to a specific audience while both demonstrating command of conventions and breaking grammatical rules when necessary

Hook/Anticipation Guide:

- ✓ Students will answer the following question: What is effective about Angelica's introductory sentences and conclusory sentences?

Beginning: I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible?

Ending: Now I am visible. Now I am visible. Now I am visible, and I want to be seen.

- ✓ During this discussion, student should be making the connection by now that Angelica is utilizing language for a rhetorical purpose. She is utilizing the repetition of clauses or anaphora to build the idea that she wants to be invisible when confronted with new experiences and new places. The repetition mimics a mantra and it is almost as if Angelica repeats this mantra to assuage her unfounded fears from uncomfortable situations. Though she reverses this mantra at the conclusion of her essay to show how her educational experiences have transformed her. The rhetorical purpose for this inclusion is to show how not only does she want to be seen, but she wants to be seen at *The University of Chicago*.

Guided Practice:

- ✓ Before beginning this portion of the lesson, please see the asterisks after the independent practice following this portion.
- ✓ During this portion of the lesson, provide students with the specific strategies below to enable them to make rhetorical choices to improve their syntax and grammatical structure.
- ✓ After writing down each definition and examining the constructions in the example sentences to determine the effect, segue into the independent practice in which they will manipulate their own syntax to mimic these strategies using content about themselves garnered from their free write.

Parallelism: Definition----A form of symmetry in which sentence elements correspond in grammatical form.

E.g. The Beatles acknowledged their musical debts to American rhythm and blues, to English music hall ballads and ditties, and later to Indian ragas.

Antithesis: Definition--- Parallelism in which clauses serve to conjoin two contrasting ideas

E.g. Where bravura failed to settle the negotiations, tact and patience succeeded.

It-Cleft: Definition---a division of a sentence into It+form to be+ [stressed element] +who or that

E.g. It was by breaking grammar rules that enabled me to compose powerful sentences.

The Periodic Sentence: Definition---a sentence in which the main clause builds to a climax that is not completed until the end.

E.g. Suffering from acute anxieties for most of her life, the novelist Virginia Woolf not only had several break downs but, finally, on the eve of World War II, committed suicide.

Participial Phrases: Definition---a participial and any modifiers

E.g. Sweating profusely from the forehead, the student looked a wreck as he ran into the classroom to turn his work in late.

Appositives: Definition--- Descriptive information about the subject set off by commas.

E.g. Johnny Depp, a virtual chameleon for so long, has people wondering what he really looks like.

Absolutes: Definition--- a noun followed by a participial

E.g. Hands shaking, she finally walked up to get the autograph of her idol, Johnny Depp.

- ✓ After Experimenting with these basic syntactical arrangements. Don Killgallon's Sentence Composing Approach will be utilized for the students to see how basic phrases and clauses can be manipulated to produce a specific result depending on the placement within a sentence. Students write sentences about themselves that address their college essay prompt, but are modeled after Killgallon's exemplars below.
- ✓ The examples given below are not a finite version of how sentences combing can be done, but rather exist as a first iteration. The students will use these patterns to see if they can arrange any of their sentences they have previously written to develop strong, descriptive ideas and voice.

Opener Mix (*before a subject and its verb*)

> **Scrawny, blue-lipped, the skin around his eyes and the corners of his mouth a dark exploded purple,** he looked like something an archeologist might find in the burial room of a pyramid. (*opening adjective, past participle, absolute phrase*)- Stephen King, *Bag of Bones*

S-V Split Mix (*between a subject and its verb*)

> Houston, **a tall spare man, wind-blackened, with eyes like little blades,** spoke to his committee. (*appositive phrase, past participle phrase, prepositional phrases*)- John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Closer Mix (*after a subject and its verb*)

> Seabiscuit's jockey Red Pollard was an elegant young man, **tautly muscled, with a shock of supernaturally orange hair**. (*past participial phrase, prepositional phrases*)-Laura Hillenbrand, *Seabiscuit*

Other Mix (*two or more different positions*)

> **There, placed on one of the hooks above the woodbox**, was my high-school jacket, **the one with the big white GF entwined on the breast**. (**opener**: *opening adverb, past participial phrase;* **closer**: *appositive phrase*)-Stephen King, *Hearts in Atlantis*

Independent Practice:

*Before the students experiment with the stylistic constructions provided in this lesson, have them first examine their writing for loose and baggy sentences as Claire Keherwald Cook recommends in *Line by Line: How to Improve Your Own Writing.* She recommends that students first look at the profile of a wordy sentence that consists of "weak verbs, ponderous nouns, and strings of prepositional phrases" (3). Since they performed a free write in order to develop ideas for their college essay, they should have a myriad of these problems. They should highlight these problem areas before experimenting with the syntactical strategies they took notes on. Then, they should reexamine their writing on how best to cut the fat and to manipulate the language to develop a distinct and effect style the best conveys the meaning they intent to convey.

Closure:

- ✓ For this particular part of the lesson the students will need to reflect on what effect their stylistic revisions had on their essay. They will need to be specific in their references on how style contributes to meaning and impact and why it is important for writers to make rhetorical choices, even if those choices include breaking the rules. What rules did they break? What form did they experiment with? What strategy is their favorite and why? These are questions that they could answer in their analysis.

Homework:

- ✓ As a summative assessment, the students will complete a full draft of their college essay with revisions. Though this could be considered a summative assessment, the draft could be completed numerous times to give time for thoughtful revision. During the first draft of their revisions, the students need to highlight the changes they made or complete the revision using the editing option in a Word document.
- ✓ Students need time to be able to complete some type of peer review in which they get to see the original draft and the completed draft in order to analyze what effect the changes brought to the essay.

TEXT EXEMPLAR:

"No Longer Invisible"---Angelica

University of Chicago

I WISH I WAS INVISIBLE. I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible. One of my biggest fears has always been going to an unfamiliar place, but each time I have had the satisfaction of knowing that at the end of the day I can go home. I am a shy person, and it has always been difficult for me to adjust to a new environment. Transitioning from eighth grade to high school was especially difficult for me because my high school was, in fact, a boarding school, which meant that that feeling of satisfaction was no longer present at the end of the day but postponed to the end of the week. Living at LFA was a completely new world for me and nothing I had experienced could have prepared me for it. With confused eyes and nothing less than a nauseous sensation in my stomach I entered my first day of high school. Growing up, I had always gone to school with people who looked like me, sounded like me, and dressed liked me, but here I quickly learned that I was the minority. I was not alone in this. Two of my friends came to LFA with me and, with this in mind, my shyness and I did not think it necessary to make new friends. Besides being one of the only schools with its own ice rink and providing only the latest technology for its students, it suddenly hit me that my new home had countless possibilities, but, before those possibilities could be realized, I had to take initiative. I learned a very important lesson at LFA: you will only get out of life as much as you put into it. Stepping out of my comfort zone allowed me to discover an interest and skill for volleyball and hidden leadership as the captain of the JV team. I became a tutor and friend for young Hispanic students at the Nuestro Center, and they reminded me how important it is to give back to the community. After numerous all nighters, I developed a system where I could get all of my homework done and still be able to get involved with sports and extracurriculars without having to sacrifice any sleep time. Towards the end of my sophomore year a family member's sickness unfortunately forced me to leave my school and return home. I left LFA and joined my new family, Mirta Ramirez Computer Science Charter High School. Containing a student body that was 99 percent Hispanic, I was no longer the minority. I had unconsciously become accustomed to the LFA way of life because, in my mind, this tiny mustard yellow building with no more than four windows could not possibly compare to my old home. I was right. No, my new home was not as big nor as fancy, but I discovered that was not a setback. Although the resources were not directly visible nor as easily accessible, I learned that obstacles did not exist for students there. Most, if not all, of the students had the same hunger for knowledge as I had. This summer my school announced that the building which we had been using had fire code violations and we could not return to our building in the fall. Throughout the summer my school did not have a building and did not find one until a few weeks after school started. By that time I had already taken a decision to, once again, leave my home and join yet another family. What I realized on my first day at Josephinum Academy, was that my shyness had not tagged along and I was eager to go to school. The nauseous feeling had left my stomach and enthusiasm had entered. I had already gained and learned so much from the people I had met in my two previous schools that I could not wait to continue my journey and embark on yet another discovery. The knowledge that I have gained

from these three schools is something I will take with me far beyond college. My roommate, across-the-hall mates, and classmates have influenced my life as much as I hope to have impacted theirs. It is evident to me that they have helped me develop into the very much visible person I am today. I have learned to step outside of my comfort zone, and I have learned that diversity is so much more than the tint of our skin. My small mustard colored school taught me that opportunity and success only requires desire. I would be an asset to your college because as I continue on my journey to success, I will take advantage of every opportunity that is available to me and make sure to contribute as much as I can too. Now I am visible. Now I am visible. Now I am visible, and I want to be seen.

Analysis:

Angelica's essay is reminiscent of Jason's "Hurricane Transformations" (Chapter 15) in that it relates a story of self-transformation as she changes schools. The first paragraph opens with a memorable repetition: "I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible. I wish I was invisible." This mantra demonstrates the fear Angelica has of going to an unfamiliar place. She honestly confesses a shortcoming she has: "I am a shy person, and it has always been difficult for me to adjust to a new environment." In these admissions essays, it is appropriate to share perceived weaknesses. However, it is best not to dwell on these weaknesses excessively. In Angelica's case, she describes her shyness in order to help us trace her progress as she slowly becomes less introverted. At the beginning of the second paragraph, we get a palpable sense of the distress Angelica's shyness causes her through her description of her "confused eyes" and nauseous stomach. She humorously describes the insular attitude she takes at her new school, LFA: ". . . my shyness and I did not think it necessary to make new friends." The transition to the next sentence is somewhat abrupt; Angelica might have considered using a paragraph break or adding another sentence so readers can see how she came to realize she "had to take initiative." However, she does a wonderful job of illustrating several ways in which she stepped out of her comfort zone by describing her leadership on the volleyball team and her community service as a tutor. Angelica wisely uses two concrete examples rather than writing a long list. Her ability to juggle extracurriculars and schoolwork without sacrificing sleep suggests that she will continue to manage her time wisely and pursue a well-balanced lifestyle in college. This second paragraph also hints at the importance of Angelica's Hispanic ethnicity. She writes, "I was the minority" at LFA, and describes her work at the Nuestro Center. This is a creative way to write about one's heritage without exaggerating its importance. Race/ethnicity play different roles in people's lives, so there can hardly be a rule for how much or how little to factor this into one's essays. Perhaps the best rule of thumb is to write about this to the extent that you feel necessary in order to genuinely convey your most important point. In Angelica's case, the fact that she comes from a Hispanic family is a backdrop to the more important point: she has a "hunger for knowledge" that refuses to be set back even in her predominantly Hispanic school that is not nearly as well-resourced as LFA. The metaphor of a "new family" and "new home" effectively demonstrate Angelica's ability to adapt. In the third school she moves to, we find out that Angelica's "shyness had not tagged along . . . The nauseous feeling had left [Angelica's] stomach and enthusiasm had entered." This reference to the nervous sensations Angelica mentioned in the second paragraph is an excellent way to show us how her feelings and thoughts have changed.

Angelica's ability to relate parts of her essay together helps tie the narrative into a coherent whole. By referencing back to earlier sections of the story, she prevents her essay from reading like a narrated timeline of her past. The most powerful example of this strategy is at the end of her essay, where Angelica writes, "Now I am visible," bringing the theme of the piece back full circle.

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