THE SUBSTANCE OF STYLE: INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT, AND PARALOGIC RHETORIC IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation explores the intersection between the rhetorical canon of style and current post-process approaches to writing. Because most contemporary theories argue for a social and interpretive definition of discourse, writing scholars and teachers have increasingly sought some means for describing and enacting textual practices derived from those principles. Indeed, current theories like paralogic rhetoric, as formulated by Thomas Kent and based on the ideas of philosopher Donald Davidson, argue that writing cannot be taught or learned, at least in the usual senses of those words. Traditional rhetorical theories, however, are based on practice and are directed toward textual creation. Consequently, determining the ways in which classical stylistics might be interjected into twenty-first-century writing classrooms provides some opportunity for creating a theory of stylistic rhetoric that is both pragmatic and interpretive. If stylistics is a study of the elementary patterns of language and of language use, then it is a small matter to argue that both reading and writing depend on how, when, and why language users make choices using stylistic principles. Rhetoricians from Isocrates to Cicero, Kenneth Burke to Jeanne Fahnestock
have theorized and enacted a stylistics that while often overlooked, may provide theoretical rigor as well as pragmatic effectiveness. This stylistic theory posits traditional schemes and tropes, including metaphor, listing and repetition, as strategies that writers tactically employ to generate and organize discourse and to engage readers intellectually and emotionally. By constructing writing situations as choice-based and contextually delimited, the principles of a stylistic pedagogy reveal opportunities for student-writers and others to gain the right to speak and to be heard through writing; in the very act of writing, the writer simultaneously creates and enacts the authority necessary to engage and to affect the material world, including other human beings.
CHAPTER 1
THE STYLISTICS OF RETROFITTING

For you know that a writing class is not an excuse to study Navaho folkways or to
train vest-pocket literary critics, any more than it is an incitiation to unremitting
workbook drill on usage and mechanics. You know that the subject of a writing course
is writing [. . .]. (Richard Gebhardt, "The Subject Is Writing")

During the twentieth century, literary scholars, classicists and linguists increasingly became
interested in stylistics—the study of rhetorical style (elocutio). Rhetoricians dealt with style when
appropriate or necessary, but the third canon of classical rhetoric lost much of its perceived
usefulness in the wake of the communications studies movement, which attended to the larger
forces at work within communication as well as the rhetorical canons of invention (inventio),
arrangement (dispositio) and delivery (actio). While the fourth canon (memory or memoria)
continued to suffer from neglect as it had for centuries, style's predicament, though equally as old,
occurred for vastly different reasons.¹ Whatever historical causes might be enumerated, rhetoric-
composition and its practitioners have implicitly marginalized the third canon throughout the last
century. For writing scholars and teachers, style usually occupies a nebulous position on the list of
priorities for investigation and teaching. In most contemporary handbooks, for example, "style"
describes broad qualities of writing such as clarity or concision. In writing classrooms the term
most often finds its way into discussions of a writer's tone or approach: a student-writer might be
accused of using "too conversational a style" in her academic essays, or an author under
consideration might be described by an instructor as "a stylist." None of these applications
accurately reflects the intellectual depth and writerly value of the canon or the strategies--tropes
and schemes--associated with it.² Although classical rhetoricians did consider qualities like
appropriateness and, what is now called, tone to be within style's purview, they imagined the
canon’s functioning in more sophisticated ways than many of the compositionists who have taken over the (post)modern investigation of writing and rhetoric. Whereas style is now often connected to the aesthetic or other readerly aspects of a text, ancient rhetoricians made it integral to the rhetor’s struggle to make meaning and to communicate effectively. Classical stylisticians were certainly concerned with form, but they also used the canon to understand the forces that both literally and figuratively drove discourse creation. Indeed, because of rhetoric’s modern dispersal across various fields of inquiry, many compositionists and writers overlook the fact that all five canons of classical rhetoric were originally formulated as complementary approaches to creating texts and were only later applied to interpreting them.

That said, style’s diminution within rhetoric-composition has not been solely a result of its misapplication or marginalization. The decline has also been spurred by compositionists’ fascination with other areas of textuality—beginning with the cognitive processes underlying writing, including revised versions of invention and arrangement, and later turning to cultural studies and other distinctly postmodern methodologies. Because these trends have been well documented by others, I focus here on rhetoric-composition’s present disciplinary difficulties and how a pragmatic stylistics helps the field to seek out and evaluate remedies. Beyond the immense amount that *elocutio* still offers writers and teachers of writing, two current aspects of rhetoric-composition and its position in the academy motivate this study. First, because of the discipline’s relatively short history as an academically recognized area of inquiry, compositionists continue to suffer from a pathological dependency on other disciplines. Only rarely since its formalization in the nineteenth century has rhetoric-composition relied on its own devices to determine its subject matter, conventions, or goals. In the field’s earliest years, philology, literary criticism and speech (communications) provided compositionists with methodologies and material—both pedagogical
and human. Writing courses revolved around lecturing, rote drill in grammar and other “basic” skills, and the instilling of distinctly elitist attitudes about writing’s social functions. During the 1960s, the field’s dependence was not ended as much as transformed by the writing-process movement, which drew its inspiration and its scientistic methodology from behavioral and cognitive psychology. Although there was a brief love affair with expressivism—which itself relied on early nineteenth-century (read: romantic) attitudes toward textuality and creativity—the process movement dominated rhetoric-composition until the end of the 1980s. Since the so-called “Theory Wars” erupted in the pages of *College Composition and Communication*, however, the field has both flowered and fragmented, with compositionists exploring everything from cultural criticism to liberatory/radical pedagogies and feminism. In these and other instances, writing scholars and teachers have relied on outside methodologies and ideas either for their theoretical and pedagogical momentum or for their subject matter in writing classrooms.6

I do not blame other disciplines or methodologies for rhetoric-composition’s present conundra; only a rare few believe it necessarily harmful to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of literacy.7 The discipline’s difficulties arise in much subtler ways than any cause-and-effect relationship can account for. Compositionists have over time been convinced—and at times convinced themselves—that to legitimize themselves and their inquiry, they must rely on other more glamorous or popular intellectual endeavors. Stereotypes regarding rhetoric-composition abound, and its practitioners have too long believed in the narratives those types propagate. Because until relatively recently the field was not supported by a specific program of doctoral study, composition scholarship and the teaching of writing were (and in some cases are) seen as something nearly anyone within English studies or a related discipline could do. (Anyone who writes for a living should be capable of theorizing or teaching writing.) Moreover, because most writing teachers were and are graduate students or adjunct faculty, the field has long been
perceived as an inherently futile bit of drudgery, a "service" to the university. (Anything worth academic recognition would deal with more than the "basic" literacy skills student-writers should have learned in high school.) Rather than successfully forestalling stereotyping, compositionists' attachment to other disciplinary models has too often resulted in self-oppression and further marginalization. At the very least, these appropriations create the appearance that writing scholars and teachers do not believe in the value of pursuing rhetoric and writing for their own sake.

Yet more than self-doubt plagues rhetoric-composition. The continual need to look elsewhere for disciplinary motivation grows from a fundamental error in compositionists' traditional approach to writing. Unlike their classical forebears, (post)modern teachers and scholars most often formulate rhetoric as a metadiscipline, whose materials are the knowledge and texts produced by other fields and whose informing processes are not limited (or capable of being limited) to rhetoric-composition's particular expertise. While contemporary scholarship routinely devotes itself to pedagogies that supposedly empower student-writers or to curricula that emphasize race, class and gender, writing is only rarely treated as a substantive subject matter in its own right. Even when scholars do theorize rhetoric or literacy, student-writers are encouraged to explore anything and everything except writing. Susan Miller observes that focusing on "cultural awareness" is likely to produce student-writers who

only compose exercises in order to reflect on or display their grasp of democratic consciousness. In these [. . .] classrooms, their writing is not positioned to enact that consciousness because they, as writers, are not taught that they have the power to do so. ("Technologies of Self?-Formation" 498; emphasis in original)

While writing about other texts allows student-writers to read and interpret them better, it does little if anything to encourage those writers to study their own texts in similar ways. Student-writers become student-readers who happen to do some writing rather than active participants in the public forum. As a consequence, Miller's reasoning continues,

[b]y teaching texts rather than their making, by teaching awareness rather than rhetoric, and by teaching the power of meanings rather than the making of statements,
we inadvertently produce a politics that is aware but passive. Rhetoric is not, that is, semiotics. And while it often suits us to equate the two (for reasons related more to professional politics than democracy), writing is not reading. (499)

My epigraph is consequently more ironic than descriptive in its assurances that writing scholars and teachers already know what their primary subject of inquiry is. Given the politics of rhetoric, it is no surprise that Gebhardt quickly clarifies his own position by indicating that while materials other than writing may be appropriate for "the freshman writing enterprise"--for which "minimal effectiveness" in communicating is the goal--advanced writing courses must focus on writing per se if students are to "make real gains in strategy, style, and substance" ("Subject"). Although I agree that "if emphasizing a subject of personal interest to students can promote greater interest in writing, then that subject probably is appropriate," I maintain that unless student-writers (and their instructors) understand that writing can never be separated from the meanings it expresses or the purposes it serves, gains of any kind are unlikely ("Subject"). Writing is always the writing classroom's most appropriate focus and compositionists' most appropriate subject of inquiry. Rather than believing they know what student-writers are or should be interested in, instructors must explore ways in which rhetoric can "interest" student-writers--or better yet, ways that those writers might see their own dependence on and investment in writing as both an individual and a sociocultural phenomenon.

The confusion over when and how often writing should be the focus of disciplinary practices is unnecessary and destructive, and the solution is neither simply to make do--as if present events cannot be controlled--nor to remake rhetoric-composition in the image of some other field(s) of inquiry--as if the best way to aid writers is to move beyond writing altogether. This dissertation is neither a jeremiad warning against disciplinary backsliding nor a call for the discipline's return to some idealized golden age of rhetoric. Because not all compositionists have had an equal disregard for (stylistic) rhetoric's potential, rhetoric-composition can still fulfill the project that its name promises and that its students and practitioners deserve. Thinking long and deeply about discourse
does not require scholars or writers to pretend that only words matter, but it does necessitate weighing all rhetorical possibilities, especially those that might be missed for want of trying. A robust rhetoric, one built around a fully recuperated stylistics, can engage writing as effectively as any (post)modern methodology. That classical rhetoric has already been revisited in recent years does not mean that style’s unique writerly value has been adequately tapped. This project assumes that a stylistic rhetorical theory, not merely a rhetoric with some stylistic component, can yet dissolve the troubles I describe without sacrificing either the intellectual integrity or the sense of wonder that writing teachers and student-writers ought rightly crave.

In recent years a surprising amount has been accomplished by applying classical rhetoric in new, less derivative ways. Invention and arrangement have been retheorized in light of process approaches to writing and other trends, providing the two canons with significant influence over not only the theories but also the pedagogies of many compositionists. In the classroom textbooks like those from Edward P. J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors, and Sharon Crowley and Deborah Hawhee have opened avenues of influence that were long minimized or closed. Although classically framed rhetorics no longer dominate the discipline, these authors have seen to it that classicism effectively competes in rhetoric-composition’s intellectual and economic marketplace. And their success has largely ensured that rhetoric need no longer rely on its more formulaic incarnations—especially the modes of discourse, the five-paragraph essay, and the single-sentence thesis—to make itself appealing or useful. An unfortunate side effect of this renaissance, however, is that the “lesser” classical canons—style, memory, and delivery—are still overlooked or assumed to be of lesser importance. Despite the occasional article or monograph devoted to an individual stylistic strategy, for example, the third canon’s pragmatic opportunities have rarely been exploited to either the canon’s or writers’ full advantage. During the past two-and-a-half millennia, the
canon has been theorized and employed in various ways, but in all permutations, its traditional role as a discursive nicety—a thing fundamentally ornamental and poetic—has remained relatively unquestioned. Words’ aesthetic qualities can have profound and quite positive consequences for the ways in which discourse is created, received, and theorized—something to which I return frequently. Even so, I argue that writing scholars and teachers must more fully consider the benefits of placing stylistics at the center of their theorizing and other practices.

On the one hand, I reassess classical stylistic theory while respectfully incorporating current theorizing by Thomas Kent and others—that is, paralogy and other so-called post-process theories of rhetoric. Because stylistics has traditionally been mobilized in a prescriptive way, writers must overcome the seeming disparities between a pragmatic stylistics and antifoundational post-process rhetorics. On the other hand, I must account for the theoretical gains made by paralogic and other post-process approaches without willfully overlooking style’s distinctive instrumental or functional qualities. At first glance, paralogy seems to work directly against stylistic rhetoric, casting language as more than a medium or tool for shuttling meanings between interlocutors. A “new” stylistics must do more than reformulate the function(s) that texts fulfill if it is to have value in the twenty-first century. My overriding goal is to determine how one might conjoin two disparate approaches to discourse without denying the particular strengths of either. What do antifoundational rhetorical theories, especially paralogy, reveal about the invention and organizational functions of style? How might an understanding of these functions aid compositionists’ in their investigation of rhetoric? And finally, how might those same functions be mobilized to a writer’s advantage across varying contexts?

Before addressing these and other questions, I want first to suggest a governing metaphor—the specific mobilization of one concept in clarifying and arguing for another. Apropos my desire to recuperate style and following Gere and Sosnoski, that concept is retrofitting. In architectural
engineering, retrofitting is the structural rehabilitation of older buildings through the selective introduction of modern materials. It is the process by which structures in California, for instance, are fitted with "earthquake-proof" supports and foundations. Interestingly enough, and thanks to the work of conceptual designer Sid Mead and others, in cinema the same principle has engendered the visual anachronism of films like Blade Runner (Warner Brothers, 1982) and Highlander 2 (Columbia TriStar, 1991). In both architecture and cinema, retrofitting is the interpenetration of the old by the new—to the supposed benefit of both. Since this dissertation recuperates style's position within rhetoric, retrofitting carries two methodological advantages. First, it ensures that my writing matches my theorizing. Retrofitting becomes a way to enact the generative and organizational qualities of style in my own work. It teases out the nuances of the communicative process by using writing to critique itself. (Since I assume student-writers can and should retrofit past discursive experiences with/through rhetorical self-awareness, the principle also underlies my teaching, as I describe in chapter 4.) If my method illuminates the questions I pose, then I manage more than the finding of answers. I suggest their validity through the very act of uncovering them. On an intellectual level, I (and I hope others) find the confluence appealing. The way in which a discourse shapes and is shaped by ideas produces a mutual reinforcement of thinking, saying and doing that is unique to retrofitting. Furthermore, on a writerly level, the exploding of distinctions between form and content, or method and material, reveals an equally powerful confluence. Because I address writers as much as to teachers and scholars, the fusion of concepts across (and within) the various levels of my investigation helps me to reach effectively all three audiences, especially when their interests might otherwise diverge.

Second, and building on these convergences, I contend that my questions are best answered through the patterns imposed on, or at least be created to understand, the meanings made possible by writing. These patterns are not necessarily inherent to the ideas, but they are crucial to a
reader’s understanding of them. The patterns are ready built into the system of language itself.

That is, language-as-system necessarily depends on patterns of all kinds—phonemic, morphemic, syntactical, and so on. These patterns, when well matched to the patterns ideas potentially encourage, leave writing at its most effective, functionally and aesthetically. The more conscientious the matching of linguistic pattern to semantic potential, the more effective a writer’s/reader’s meaning-making and consequent understanding. This process, however, requires more than a single attempt at communication. Far from a formalist one-off, it is continuously (re)enacted over time; that is, it is a recurring process of discursive retrofitting. As writers gain more experience, they come to understand and better control textual encounters, but the revision itself never ends. Like structural and cinematic retrofitting, stylistic retrofitting drives the creation and reception of its object (discourse), the matching of underlying discursive structures to future contextual potentials.

The continual revision of patterns and potentials can occur only with feedback (both self- and other-produced), for it is discursive effects that yield perspective over time and across contexts. Metadiscursive feedback allows interlocutors to understand language situations through what Kent calls “hermeneutic guessing,” a contextual revision of one’s thoughts about which discursive patterns fit which semantic potentials (Paralogic Rhetoric 14). Supposing that hermeneutics (a theory of interpretation) stands at the center of discursive patterning, Kent concludes that one cannot theorize discourse without distorting it, that the only viable means for gauging writing or speech is a description of what actually occurs as interlocutors express words in the world. Any narrative of this sort is incomplete, of course, involving as it does the analyst’s own rhetorical (read: interpretative) choices, but paralogy accepts its own provisionalism as a necessary precursor to meaning-making. That is, paralogic rhetoric takes meaning to be generated through the disjunctions and consequent tensions between or among interlocutors’ words. Although Kent’s
formulation precludes meaning from residing within words, I suggest that readers access writers’ meaning-making through the stylistic enactments that determine what gets written, in what ways, and for what reasons. When I encounter Kent’s repeated use of “guessing” and “guesswork,” for example, I do not construct meaning solely from individual words in isolation. Every use after the first reinforces a pattern of polyptoton (repetition of “many forms or cases”) that (a) encourages me to (re)consider whether and why the root “guess-” might be more significant than other words used either once or less frequently and (b) forces me to (re)consider according to context whether “guess-” in its ordinary or primary meaning is what Kent is attempting to express. In short, to make sense of Kent’s text, I must ask why he might have used this specific set of words in these specific ways. The words’ individual uses are always potentially meaningful, but the complex they create when taken as a group tells me equally as much about Kent’s (making of) meaning and about the work his words do.

Interlocutors could not communicate at all if they did not share, or at least share potential access to, the appropriate means for discursive creation/reception—a particular language, various rhetorical patterns/strategies, and so forth. As language users, interlocutors also share some capacity for understanding, consciously or not, how motivated language has worked for or against them in the past. Though each person’s relationship to discourse varies, all language users by definition have experience with language-in-use. I could not recognize either (a) or (b) above if I had never before encountered repetition or the word guess. My readers could not follow my thinking on this point if they did not have similar experiences on which to draw. And most importantly, since his words are the ones at issue, Kent himself could not mobilize these strategies if he lacked a comparable awareness, conscious or otherwise. Stylistic enactment marks an utterance for a particular task and audience—whatever, whoever, and whenever they may be—by generating and maintaining the thought-language patterns that potentially (read: contextually) exist in that utterance. A pragmatic stylistics consequently provides an opportunity for understanding,
However provisionally, language-in-use as well as the various narratives constructed to describe that language. It is for these reasons that stylistic retrofitting supplies an appropriate framework for what I attempt in these pages. As a mobilizing figure, it focuses my project and my readers on those rhetorically valuable areas that have been overlooked or cast aside when compositionists focus on concerns that may have little to do with texts, the work they accomplish, or the meanings they generate.

Indeed, to engage the third rhetorical canon without aping other scholarship on writing or on figurative language requires that overlooked sites of inquiry be foregrounded against those already (overly) theorized. Because it does not rely on traditional stereotypes of style, retrofitting provides a template for analyzing what one cannot access from within most existing scholarly work. Effective scholars must settle on some means for understanding the intellectual context within which they operate, and retrofitting is precisely that instrument for my readers and me.¹⁵

Moreover, because retrofitting suggests an atypical entrance into current conversations, it is a potential mechanism for the critique of contemporary rhetoric-composition’s divergent methodologies, especially those that compositionists in investigating and teaching a phenomenon like style. In the spirit of Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky’s “defamiliarization,” retrofitting presents language users with the familiar made strange. Directed by its lens, compositionists can engage in the self-reflexive contemplation necessary to determining just what it is they (and writers more generally) do with/to/for writing. While re-envisioning of this sort is so often promised that its value might seem slight, it must not be too hastily discounted.¹⁶ The intellectual and professional tension between between doing and thoughts about doing largely keeps a field of inquiry vital. Because thinking and doing are also the two primary forces at work in stylistic retrofitting, the metaphor and its various uses are only strengthened by parallels between current debates within the discipline and what I do here.
Because retrofitting allows me to enact that which I explore, my saying and my doing become one act(ion) under its influence and illustrate how the canon of style generates and meaningfully arranges the ideas with which I struggle. This project’s best defense—especially against those who would question the claim that style might lie at the heart of rhetoric—is to provide the proof of actual use. Of course, underlying this method is the assumption that theorizing is a kind of practice.17 Placing stylistic theory within an entire network of disciplinary practices supports the argument made by Dobrin and others that compositionists should accept, even celebrate, a continued and continuous tension between theorizing and practice. Retrofitting erupts from that tension; it enacts my understanding of how words work. One of the most important realizations I hope to share with all writers is the discursive value of exactly this tension. With time and thought, any writer can come to understand that every discursive act is a testing of the limits of his thoughts against the world (and vice versa). All utterances are thoughts and actions simultaneously, habitual ways of doing as well as patterned ways of understanding.

That said, stylistic rhetoric is not discursive sleight-of-hand. It is a kind of theorizing, but it cannot predict the outlines or outcomes of future communication. It is a kind of enactment, but it does not necessarily reflect a discursive norm, much less an ideal. Stylistic rhetoric cannot be all things to all people or to all circumstances, for as Kent explains, any encounter between interlocutors is wholly unique. No individual exchange can be accurately formulated based on any other encounter:

> the activity of communicative interaction cannot be predicted in advance by any framework theory, and [furthermore,] all meaningful utterances exist in an already rhetorized condition because every utterance, in its own particular way, represents a living event that embodies hermeneutic guessing—which is, of course, the practice we employ in our attempts to fathom meaning. (Kent, Paralogic 16)

Along with modern rhetoricians like Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, Kent emphasizes rhetorical phenomenology, and like most experiences in other aspects of life, rhetorical encounters do not produce a self-fulfilling prophecy, something that calls a particular truth into
existence. By contrast, Kent’s theory builds on probabilities, assumes that the realm of social and ideological life--like the realm of physical reality--will function roughly the same tomorrow as it does today. This basic assumption allows interlocutors to begin with some sense of how to create a meaningful exchange, but it does not lead them to believe they can now (or ever) communicate faultlessly or without investment. Effective interlocutors operate as experience would seem to dictate: they learn from past discursive encounters precisely because they have engaged in them, made it through them intact. Were this not true, a person’s use of discourse could never progress beyond the most elementary levels. It would be as if everyone were eternally four years old, forever inexperienced in the creation and reception of meaning. The ability of so many people to communicate daily about everything from quantum physics to the weather would not be possible if communication’s contextual imperative were equivalent to starting from absolute scratch. Interlocutors do not have to reinvent the discursive wheel as much as continuously reconsider the uses to which discourse has been or is being put.

If Kent rightly agitates for a less formulaic narrative of communication, then stylistics and other rhetorics can only be more effective by being less prescriptive. Their practitioners must think about them in ways that reflect lived experience rather than what they believe ought or should happen. But taking a nuanced view of discourse is not the same as teasing out the finest complexities of language-in-use. Stylistics taps the pragmatic potential of one’s (self-)awareness about and use of writing, taps it more influentially than is usually thought, even by rhetoric’s strongest proponents. Building on the work of those like Kent and philosopher Donald Davidson, I propose that *elocutio*’s capacity to describe writing/speech depends on taking a rhetorical stance adequate and appropriate to any given context. I turn to the work of Isocrates, Cicero, Jeanne Fahnestock, and others to reveal why stylistics must be approached as an enabling and architectonic *way of thinking*. Using these authors’ ideas to theorize style’s place within
(post)modern rhetoric-composition, I recover a multitude of opportunities that have lain dormant for far too long. Two-and-one-half millennia after rhetoric was first formalized, there are few answers to even the most basic of questions about style’s relationship to discourse. What is the canon’s distinctive role in understanding discourse creation and reception better? How might stylistics allow scholars and teachers to analyze discursive exchanges more accurately and to produce discourse more effectively? How might it help all language users write more effectively and grasp more strongly the process(es) behind doing so?

Rhetoric is not and should not always be baldly practical-cum-pedagogical. Theorizing is not inherently impractical, nor does it circumvent rhetoric-composition’s (stereo)typical imperatives:

> [c]ompositionists who see the field in terms of a simple practice/theory binary in which practice must be privileged are misguided. [. . . ] Theory does not necessarily have to inform pedagogy. The anti-intellectual positions that find theory useless unless it leads directly to classroom application deny a responsibility to the field. (Dobrin, *Constructing* 28)

Pedagogical or not, however, theorizing should make social and material concerns more manageable. If a pragmatic stylistics envisions what discourse is and how it functions, its vision may also (re)produce social/material effects in the world. Pragmatic stylistics does not amount to an idealization designed solely for students’ consumption, as no teacher or scholar of composition can fulfill his role without the awareness Dobrin describes. Scholars, writers, and teachers must understand not only the theorizing that underlies their own writing but also those attitudes enacted in their other practices. Rhetoric’s intellectual position requires flexibility as well as insight and a concern for utility—a flexibility that invites stylistic retrofitting. Tradition need not bind rhetoric, rather rhetoric ought to be “made conscious” of its own tradition through stylistics and other methodologies. If compositionists assume that discursive awareness comes through experience, through writing-as-enactment, they (like all students of language) must rely on their own experiences as well as the practices of those who have preceded them. While precedents cannot teach effective communication, they can broaden language users’ understanding of what it
means to communicate and why it is important to understand meaning-making in the first place. To communicate effectively is simultaneously to be within the moment of discursive exchange and to think as if outside that same moment. When facing the demands of language, writers must take advantage of the ironic tension among multiple practices and approaches. I say ironic because, as the philosopher Fernand Hallyn would have it,

\[
\text{[t]he interplay between statements about objects and reflection about those statements as objects is ambiguous. The subject is placed in a transcendent position with respect to his discourse, but only to deny the possibility of making himself the guarantor of transcendence. (Poetic Structure of the World 22)}
\]

Again, the disjunction between doing and believing, between words and likely responses to them, is the necessary catalyst for meaning(-making). Frustrating and chaotic, language-in-use refuses idealization and the transcendence thereby promised.

Beyond conversations about theory and practice, dealing in probabilities and extrapolation also leaves writers caught between the material and social conditions of the present and the contingencies of the future. This additional tension does not separate writers from rhetorical thinking, though other disciplines and fields of inquiry are viable without explicit rhetorical intervention. There are multiple distinct but equally productive means for making and expressing meaning. And yet rhetoric is interdisciplinary to the degree that other disciplines are language dependent. Whether inside or outside the academy, rhetoric can and does reveal something about people’s discursive interactions (and about the people themselves in their role as users of language). From physics to advertising, retail sales to medicine, stylistic rhetoric in particular serves as a complement rather than a sovereign. As the art of using language well, rhetoric is really no different from biology, for example, which shares some particular areas of interest with medicine and with chemistry. Disciplinary interrelationships do not threaten the fields involved; it is only through these convergences that disciplines exist at all. To be sure, specialization depends on one’s ability to recognize distinctions between various forms of knowledge/meaning creation.
Such distinctions are only possible, however, when there is some criterion by which to judge. In this case, the con/disjunction among fields of inquiry determines how the practitioners in a given field see themselves and others. All disciplines carry on discursive skirmishes over areas of influence. The criterion for judgment is not immutable but rather situational, determined through exigencies and “manufactured” conditions—shaped within disciplines by practitioners and shaped without by those in other disciplines who check forays that go too far afield. In short, all disciplines depend on a pragmatic rhetoric to define themselves and others.

Because there are multiple interpretive positions available for engaging any object or event, every discipline shares something of concern with some other(s). Astrophysics exists in large part because astronomy and physics share a particularly expansive set of concerns. Philosophy and rhetoric(-composition), as another example, often study discourse in similar ways. Their interpretive frameworks are not in direct conflict simply because they are relegated to different academic departments. They share a common object, one they each describe differently. Indeed, this relationship indicates just what should be at the center of inquiry in all disciplines—objects, people, and events. Stylistic rhetoric allows all writers to contemplate how history, psychology, and other disciplines manipulate writing to produce meaningful communication. By understanding rhetoric-composition’s relationship to other disciplines, compositionists also better understand the field’s relationship to discursive limitation, which determines what can be expressed or accepted within the field—something of special concern to post-process scholars and others like myself. At their best the modern sciences manage to compensate for inherent limitation by continuously retheorizing and reapplying the knowledge they create; that is, by continuously retrofitting their practices (including theorizing) as they go forward. A similar opportunity awaits rhetoric-composition if it exploits stylistic rhetoric as fully as it should. Classical rhetoric has struggled to escape that formalist stigma which makes it seem both reductive and, as a direct result, “grossly expedient.” Likewise, style—even as seen by those who view rhetoric as a force for positive
change—has usually been an ornament (ornatio), an enticing afterthought. The sophists, Cicero and Quintilian saw style as the means for making words accessible and somehow more than themselves. It is true that style was considered the avenue by which great poets and orators separated themselves from the vast majority. And it is true that the grand style was a classical sign of taste and decorum, of wisdom and learning. But even so, ornamentation was only one of the values attached to style.

Both the general qualities of elocutio—correctness, clarity, appropriateness, and ornamentation—and the individual figures were envisioned as accomplishing work in the world. And I explore this labor by taking figures as, what Fahnestock calls, “epitomes” of argument and meaning-making (Rhetorical Figures in Science 24). My project conceives of style as a collection of discursive strategies that, again in Fahnestock’s view, “iconically” represent larger patterns of thought (23).20 As the centuries have passed, however, style has been so reified—the appropriators of metaphor are especially guilty of literary fetishism—as to become synecdochally confused with ornamentation alone. For instance, many in English studies have judged figures like metaphor, simile, personification or prosopopoeia, and allegory as purely literary. Treating figures as precious curiosities has done nothing but harm rhetoric’s case as both a pragmatic art and a theoretical inquiry. Style-based pedagogies should especially encourage students to apply and investigate stylistic techniques self-consciously. Theorizing provides for more than figures qua artifacts, with only the vaguest function attached.

Especially when imported into writing classrooms, later visions of stylistics have foolishly assumed that the third canon has no concern for accomplishing real work in the world or for recognizing how words shape and influence people as well as objects or events.21 The rhetoricians and other scholars whom I cite were effective writers and stylists, first and foremost among their peers. Whatever their purpose(s), these writers used discursive strategies to accomplish their goals.
Style offered them a storehouse of strategies that could be deployed as necessary or appropriate. From this position, metaphor--from the Greek for “transference”--is not about “vividness” or “imaginative detail.” It is instead one way a writer may come to terms with one concept through another and, having done so, make her understanding accessible to an audience with (the potential for) similar interests and/or concerns. Redefining stylistic techniques as strategies rather than formalisms enables their potential for generating meaning and developing relationships among ideas. Stylistic strategies make meaning itself possible by engaging readers through the patterns of language and language use that all interlocutors require. Encouraging writers to harness these patterns, to accept their functionality, can only leave rhetoric-composition stronger and better able to account for what writing does, not simply what it is.

Discursive understanding best begins with an investigation of compositionists' earliest predecessors. Scholars and teachers of writing need not cast themselves as the epigones of Isocrates or Cicero to find enduring stylistic value in each thinker's work, and in chapter 2 I illustrate how this exploration might begin. Through the writing--and to a lesser degree, the theorizing--of Isocrates and Gorgias, I uncover the stylistic relationship between writerly affect and audience effect, particularly as they work against traditional separations of thought, form, and function. A pragmatic stylistics flowers when writers and readers believe in its ability to shape word and world equally, and these Greek rhetoricians did more than anyone since them to ensure this equality. Demetrius' On Style engages the debate between dominant--that is, Platonic and Aristotelian--rhetorics and sophistic alternatives. Demetrius resolves the perceived schism between sophistic, custom-based rhetorics and the institutionalized theorizing of Cicero and Quintilian. Demetrius also provides valuable opportunities for reflecting on the stylistics precisely because he is himself caught in the double bind of treating discourse as simultaneously a tool and a phenomenon. The Romans Cicero and Quintilian occupied a distinctly different sociocultural milieu than their Greek forebears, but like them, these two rhetoricians explicated the fundamental
relationships that make discursive interaction possible and more powerful than strict thought/form/function separations admit. Customs and social laws (*nomoi*) ensure that their stylistic rhetoric—one promising awareness of and control over words—produces more than finely tuned utterances fit for ornamental occasions. The chapter concludes with a review of three modern scholars of rhetoric and writing who carry the classical tradition into the twentieth century without forsaking either the former’s currents or the latter’s unique needs and demands. Corbett, Richard M. Weaver, and Richard A. Lanham place stylistics at the heart of a robust rhetoric of people and ideas, and in their own writing and theorizing, these three authors exemplify the best of rhetoric-composition as a *writerly* endeavor.

Chapter 3 continues tracing pragmatic stylistic currents into the twentieth century and through the work of Kenneth Burke, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Fahnestock. Burke’s argument that form is psychology and that consubstantiation—writers and readers’ being of one mind and one stance—drives rhetoric lays the final piece of my stylistics’ foundation. In Burke’s hands the intertwining of thought-form-function becomes a phenomenon over which writers exercise some control and through which the world and others may be understood. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca pursue Burke’s narrative to its conclusion: rhetorical strategies produce audience adherence in ways that matter as much to argumentation as to descriptive, expository, or other "modes" of discourse—what Mikhail Bakhtin would have defined as dialogic speech genres. By advocating argument’s necessary reliance on rhetorical psychology, they prepare the way for Fahnestock and others who suggest that rhetoric *is* the source of logical/scientific argument’s power. Rather than a pale substitute for dialectic, stylistic rhetoric accesses the generative and organizational fuel for scientists, not simply for other practitioners in other disciplines. Fahnestock’s conclusion, then, permits me to investigate the narratives compositionists themselves have constructed and to determine whether it is possible, through such narratives, to be idealistic about the power of stylistic rhetoric without *idealizing* it as the be-all, end-all of people’s lives.
Brief consideration of the commentaries of Kent, Jarratt, and Victor J. Vitanza indicates that stylistic rhetoric can support a self-aware narrative, one that accepts rhetorical limitations and leverages them to create dialogic pedagogies--teacher-student investigations of writerly authority, of who has the right to speak and to be heard--and to make rhetorical practices more responsive to the human and material needs of writers.

Chapter 4 underwrites the conclusions reached in the final section of chapter 3 by detailing the outcomes of a stylistic rhetoric-cum-pedagogy in writing classrooms, especially the generative and organizational power of stylistic strategies and the authority that this power provides student-writers as they make choices about their words' interaction with the world. Through my analyses of invention's and arrangement's stylistic underpinnings, I also explore the pragmatic power of style in texts by authors as diverse as Virginia Woolf, Richard Rodriguez, and two of my own students. Each of these texts distinctively enacts style's core principles. All four texts also hint that regardless of a writer's stance, situation or audience, stylistic strategies inevitably inform writing that strives for full effectiveness. Woolf's rhetorical questions, when paired with a student-writer's use of questions to investigate her own attitudes about writing, illustrate that discourse can be deployed in self-generating and/or self-sustaining ways. And Rodriguez's and another student-writer's section headings may differ according to the patterns they enact, but both writers effectively arrange their texts by matching those patterns to the meanings they express. I conclude with four general principles that help teachers and students of writing work through discourse toward authority, an authority drawing on style's inventionsional and organizational qualities and maintained through the (self-)conscious choices that writers confront. If style is taken as an optimistic (but not idealizing) habit of mind, involving multiples practices as they play out in every kind of writing, then it becomes much easier for compositionists and others to teach and theorize rhetoric's principles and possibilities.
Chapter 5 tests the potentials exemplified in chapter 4 by confronting the paralogical work of Davidson and Kent. By insinuating myself into the apparent disjunctions between stylistics and this antifoundational approach to discourse, I provide my readers and myself with a wider horizon for understanding rhetoric-composition in the twenty-first century. By retrofitting my stylistics to enhance paralogy’s key concepts—an externalist episteme, triangulation, the principle of charity, and prior/passing theories—I take the final step toward a pragmatic stylistics that meets the needs and expectations of compositionists who have turned, willingly or unwillingly, to other methodologies and other disciplines for help or inspiration. Stylistics may be a means for both theorizing and enacting discourse, but I open it to the hermeneutics on which Kent and Davidson rely in order work with/through the postmodern assumptions most scholars now have about meaning’s stability and/or origins. All theorizing and enactment is interpretive, depending on a writer’s awareness of past experiences and outcomes, and one’s use of stylistic strategies in textual creation/reception should acknowledge that situation. Similarly, paralogy grounds meaning and truth in the interaction between interlocutors and their shared context and in the preconceptions those language users bring to a given exchange—again, something not unlike Bakhtin’s formulation of speech genres. This response to the search for objective or absolute truth has consistently gained ground in the last thirty years, and if accurate, it only strengthens the case for interlocutors’ reliance on the discursive patterns and strategies I value so highly.

Finally then, my appendix provides an overview of my own teaching practices and the kinds of assignments with which my student-writers actually engage. These assignments are not static configurations; I rewrite them every semester with an eye toward the particular student-writers in my classes and the needs of our mutual situation. They do indicate what stylistics can help student-writers accomplish, however, and their ability to serve as effective pedagogical tools stems from the questions they encourage, not their ability to control discussion or to elicit a single or univocal response. Most of the assignments contain more questions than any writer could adequately
explore in the time allotted—whether that be fifteen minutes in class or two weeks in class and at home—precisely because I want student-writers to approach questions of strategy and choice from whichever direction they are most comfortable and to accept that there is no single way to formulate responses to a writer's textual enactments or readers' responses to them. Student-writers are not graded on their responses in class or even the longer response papers they do once a week. Rather I focus on their writing as an opportunity to create individualized dialogues about what they see writing doing to/for them and why they might pursue these questions and ideas as they have. Some readers will find this last section less satisfying or important than the theorizing and analysis found in chapters 2 through 5, but it is these assignments and the hundreds of student-writers who have engaged with them that make such theorizing and analysis possible.

This project would not exist without the many, many things I have learned by working with student-writers, and through my dialogue with them, I have come to appreciate much more fully how savvy they are as writers and users of language. They know and can come to understand much more about writing itself than most scholars and teachers might give them credit for, and I have learned more than anything that respecting their prior discursive knowledge and ability to tackle tough questions about writing matters more than searching for some other subject(s) to pique their interests. They know their own investment in writing and discourse more generally. What troubles most of them is the feeling that they have no real choice in how words work or how people respond to the words they use. Although it was Peter Elbow who argued that teachers should encourage students to write with power, it was the sophists and the Romans who made that idea one worth pursuing. These classical rhetoricians were also much more savvy than popular belief might suggest, and it is in their theorizing and more especially their own writing that one finds the first hints that style and stylistic strategies can not only pattern language/language use but also shape writers' and readers' responses to the situations in which they find themselves. In the next chapter, I begin my stylistic retrofitting by exploring exactly what it is that writers can do to empower
themselves through discursive enactment and what scholars and teachers can learn from retracing
the currents that flow from Isocrates, Gorgias, and the other antecedents of contemporary
compositionists.

Notes

1 Rhetorical memory and delivery are not central to my investigation, but both canons’
perceived usefulness can be increased by a more rigorous approach to stylistic rhetoric. Although
memory originally referred to one’s ability to memorize the text of a speech for later oral
presentation, in a textual (and electronic) age it might be more accurately taken as the textual
medium itself. Rather than replacing memory as a rhetorical concern, written texts transform
writers’ and readers’ concept of what can or should be remembered. In short, texts become
contextually specific “memories” serving various purposes. Likewise, delivery in the twenty-first
century might be applied to a text’s physical presentation—its design and layout, for example—
rather than a speaker’s gestures or tone of voice. This formulation accounts for classical delivery’s
emphasis on the performative nature of discourse without ignoring the tangible differences
between the spoken and written word. For a detailed investigation of the fourth and fifth canons,
the interested reader should consult Kathleen E. Welch’s The Contemporary Reception of Classical
Rhetoric.

2 Throughout this project I refer to all rhetorical tropes (“deviations” in ordinary meaning)
and rhetorical schemes (“deviations” in ordinary word order) as “strategies” unless the context
demands some other means of classification. While tropes and schemes are normally formulated as
textual or poetic features, I argue their rhetorical value depends as much on their functionality as
their formal characteristics. When theorizing style for prose writers, a refusal to rely on binary
oppositions—like form and content or form and function—allows one both to conceive of and to
employ figures as strategies for effective communication. That is, a non-categorical treatment of
figures reveals possibilities for writerly choice and control that are too often ignored or incorrectly
taken as a result of sheer experience with writing.

3 Along with Brenda Deen Schildgen, Thomas Kent and others, I recognize that “current
composition theory and practice are engaged in realigning philosophy and rhetoric because
composition defines rhetoric to include both production and interpretation of texts” (“Reconnecting
Rhetoric and Philosophy” 30). Consequently, in this instance and throughout my investigation, I
take rhetoric to mean the theorizing and/or enactment of textual creation and textual reception.
Similarly, discourse refers to motivated language, or rather language-in-use, regardless of who
(writer or reader) is putting it to use.

4 While it does not provide definitive evidence, an informal survey of articles from the
Journal of Advanced Composition (now JAC) does suggest declining interest in the third canon of
rhetoric, even in advanced writing courses and especially with the rise of cultural studies. In the
journal’s first four numbers (appearing from 1980 to 1982), some nine of forty-nine articles
focused on style/stylistics; only three of those same essays directly addressed cultural criticism or
another postmodern methodology. By contrast the four numbers published in 1999 featured two (of
twenty-six) essays on style-related topics and fourteen on postmodern subjects.

5 Those interested in the writing process movement will have to turn to individual
practitioners for a sense of what the movement was/is all about. Although there is no definitive
overview of the movement’s historical development, one exemplary text is Ruth E. Ray’s The
Practice of Theory (NCTE, 1993). Commentary on and analysis of recent postmodern and
liberatory trends can be found in Fitts and France’s *Left Margins* (SUNY, 1995), Harkin and Schilb’s *Contending with Words*, and Sidney I. Dobrin’s *Constructing Knowledges*.

6 Anne Ruggles Gere attributes the field’s difficulties in such instances as I describe to misguided attempts at “bridge building,” which as “one of two frequent descriptions for interdisciplinary relations, denotes simple appropriations in which the boundaries of both disciplines remain undisturbed” (Introduction 1). She asserts an alternative, and imminently postmodern, “restructuring” of interdisciplinarity because “[r]estructuring connotes radical realignments and a critique of the disciplines being restructured, and it suggests that change, disruption, and even challenges to prevailing knowledge emerge from interdisciplinary relations” (1).

In describing the process by which so-called radical theories are implemented in the classroom, James J. Sosnoski supports a similar (metaphorical) treatment of the field’s practices and the institutions with which they interact:

rather than tear down old buildings to make way for new ones, I advocate rebuilding them entirely, piece by piece, in a local and ad hoc manner, starting with windows, doors, and stairways linking rooms and creating paths. If remodeling persists, at some point it becomes rebuilding. (“Postmodern Teachers in Their Postmodern Classrooms” 200)

7 Terry Eagleton’s formulation of cultural studies and its historical precedents sounds surprisingly like the stylistic project I support in these pages:

[w]hat would be specific to the kind of study I have in mind [...] would be its concern for the kinds of effects which discourses produce, and how they produce them. Reading a zoology textbook to find out about giraffes is part of studying zoology, but reading it to see how its discourse is structured and organized, and examining what kinds of effects these forms and devices produce in particular readers in actual situations, is a different kind of project. It is, in fact, probably the oldest form of “literary criticism” in the world, known as rhetoric. (*Literary Theory: An Introduction* 205; emphasis in original)

8 The authors’ respective texts, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (Oxford UP, 1999) and *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, formulate rhetoric-composition in classical terms. Both texts intentionally avoid or interrogate so-called “current-traditional” pedagogies, though the latter makes more thorough use of the sophists and other rhetoricians beyond Aristotle.

9 Lee A. Jacobus’ *A World of Ideas*, now in its sixth edition, is an exception to the trend. This non-fiction anthology contains headnotes that focus on both the historical context and the stylistic strategies relevant to each text. Many of the reading and writing questions that follow the selected texts focus on the rhetorical strategies with which I am concerned. While this reader may not be the only one of its kind, it is a powerful example of what it means to focus on the stylistics of rhetoric, reading, and writing.

10 Two relatively recent articles on stylistics come to mind here. Jeffrey Walker’s “The Body of Persuasion” argues that “an enthymeme is [...] a figure--any figure--that connects an idea with reasons for believing it and that relies on its audience’s inferential powers” (63). Similarly, Ryan J. Stark’s “Clichés and Composition Theory” suggests that the cliché is “a commonplace figurative expression that secures an immediate connection with other participants in the ordinary discourse of a culture” (462). In these and other ways, both essays attempt the stylistic recuperation on which my own project is more broadly focused.

11 While by no means a monolithic approach to rhetoric, post-process theories typically assume that “(1) writing is public; (2) writing is interpretive; and (3) writing is situated” (Kent,
Introduction 1). More specifically, Kent's own paralogy, especially as described in Paralogic Rhetoric, builds on these assumptions by further positing that there is no repeatable process (read: series of steps) underlying language use. It instead focuses on the interpretative acts that allow interlocutors effectively to match their individual discourse strategies. Because these acts are only guesswork--no one can ever be inside someone else's head--they cannot be taught/learned in a systematic way. If accurate, this argument leaves writing teachers in a position unlike any they have faced before. As championed by Kent and others, post-process rhetoric forces compositionists to ask what they are to do, if not teach the writing process.

12 My statement overlooks the supposed split between theory and practice that has grown up in rhetoric-composition since the 1980s. Later in the chapter, however, I do touch on, and perhaps partially alleviate, the fears of those who see theorizing as necessarily sacrificing teaching. In point of fact, the tension between the two is not detrimental if it is taken as an opportunity for mutual critique.

13 Apropos style, because as I explain in a moment, style itself is a sort of linguistic and/or discursive retrofitting.

14 I rely partially on the principles of schema theory and cognitive science. Lakoff and Johnson, and others have long done work with discursive schema--much of it focused on metaphor. What most scholars tend to overlook is style's influence on all discursive patterning as well as the effects that such patterning creates. As I indicate later in this chapter, all figures can and do create meaning through their establishment and reinforcement of discursive patterns.

15 In the case of stylistic retrofitting, remodeling and rebuilding operate on both one's stance toward/through language and one's rhetorical enactments as shaped by that stance. In the moment of communication, there is no necessary distinction between the two: one's enactment is the material manifestation of one's stance. As I illustrate in chapters 2 and 3, changes in one's words represent changes in one's understanding.

16 I am referring here to projects such as Lakoff and Johnson's Metaphors We Live By (U of Chicago P, 1980) and Kurt Spellmeyer's Common Ground (Prentice, 1993) that have been almost excessively (and surely obsessively) emulated. While this groundswell does not diminish the value of their work, it does suggest that other kinds of scholarship are still needed. This is not to say, however, that pragmatic usefulness should be sacrificed for innovation's sake.

Furthermore, some preliminary work has been done that makes projects like mine more likely to succeed. For example, in Rereading the Sophists, Susan C. Jarratt reconsiders sophistic rhetorics and their usefulness to both composition studies and feminist criticism. And yet, more time can and should be spent with the various strategies she explores. How might her analysis and conclusions apply to discourse creation and reception at other levels, stylistic and otherwise? Why might such work not only strengthen her conclusions but also the stylistics I advocate here? Such questions are still unanswered.

17 I emphasize this point of contention only to indicate how strongly I wish to avoid being seen as anti-theory. Which label most rightfully belongs to those responsible for what Dobrin describes as "the creeping anti-intellectualism that now surrounds discussions of the academy" (Constructing Knowledges 16). For what I hope are obvious reasons, I want no association, implicit or explicit, with such debilitating attitudes.

18 Rhetoric's future has nothing to do with being the institutional King of the (English studies) Hill. Regardless of everything else, it should not be in the business of cannibalizing its fellows, profiting at their expense. Such cannibalism goes against rhetoric's commitment to the building of productive debate, to the placing of words in a complex and very special relationship
with the material world. However, in order to remain thus committed, it must play a *central* role within both rhetoric-composition and the academy at large.

19 This may appear reductive, but chapter 4 illustrates the central dynamic within rhetoric as I see it. I argue that the nature and potential effects of stylistic strategies make them easier to deploy but harder to control than any formalist approach might allow.

20 My project is both based on and in pursuit of Fahnestock’s definition of schemes and tropes as “the formal embodiments of certain ideational or persuasive functions” (23). My final goal is to theorize figuration, and style more generally, as a network of discursive strategies compatible with current post-process theories. To that end I employ any and all rhetorical, prosodic, and linguistic principles necessary to center stylistics within rhetoric-composition. The different uses to which language is put, not the categories into which it can be put, are of primary concern.

21 Perhaps the most telling definition of rhetoric is Phillip K. Tompkins’, which frames rhetoric as the “adjusting of ideas to people and of people to ideas” (“The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works” 431). Indeed, it would be difficult to accept Fahnestock’s description (in note 20 above) or much of paralogic theory without assuming that mutual adjustment is at work in all discursive exchanges.
[M]en are born rhetoricians, though some are born small ones and others greater, and some cultivate the native gift by study and training, whereas some neglect it. Men are such because they are born into history, with an endowment of passion and a sense of the ought. There is ever some discrepancy, however slight, between the situation man is in and the situation he would like to realize. His life is therefore characterized by movement toward goals. It is largely the power of rhetoric which influences and governs that movement. (Richard M. Weaver, “Language Is Sermonic” 221)

As the previous chapter suggests, style’s relationship to discourse begs the question of whether one can say anything about motivated language without resorting to stylistic principles. Far from an unneeded complexity, this codependency could potentially guide contemporary scholars in culling out the cornerstones of a thoroughly robust stylistics—and a consequently more effective rhetoric. The retrofitting of rhetoric by way of the third canon is therefore as much a rebuilding of the discipline as a reconsideration of elocutio per se. At a moment when the term “rhetoric-composition” is perhaps all that binds the field’s disparate interests together, a pragmatic stylistics promises a stable purpose with both its study and its enactment of effective discourse. What the discipline pursues and how it goes about such work are still debated in a way that surprises or frustrates more than a few. To be sure, the battle over rhetoric has been waged almost constantly since Isocrates and Aristotle, but no matter how clouded the field of engagement, there was never a doubt that the argument was over methods, not materials. Discourse of one kind or another has always been central to rhetorical studies. It is only on the cusp of the twenty-first century that rhetoric-composition finds itself moving away from textual practices. With the rising arc of cultural studies, radical pedagogies and consciousness-raising, the discipline more than ever mistakes circumference for center. A pragmatic stylistics can reassert that center without ignoring the gains made through post-process and postmodern methodologies.
Because tradition is itself a historical burden, any field of inquiry as old as rhetoric inevitably carries intellectual and cultural baggage. With respect to style’s part in discourse creation and reception, the burden’s size varies according to who describes the canon. During the Renaissance, for example, Peter Ramus was so disdainful of style that he isolated it from *inventio* and *dispositio*, which he felt belonged under the auspices of dialectic.\(^1\) It was better, he argued, that *elocutio* and its oral equivalent (*actio*) be the sole province of rhetoric, for discourse’s primary function was to evaluate the rational and certain, not to express the emotional and probable. Through the intervening centuries, some have spoken of “empty rhetoric” or “political rhetoric.” Because these phrases reflect attitudes that tie the canon to certain Ramistic stereotypes, they ensure a taint, an implicit argument that style is *never* substantive. Arguments for style’s superficiality, in every sense of the word, quickly follow.

Others have variously labeled stylistic practices as formal afterthoughts, as localized textual artifacts, or even as literary concerns, not appropriate for the writing classroom. These approaches to style produce widely divergent results within academia: linguists’ attempts to measure stylistic strategies quantitatively—as in type/token ratios (TTR’s) or metric typologies; composition handbooks’ acontextual demands for “clarity” or “appropriateness”; and modern literary criticism’s obsession with hunting for symbols. (See Thomas A. Sebeok for a representative sampling of these practices.) In each case the end result is a fetishizing of style, the objectification of a discursive *phenomenon.*\(^2\) These objectifying practices almost always produce a deep skepticism about *elocutio*’s genuineness (a question of ethics) and legitimacy (a question of epistemology). Once again, the third canon is taken to be “empty,” less compelling than invention or arrangement.

This chapter addresses (mis)perceptions of style by focusing on an alternative pragmatic stylistics, a viable response to the Aristotelian-*cum*-Platonic tradition that has produced most of the
received stereotypes. Rather than challenge these distortions directly, it is better perhaps to explore style's ability to engender more than conventional textual practices have historically allowed. How might the canon's persistent, but often marginal, existence suggest a rhetorical foundation that moves beyond traditional mischaracterizations? How might the canon's supposed weaknesses become strengths, motivating forces for current work in stylistic rhetoric? The arguments against style's substantiveness are not nearly as damaging when seen as counterpoints, as sites of productive tension for the work currently under way within rhetoric-composition and other fields. From that tension have already come recent investigations of tropes and schemes as discursive strategies and patterns of thought. And from that tension can come further investigations into what style is and does and, more importantly, into why its supposed nature and discursive functions inevitably elicit such criticism and condemnation.

Rather than attack those who would declaim style's micromanagement of words, mechanical application of rules, or time-worn ideas, rhetoricians have begun to (re)establish successfully the canon's relevance and influence by proving its usefulness in a broad array of intellectual endeavors. One only need look to recent projects in science and rhetoric, historiography and cultural studies, and technology and rhetoric for contemporary evidence. Lakoff and Johnson, and Mark Turner have long been working with the cognitive aspects of metaphor, analogy, and other discursive symbol systems.3 Fahnestock's treatment of figures as argumentative exemplars pushes scientists and rhetoricians alike to reconsider the canon's purpose and function within purportedly objective (read: arhetorical) discourses. And Jarrett's investigation of the sophists and their use of schemes as organizing principles suggests a style much broader than its traditional canonical boundaries. By changing what they do and how they do it, some rhetoricians are already establishing a positive counter-image for the third canon.
The current project assumes that discursive retrofitting is the primary function of all stylistic strategies. Whether that retrofitting is invoked or occurs "naturally," it does occur and must be accounted for in any full recuperation of style. While my application of the term is unusual, its unnamed presence is concomitant with the advent of rhetorical theory itself. Four of the most important ancient rhetoricians—Gorgias, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian—engaged style on similar terms. As sophists, Gorgias and Isocrates saw the canon as an inherently practical endeavor, an enactment of their discursive theories. They were first and foremost teachers, writers, and speakers, and it is their textual performances that best support the spirit of this work. Cicero and Quintilian, who were effective rhetors in their own rights, draw heavily on Isocrates in developing their rhetorical apparatuses and formalize a cohesive system from the largely practical matter of elocutio. Only the post-classical mutalist tradition, the influence of Ramistic and elocutionary rhetorics, and the co-option of style by modern literary studies make these relationships difficult to see now. By circumventing the intervening authors and theories, one can more easily understand the ties that bind these influential thinkers. A fifth rhetorician, the largely ignored Demetrius, serves to both connect and expand on the other four I mention. Caught in the historical forces of the second century BCE, Demetrius and his treatise on style are a hybrid of Aristotelian and sophistic thought. Because of its hybridity, it suggests one effective way to engage the dominant tradition that until recently had all but swallowed Isocrates and other non-canonical rhetoricians, to engage it without oneself being swallowed. While these five writers hardly represent a monolithic tradition, they do provide necessary points of access to stylistic rhetoric's most dynamic currents.

The coming pages chart those currents' ebb and flow in preparation for the stylistic pedagogy developed in my remaining chapters. But while that survey will be roughly chronological, the informing principle behind it is more complex. In tracing style's history, one should not overlook the ever-continuing erasure of dichotomies between thought and language, form and content, meaning and function. Rather than relying on the mere reversal of long-standing
binary oppositions, the five authors I name assume that content is form. Rather than accepting the usual categories for describing language as fixed or mutually exclusive, they engage in practices that undermine any distinctions or oppositions. Their work eventually forces one to ask whether the intellectual exercise of separating thought from language is possible, much less practicable. Their ideas also lay the groundwork for a stylistics which not only valorizes discursive retrofitting but also demonstrates the third canon’s extensive influence on language use. If thought and language are one and the same, then it becomes difficult to posit style as purely ornamental or mechanistic. And it becomes equally challenging to claim that the culling and arrangement of ideas can occur in separation from their means of expression.

The reader will further note that the present chapter actively works around the roles of Aristotle and Plato—or more accurately, their manifold interpreters and devotees—in the formation of style. That detour is my conscious attempt to produce a rhetoric squarely centered on stylistic practices. The dominance of these two traditions (and their many distinctive permutations) has often prevented elocutio from being viewed as anything more than afterthought, or rhetoric as encompassing more than invention and/or arrangement. Scholars’ current recuperation of the sophistic tradition is a boon in this respect, as it provides a counter-narrative and allows for precisely the turn rhetoric-composition must take in the coming years. Furthermore, it is not difficult to see the authors considered here (especially Isocrates and Gorgias) as noticeably (post)modern in their practices. Much of what they say and do should seem strangely familiar to readers, and their presence puts my project largely in tune with current thought, allowing for a style which is decidedly pragmatic in its outlines and functions. It is no surprise that Jarratt and Kent have turned to the sophists in (re)considering historiography, feminist writing/criticism, liberatory pedagogies, and the philosophy of language. Using the sophists to fully uncover rhetoric’s development is akin to fully understanding the positions presently being (re)adopted by
some compositionists. The sophists' rhetorical practices allow rhetoric-composition to see itself in a way that may never again be possible. In the most crucial of ways, these rhetoricians clearly saw the present long before it learned to see them.

**Isocrates: Thought, Affect, World**

Isocrates (436-338 BCE) is arguably the father of Western educational practices, if not of rhetoric. His pedagogical theories have influenced the teaching of the liberal arts and rhetoric from his time forward—most notably through their later adaptation by Cicero and Quintilian—and like many current compositionists, he often blurred any formal distinctions between rhetoric and pedagogy. For him, both concepts were attempts to deploy thought in the material world by accentuating the connections among thought, word, and deed. From this collapse of categorical separations also comes the subordinate role he argued the teacher ought to play in one's education. In *Against the Sophists*, Isocrates ranked both natural talent and practical experience above the teaching of abstract rhetorical principles, and it is his forward-thinking pedagogy that most distinguishes him from his contemporaries. Prefiguring the current advocates of paralogic rhetoric and other post-process theories, he contended that while an abstract view of rhetoric is useful, it is not the deciding factor in a student's or rhetor's effectiveness. While many might take issue with his emphasis on innate discursive aptitude—cognitive psychology makes it clear that all human beings, barring some pathology or extraordinary circumstance, are capable of effective language use—his interest in pragmatic experience, in actually *using* language to improve one's facility with it, should seem comforting. More than practice for its own sake, or even *mimesis* (emulation or modeling), one finds the seeds of learning-by-doing, of *phronesis* (practical or applied wisdom) in Isocrates' own rhetorical enactments.

Isocrates relied so heavily on pragmatics because he understood that language-in-use is contextually dependent, that *kairos* (timeliness) is the foundation of effective rhetoric. While one's
teacher might provide a more sophisticated, more discursively aware audience, she cannot make
one an effective rhetor through general principles alone:

who does not know that the art of using letters remains fixed and unchanged, so that
we continually and invariably use the same letters for the same purposes, while exactly
the reverse is true of the art of discourse? For what has been said by one speaker is not
equally useful for the speaker who comes after him; on the contrary, he is most skilled
in this art who speaks in a manner worthy of his subject and yet is able to discover in it
topics which are nowise the same as those used by others. (Against the Sophists 48)\(^6\)

The sharp contrast drawn between grammar ("the art of using letters") and rhetoric ("the art of
discourse") indicates that rhetorical pedagogy should not be (mis)defined in terms of rules and
injunctions. The instruction he describes relies on neither artificial standards nor an idealized
model of communicative exchange. One’s words must suit the subject and the moment without
assuming that what worked previously will work yet again. Isocrates felt no shame in suggesting
that rhetoric is an ephemeral and unpredictable endeavor:

[for ability, whether in speech or any other activity, is found in those who are well
endowed by nature and have been schooled by practical experience. Formal training
makes such men more skillful and more resourceful in discovering the possibilities of
a subject; for it teaches them to take from a readier source the topics which they
otherwise hit upon in haphazard fashion. (Against 48; emphasis added)

Any drives toward absolute consistency—especially when communication is so often chaotic—
would defeat the purpose of rhetorical training. It would turn rhetoric into grammar, an art which
applies only poorly to meaning-making. Through conjunction (use of the word "and") Isocrates
yokes skill to resourcefulness, an experiential resourcefulness developed through discovery.
Discovery is not a process that can be taught, only encouraged—a necessity further compounded by
rhetoric’s focus on possibility. To understand and use the material that discourse uniquely
involves, one must be willing to struggle with probabilities rather than truths.

In The Practice of Theory, Michael Bernard-Donals uses Aristotle’s formulation of
phronesis—best defined in the Nicomachean Ethics—to investigate materialist rhetoric’s
relationship to kairos (42, ff.). Whereas episteme draws on empirical knowledge and techne
consists of skill or craft, phronesis synthesizes the two. Practical wisdom accounts for learning
over time, for (re)discovering one's prior experiences as future tools. Just as the scientific method asks one to assume that hypotheses are only as good as their next test, *phronesis* asks interlocutors to learn from past attempts at (mis)communication. In *Against the Sophists*, one sees hints of Isocrates' own assumption that *style* allows such practical wisdom to be discursively enacted:

> to choose from these elements those which should be employed for each subject, to join them together, to arrange them properly, and also, not to miss what the occasion demands but appropriately to adorn the whole speech with striking thoughts and to clothe it in flowing and melodious phrase—these things, I hold, require much study and are the task of a vigorous and imaginative mind: for this, the student must not only have the requisite aptitude but he must learn the different kinds of discourse and practice himself in their use; and the teacher, for his part, must so expound the principles of the art with the utmost possible exactness as to leave out nothing that can be taught, and, for the rest, he must in himself set such an example of oratory that the students who have taken form under his instruction and are able to pattern after him will, from the outset, show in their speaking a degree of grace and charm which is not found in others. (48-49)

Thus, style becomes integral "not to miss what the occasion demands." Stylistic choices shape the pragmatic process that (retro)fits thoughts/words—here combined within the term "elements"—to context. Although Isocrates uses the typical formalist phrasing ("adorn" and "clothe") to describe the third canon, it is said to aid the rhetor in *not missing* (read: of taking advantage of) the kairotic demands of any discursive occasion. Moreover, and no different from invention or arrangement, style "require[s] much study and [is] the task of a vigorous and imaginative mind." "[T]hese things," not one or two canons but *all*, are referentially joined.

As the passage progresses, its emphasis is not "the principles of the art" but rather the rhetor's ability to act in the world ("practice himself in their use," "show in their speaking"). Isocrates' commentary culminates in the establishment of an *active* rhetoric; that is, rhetorical power or forcefulness seems precisely the concept Isocrates has been working toward. 8

Stylistically, the text reveals as much. Readers will note the *enumeratio* (catalog or list) that resolves itself into the (here) m-dashed comment on which I have already remarked. From this climax grows another list of sorts—a recitation of qualities associated with teaching/learning.
Again, this list makes its way toward a climactic (and larger) point. The patterned movement of the entire passage works on readers’ attitudes about rhetoric. Through his climactic push, Isocrates constructs a case from several implicit propositions, the sort normally associated with the enthymeme. Indeed, the construction’s effectiveness is neither surprising nor unfamiliar. In “The Body of Persuasion,” Walker defines Isocrates’ approach to rhetorical argument, indicating that for Isocrates “an enthymeme is [...] a figure—any figure—that connects an idea with reasons for believing it and that relies on its audience’s inferential powers” (63). Although a radical departure from Aristotle’s dialectical definition, the stylistic enthymeme clearly has a place among Isocrates’ rhetorical resources. Walker disrupts the formalist view of enthymememg by suggesting that depending on the rhetorical context, any stylistic strategy might serve as an enthymeme—form and function are dissolved into each other. Isocrates enacts this very principle in the present passage, and as a consequence, his climaxes evoke not simply a rhetorically forceful pattern but also a distinctive “logic”—ideas are selected and organized as well as expressed through his stylistic enactments.

While Isocrates’ enthymeme can be resolved into the activities individually mentioned (to practice and to show), the syntax employed makes one sharply aware that those activities are built on a broader foundation. The prose itself is a model for and an enactment of phronesis. Isocrates’ style allows him to bridge the gap between rhetorical principles and discursive practices at the very moment he is also enacting that crossover (through his syntactical and stylistic choices). Thought becomes language becomes action, with little to differentiate one from the others. A blurring for which there is again good reason. The Greek logos means not only “word,” “language,” and “discourse” but also “reason” and “thought process.” There is no discursive distinction between the mental faculty and its means of expression. It is only with the rise of the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions that one begins to see the emphasis being placed on reason-cum-rationality (as
in “logic”). The logos’ multivalency is what lends it its conceptual power, however, and Isocrates effectively emulates that breadth in his stylistic choices. Whether or not those choices were conscious or intentional, the result is the same reinforcement of Isocrates’ rhetorical theory.

As if to emphasize the importance of concept spawning stylistic effect, Isocrates begins his passage with “employed,” “adorn,” and “clothe” and ends with “exactness,” “form,” “example,” and “pattern.” When taken with thoughts and words—again, expressed as the single category “elements”—this complex of terms reveals two of discourse’s primary characteristics. First, thoughts/words have a shape, a form, a way of appearing, and that form (whatever it turns out to be) is manipulable, can be “employed,” used as “example,” provided as a “pattern.” Form-as-content can be shaped by the rhetor in the same way the student-as-rhetor is shaped by the instructor. Second, that these concepts are expressed as a single paratactical sentence accentuates both the manipulability and the integration of form, content, and function. It is quite “natural,” then, that Isocrates concludes the passage I cite by saying, “When all of these requisites are found together, then the devotees of philosophy will achieve complete success; but according as any one of the things I have mentioned is lacking, to this extent must their disciples of necessity fall below the mark” (Against 49; emphasis added). The pattern of oppositions Isocrates mobilizes (and articulates around the conjunction “but”) demarcates the line that rhetors must cross if they are to enact discourse effectively.

In Antidosis the same stylistic processes are at work, but one’s attention is specifically drawn to the effective rhetor’s awareness of logos in all its aspects. Defending the teaching of rhetoric against those—here typified by the character Lycidas—who would argue the art’s corrupting influence, Isocrates manages to push the unity of thought-language-function to its practical outcome. This outcome is described in some detail, and as one also sees in Against the Sophists, it assumes the form of phronetic integration, a retrofitting of the word to match its kairotic potential:
that
thinkers
prose
item
Isocrates
discursive
discrete
Furthermore,
are
later
individualize
enact
the
As
he
separable
categories.
He
has,
spends
some
researches
[45]
First of all, then, you should know that there are no fewer branches of composition in prose than in verse. For some men have devoted their lives to researches in the genealogies of the demi-gods; others have made studies in the poets; others have elected to compose histories of wars; while still others have occupied themselves with dialogue, and are called dialecticians. [46] It would, however, be no slight task to attempt to enumerate all the forms of prose, and I shall take up only that which is pertinent to me, and ignore the rest.

For there are men who, albeit they are not strangers to the branches which I have mentioned, have chosen rather to write discourses, not for private disputes, but which deal with the world of Hellas, with affairs of state, and are appropriate to be delivered at the Pan-Hellenic assemblies—discourses which, as everyone will agree, are more akin to works composed in rhythm and set to music than to the speeches which are made in court. (Antidosis; translator’s insertions)

Isocrates combines the stylistic praemolum (priamel) with his argument against the cataloging of prose and poetry according to genre.\(^{12}\) The priamel, a list that ends by dismissing all but the final item named, allows Isocrates to catalog various kinds of prose, in effect mimicking those other thinkers he will eventually dismiss and building a certain argumentative momentum. The list—along with the signposts “some,” “others,” “still others”—directs his audience to the larger, practical point he wants to make: effective prose is not defined by its subject matter or its explicit purpose but rather by its unique combination of form, content, and function. It is this combination that produces “works composed in rhythm and set to music,” discourse that engages the “assemblies” rather than some narrow few (“the court”).

As with the example I cite from Against the Sophists, this excerpt’s development and shape enact the relationship between form and content. While the semicolons in section forty-five do individualize the enumerated terms, the punctuation also joins them to the degree that, as Isocrates later suggests, they are all prose types. Consequently, both form and content imply that these types are less separable than they might appear. (Intellectual categories are not discursive realities.) Furthermore, the litotes (understatement) with which section forty-five ends—“it would be no slight task”—re-emphasizes Isocrates’ strong concern over the mechanical parsing of discourse into discrete categories. He has, after all, just spent the last several lines belaboring a few of the many discursive genres his contemporaries and predecessors have developed. (The repetition of words
like "some" and "others" lends significant semantic weight to these genres' great numbers.) His reason for criticism is revealed at the end of section forty-six, where the "private" and the "court" are juxtaposed against "the world" and "the assemblies." Through these oppositions, Isocrates can valorize an alternative attitude toward discourse as well as undermine what for many contemporaries would have seemed the more accurate view (as found in history, philosophy, forensic speeches, and so on). Discourse finds its home in the social relations established and maintained throughout the material world, not merely in one venue or for one constituency.

*Antidosis* develops, according to Welch, as "[a]n illuminating example of functionalism coexisting with theory and aesthetics in rhetoric" (*Contemporary* 116). Sections forty-five and forty-six fulfill the role of the enthymeme that Walker outlines. Here and elsewhere, "one can see Isocrates exploiting oppositions in a noninquisitorial way to motivate identification, or what Perelman calls 'adherence'" (Walker, "Body" 51). The lines between thought and language may not be clear, but their overall rhetorical force is clearly felt. Isocrates' concern for enacting phronetic and kairotic principles, for ensuring the full potential of *logos*, provides him with an argument as well as a means of communicative engagement. Through that double function, style enters the very fabric of his discourse. It is then truly at work--working through his argument, working on his audience.

**Gorgias: Ornament, Effect, Audience**

Beyond being historically supposed Isocrates' teacher and mentor, Gorgias (d. circa 376 BCE) is perhaps best known for his baroque style and the effects it produced in audiences. In the present instance, his importance comes less in the bombastic nature of his writing than in the ways his stylistic choices reinforce (1) the relationship between thought and language and (2) the importance of the tropes and schemes as rhetorical *strategies* that can be consciously enacted. While Isocrates' strength lies in his delineation and enactment of fundamental principles--his
concern over writerly affect—Gorgias is an exemplar of those principles taken to the audience, to those principles’ ultimate effects. Gorgias did not ignore the writerly dimensions of style, but his refusal to distinguish between logos and elocutio was most evident in his rhetoric’s work for and on the audience. His reliance on the power of language in general—not merely what today would be considered “literary” language—makes his work appealing to some and troubling to others. Welch rightly notes that Gorgias has often been dismissed by rhetoricians and others precisely because he is seen “as a dazzling, mystical manipulator of language, whose ‘style’ is frequently regarded as a decoration and therefore not to be given significant consideration” (Contemporary 141). In other words, his style has been used as a reason for ignoring his contribution to rhetorical theory. Such a response treats style as dangerous (because alluring but empty) and implies that those who self-consciously employ stylistic strategies are not worth studying. By undermining the often nebulous conventions of the time, the often unarticulated expectations of the audience, Gorgias’ style takes advantage of what language makes possible without privileging a priori one form of discourse or another. Words are matched to contexts through stylistic strategies; at no point are these three categories treated as individually sustainable. They consistently appear as a single phenomenon. Gorgias clearly subscribed to the same theory as Isocrates: should any of the three be missing, to that degree the rhetor will have failed.

*Encomium of Helen* is not only Gorgias’ most often discussed text, but it is also the one that most directly explores the power of logos and rhetoric’s role in harnessing it. Although the text considers several charges laid against Helen, its most telling section is devoted to whether Paris “persuaded” and “deceived” (rather than abducted) her (*Encomium* 40). Therein, Gorgias details his thoughts on logos, using style to strategically emphasize his central argument. He begins that argument with the topic-comment structure familiar to nearly everyone—posing a claim about language then addressing the reasons the claim is sustainable:
8. [. . . s]peech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works: it can stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity. I shall show how this is the case, since 9, it is necessary to offer proof to the opinion of my hearers: I both deem and define all poetry as speech with meter. (Encomium 41)

Gorgias employs prosopopoeia to transform speech into a "lord" whose "body effects the divinest works." The aristocratic connotation of the latter word is of some importance. But for now, the reader should note that the strategy directs the audience's attention in a particular direction, focuses them and his discourse on a specific attitude toward speech. The audience is also told that speech is "powerful." Its presence is "the finest" yet "invisible"; its works, "the divinest." Although it valorizes speech, this complex of terms is semantically disrupted by the presence of "invisible." Speech's "body" is invisible, though its effects are not. That is, while one cannot necessarily understand the way(s) in which speech works, the effects it produces in the material world are accessible and/or comprehensible. The nature of speech is not necessarily as important as the possibilities it creates. Which fact is further emphasized by the syntactic placement of speech's effects in the form of an emphatic polysyndeton (repeated use of the conjunction "and").

The described "works" are all active (stop, banish, create, nurture) as well as pathetic—subject to emotional/psychological coloring. As I suggest above, the emphasis on speech as producing effects in the world occupies the center of Gorgias' argument. And these effects, while not tangible, are apparently empirically verifiable: one can know whether feared is allayed, grief dispelled, and so forth. Unlike Isocrates, who seems to be most concerned with how such effects are produced (writerly affect), Gorgias directs attention to what those effects can accomplish, readerly effect. Moreover, the proof of his claim is apparently forthcoming, illustrated by the promised comments about poetry ("speech with meter"). Having established the effects speech can produce, Gorgias implies that he can also "show how this is the case," "offer proof to the opinion of my hearers." Having focused the audience on emotion and/or psychology, Gorgias turns against that very point by addressing the audience's supposed need for demonstrable (read: rational or
unemotional) evidence. First, the turn enacts the first of several instances of *paradoxologia* (paradox, literally “outside accepted opinion”) and/or *antilogia* (antilogy or contradiction in terms) in his work. Establishing then undercutting a point he has previously established allows Gorgias to engage readers without attacking them (or their opinions) directly. He builds and reinforces a position just long enough to gain acceptance, then having hooked the audience, he pushes in the opposite direction, uncovering whatever is overlooked by the first position. The audience is here left wondering how speech can produce pathetic (intangible or “invisible”) effects while also leaving some verifiable proof behind.

The evidence provided, however, is nothing more than an *amplificatio* (amplification or extension) of his previous comments. It draws on readers’ past experiences, but it is neither a tangible manifestation of nor an external adjunct to the argument (as in Aristotelian *logical proofs*):

> careful shuddering and tearful pity and grievous longing come upon its [poetry’s] hearers, and at the actions and physical sufferings of others in good fortunes and in evil fortunes, through the agency of words, the soul is wont to experience a suffering of its own. But come, I shall turn from one argument to another. (*Encomium* 41)

Turning away from the intangible nature of speech’s effects, Gorgias’ promise of proof recursively engages his previous statements—with list and *polysyndeton* intact. The same concepts are again addressed (fear, pity, grief). Speech is again an active force: it is said to have “agency.” And the audience’s role is again passive and psychological/emotional: it is the soul that “suffer[s]” through poetry. (*Passivity derives from the same Greek root as passion and means literally “the condition of suffering.”*) At this point Gorgias’ larger argument about interlocutors’ relationship to language is clarified. Words can and do control human beings, or their passions at any rate, and that possibility for control seems to carry more importance than the effects of such control. The agency attached to speech through its personification as a divine lord is reinscribed by arguing that language can master listeners/readers. What differs is the explicit nod toward the “passive” nature
of the audience's role. Although it was previously implied through the active verbs associated with Lord Speech, that role is here addressed directly as the audience's "suffering." 17

Even so, as the force of Gorgias' words begins to move the audience in one direction, the rhetor reverses his field and again pushes against what he has said. This time the move is more forceful. The final sentence I cite above begins with "But" and uses a command form of the verb "to come." One is told Gorgias will "turn from one argument to another" at the precise moment when his previous argument climaxes. Disrupting that climactic tension here, and in the previous example, is not without reason or completely unexpected. Given what he has revealed about speech's active role in the world, about the audience's pathetic response to that agency, it should not surprise one to see Gorgias reverse his argument twice, to invoke the command that he (as author) has over the audience. The strategy paradox/antilogy proves Gorgias' case more decisively than any direct statement could. By being caught in two separate but equally constraining double binds, the audience experiences the agency of language, the power it has to lead them in a sensible direction—or an apparently sensible direction—only to discover their own lack of control by seeing that initial direction turned on its head, its potential weaknesses revealed. Gorgias begins with personification but quickly concludes proof (not metaphor) is "necessary." (At the same moment, of course, he constructs the audience as "my hearers," as if he, or Lord Speech, owned or controlled them.) Such proof is not forthcoming, however, as he reinscribes what has already been said while heightening one's sense of the active/passive relationship between discourse and interlocutors implied from the beginning. This reinscription is developed to another climax, but rather than extending understanding to material action—what all of this talk means for interlocutors in the world—Gorgias again takes explicit control of both speech and audience: "But come, I shall turn [...]." Each time he turns, the listener/reader sees more clearly the point he wishes to make. Finally, at the moment when his words' agency is most powerful, when the audience can least
control what happens next, the rhetor enacts what he has described, enforces the experience he argued the audience would/should feel. Thus, the passage embodies Gorgias’ desire “to productively harness the power of rhetoric” (Welch 130)—which Wardy more specifically calls the sophist’s fascination with “pleasurable confusion” (Birth 29).

What remains, then, is a broader consideration of the mode in which Helen is written and that mode’s particular impact on the coming-to-know I describe in the last few pages. In her exploration of ancient rhetoricians, Welch consistently emphasizes the experimental (read: custom-defying) work many of them attempted. For her, their failure to distinguish between literary and everyday, between this genre and that, is perhaps their greatest strength and their most valuable legacy: “[f]ar from regarding everyday language as in some way inferior to what we now call literary language, Gorgias, Isocrates, and Plato regarded it, in these vivid years of language development in general and rhetorical theory in particular, as a center of thought, performance and education” (Contemporary 117). In considering Gorgias’ low scholarly esteem, Wardy echoes Welch, arguing that the rhetor “was bound to disappoint because his greatest originality lay in deliberately subverting generic expectations” (Birth 9). The generic expectations Wardy describes are subverted not so much in what Gorgias does as in what he does not do. That is, throughout Helen—and particularly in the passage which begins my analysis—Gorgias reminds the audience that he is about the work of investigating speech’s nature, function, effects, and value. It is not for nothing that he ends by revealing he “wished to write a speech which would be a praise of Helen and a diversion to myself” (Encomium 42). These are not the words of a man who cares much for convention or expectation. And his real utility to current scholars and teachers comes in his ability to harness the power of stylistics, to investigate and manipulate its effects on an audience, and to prove the results of that work by constructing a text that both describes and produces such effects. In concluding as he does, Gorgias reminds one of the power the rhetor has
over an audience, of the lord-like agency that speech endows him with. It is not praise or defense of Helen that drives the work. It is not the search for truth or right-thinking (doxologia). Rather, Gorgias argues for the power of discourse to accomplish material change and to do so with a flourish more real than imagined.

Interlude: Demetrius’ *On Style*

This interlude devotes itself to Demetrius’ *On Style* (ca. the second century BCE) in order to illustrate the pedagogical potential of Isocrates’ and Gorgias’ rhetorical practices—as well as any other similar enactment of the principles they enjoined. Approaching the present moment as an interpretive space, I self-reflexively insinuate myself into my own methodology. Insinuation uncovers weaknesses, conundra, and other potential difficulties by working against the arguments already laid out. And so, while chapter 4 details a distinctive approach to stylistics in the writing classroom, one should not assume that the rhetorical potential uncovered in Isocrates or Gorgias (or any other rhetorician) serves only as backfill for my own thoughts. These men and women do not deserve attention simply to shore up a pedagogy developed independently from them. They are the originating practitioners to which any effective rhetorical pedagogy must look in all instances. Arguing for a pragmatic stylistics necessarily entails an exploration of *material* practices. By their very nature, these practices are not established *ex nihilo*, nor can they be reduced to an algorithm. They function alongside and against custom, not Platonic reality, and as a consequence, they constantly require retrofitting if they are to match effectively the ever-changing face of rhetorical circumstance. Demetrius’ potential role in my retrofitting of Isocrates and/or Gorgias is multifaceted, but because foundations must be laid before an apparatus may be erected, this interlude interrogates Demetrius’ basic intellectual relationship to the sophistic and Aristotelian traditions. *On Style* serves as a template that may be laid over both thought systems, revealing the possible intersections between them as well as the points of highest tension or disagreement. By exploring the (dis)agreements embodied by *On Style*, one better understands similar relations
within the rhetorical tradition more generally and, as is the case here, the possibilities for applying discursive awareness to the writing classroom.

The most obvious disagreement between the two traditions I mention arises over stylistic practices. Aristotle, though not dismissing style’s rhetorical function, was circumspect about the employment of rhetorical strategies. Because he had chosen to systematize rhetoric, he was bound to proscribe particular practices—no system accounts for or permits all possibilities. Particularly because of the fluctuation being experienced by the Greek language at the time, Aristotle found himself a pioneer in establishing the normative rules for Greek language use. The sophists were perhaps freer to challenge the authority of custom: for them it was custom or social law (nomos), not some idealized reality, that affected rhetorical enactment. Question, challenge, and change custom, then, and idealized rules or laws of rhetoric no longer have the same currency. One enacts change through rhetoric itself, and in this way the sophists combined theory and enactment in a single exploration. To understand how influential this difference is, one has only to consider Demetrius’ description of metaphor’s relationship to the so-called elegant style:

Usage is our teacher everywhere, but particularly in the case of metaphors. Usage, in fact, expresses almost everything in metaphors, but they are so safe that we hardly notice them. It calls a voice pure, a man sharp, a character harsh, a speaker long, and so on. (sect. 86)

Language use, Demetrius suggests, is typically metaphorical, and one means for confronting its figurative nature is (customary) usage. Usage is personified throughout this passage, “express[ing]” particular meanings in metaphor. Usage is also “our teacher,” calling a concept one thing or another. Usage pro/inscribes discursive expression. Its inscription seems to occur before conscious choice may be mobilized or employed. In other words such expression is not self-aware; one does not see it as metaphorical in daily usage. More specifically, it is no accident that Demetrius focuses on “safe” usage. This narrowing of his subject implicitly agitates for a lack of overt challenge to the sociocultural status quo. But that customary (read: non-reflective) role is
precisely the point at which language-in-use takes advantage of the stylistic imperative ready-built into language-as-system. That is, by arguing that expression is typically metaphorical by nature, the rhetor argues for an imperceptible influence from and fundamental need for metaphor within usage. Usage, according to this view, leverages the metaphoricity of discourse, even if language users do not always perceive that creation. Likewise, and extrapolating from this commentary, one assumes challenges to customary usage can benefit from leveraging that same figurative power.

Pedagogically, Demetrius' frame offers two outcomes of some relevance to this project. Because figuration already (latently) exists in usage, serves as a "natural" function of language use, metaphor and other stylistic strategies should be conducive to the teaching of writing. Those strategies become the sort of options language already offers language users--the sort of choices writers have available--as well as offering rhetors access to the sites of power within custom and social law. Despite their latency, stylistic strategies are the stock from which all users of language draw. They need not be taught in any usual sense, though rhetorical choices must be tempered by an awareness of one's circumstances--based again on usage and the work at hand. Moreover, the examples Demetrius lists should convince by their very commonness. The style under consideration is not the plain (supposedly styleless) style associated with the vernacular. It is the elegant style, but in this instance Demetrius seems to derive its supposed artfulness from neither aesthetic nor any other "literary" concern. Usage appears to determine what is or is not elegant. This second point assumes some phronetic use of language, exposure to its creation and reception as material acts, not as general principles. The very fact that customary usage accomplishes metaphor and other strategies while "we hardly notice them" only reinforces the pragmatism Demetrius apparently values.

Even so, Aristotelian principles do begin to impinge on the argument. The classification of styles according to the presence and number of stylistic features in a text is clearly predicated on the taxonomic principle of division and classification. Within that framework, usage (as it has been
instrumentally defined) should really have no shaping influence on language. If style is present only in some texts, then it seems unlikely to represent the elementary foundation of language use. Its place at the center of Demetrius’ attention consequently replicates the dilemma rhetoricians of the age were confronting. Demetrius combines an Aristotelian concept of linguistic mimesis with a sophistic reliance on usage. Yet in doing so, he cannot help but implicitly suggest that the elegant style is not definable according to its use of metaphor or other figures. If usage motivates one’s use of these figures, then terms like elegant, arid or frigid cannot be applied without due attention to a discourse’s historical and sociocultural contexts. In other words, taxonomic terms can no longer effectively function as generalizing principles. For example, Demetrius defines the period as “a combination of clauses and phrases arranged to conclude the underlying thought with a well-turned ending” (sect. 10; emphasis added). Not long after, however, he details the relationship between enthymemetic thought and arrangement by saying, “[t]he enthymeme is, as it were, added to the verbal form, the period is exclusively verbal” (sect. 32). At one point, a thought is part and parcel of its period, yet at another, expression is separate from thought (or at least the particular kind of thought called the enthymeme).

The lack of a cohesive stylistic theory in On Style offers a further lesson on pedagogical practices. Pedagogy implicitly requires some use of categories, however broad or narrow, as does rhetoric. Language itself is dependent on establishing categories for tangible objects (tree, chair, book) as well as abstractions (freedom, hatred, aspiration). The discrepancies that creep into Demetrius’ treatise are not a sufficient reason to dismiss his work. On the contrary, they should bolster compositionists’ commitment to engaging with students in ways other than lecture or general principles. A self-consciousness about these (and other) aspects of discursive creation/reception ought rightly exist in all cases. Stylistic strategies are only identifiable (or deployable) to the extent that they are susceptible to categorization, yet no two metaphors are identical in their influence, force, or meaning. Reliance on usage only takes one as far as the limits
of one particular category. (Is all discourse equally influenced by usage? Or does this principle refer to the “best” uses by the “best” rhetors? If so, who or what determines “best”?) Demetrius struggled with these confusions as best he could, despite the internal contradictions and frictions that I outline. For example, at several points in *On Style*, he indicates that all rhetorical styles have need of figures and tropes on occasion. And he further attempts to overcome problems by incessantly privileging the functional concept *deinos* (power or force, literally “terrible” or “fearsome”). This is another abstract quality, to be sure—once strangely reminiscent of Peter Elbow’s *Writing with Power* (Oxford UP, 1981)—but through it Demetrius attempts to replace the high/middle/low parcelling of style with a broader-minded functional schema. Because all theoretical apparatuses are rhetorical constructs, they necessarily susceptible to the disjunction between what one thinks is happening with one’s words and what is actually happening. Discursive retrofitting works against disjunctions of this sort, but it is only effective to the degree that one’s rhetorical enactment accounts for the idiosyncrasies of each textual encounter. Without the rhetorically (self-)reflective opportunity provided by treatises like *On Style*, it is unlikely that any gains in stylistics or pedagogy would occur. Eliminating “error” is not nearly as vital as understanding how these discrepancies between theorizing and other practices occur in the first place and why they manifest themselves as they do.

**Cicero and Quintilian: A Rhetoric of Ethics**

I join these two Roman rhetoricians because they share the particular ethical concern that my analysis of Gorgias’ manipulations makes evident and that any reliance on customary usage foregrounds for language users of all sorts. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) is widely considered the quintessential Roman orator and theorist. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (35 to ca. 96 CE) is certainly his best-known disciple and a powerful force in his own right. The two are equally concerned with the question that at some point must be raised when considering style: Is rhetoric unethical because it may be used to deceive and to dominate? If the third canon can indeed be used
to manipulate not only thoughts but also people, where does the line between virtue and vice lie?
And who is responsible for such possibilities, rhetor or audience? Perhaps both, or neither?
Isocrates argued for a pragmatic ethics, one developed through rhetorical study and built on the
customs of the rhetor's own time and place. He did not completely absolve the audience from
responsibility, but the primary target of his ethics was the teacher-rhetor. As he says in Antidosis,
"the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse
which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul." Gorgias
implicates rhetor and audience equally, suggesting in Encomium of Helen that while rhetoric might
have the power to manipulate, each person must resist that practice when it turns destructive: "It is
the duty of one and the same man both to speak the needful rightly and to refute [the unrightfully
spoken]" (40; translator's insertions). Custom was partly to blame as well, or could be, if Gorgias'
indictment of conventions (rhetorical and otherwise) is any indication. In undermining the
audience's expectations, the rhetor questioned whether any customary worldview was ever
adequate.

Cicero is perhaps best known for his belief in the great orator as "good man" (vir bonus); or
Quintilian, for his extension of this concept: "the good man speaking well" (vir bonus dicendi
peritus). It is the rhetor who bears responsibility for the ethical repercussions of his words, and it is
through rhetoric that a person pursues, enacts, and comes to personify virtue. How this should be
achieved in practice, though, is a bit trickier to determine, as Quintilian's description of it suggests:

But it is surely the orator who will have the greatest mastery of all such departments of
knowledge and the greatest power to express it in words. And if ever he had reached
perfection, there would be no need to go to schools of philosophy for the precepts of
virtue. [...] Let our ideal orator then be such as to have a genuine title to the name of
philosopher [...] (Training of an Orator bk. 1, pref. 17)

His use of the words "greatest," "perfection," "virtue," "ideal," and "genuine" indicate that
Quintilian is not describing actual practice, but nonetheless, the true lover of wisdom (philosopher)
is one who should master knowledge and express it well. Because no one can be said to "master"
knowledge in its totality, Quintilian is more likely suggesting that one must harness or shape knowledge in order to express it. The first hint of an Isocratic rhetoric appears, as shaping knowledge becomes tantamount to shaping its expression. The very syntax of the phrase “good man speaking well” suggests the possibility; “man” and “speaking” are enjambed (conjoined) and surrounded equally by the abstract “good.” But even if what I describe is the case, how does it affect the ethical dimension of style—particularly over and against accusations of deception and/or coercion?

For Quintilian, rhetoric becomes ethics-building to the degree that it depends on a rhetor’s ability to express herself truly and well. With a self-consciousness about one’s use of rhetoric, with a sense of the dimensions Quintilian’s mastery and perfect expression provide, it is no large step to envision the possibility for ethical engagement with other thinking, feeling human beings. Stylistic rhetoric’s generative dimensions matter most in this case, since as Lanham posits, “style will influence what a writer ‘wants’ to say. People want to say what they are good at saying, can say most gracefully” (Style: An Anti-textbook 38). If this position is accurate, then stylistic rhetoric provides the possibility for shaping one’s rhetorical stance in relationship to the world, as well as one’s audience. Custom and thought are essentially specialized discourses that one uses with others or oneself, and as a consequence, both can be reinforced or generated through rhetorical action. They may also be defended against the assault of other (more destructive) rhetorics. Working toward the good for others necessarily works toward one’s own. In this way, an Isocratic ethics takes on new life:

Since we want not emancipation from impulse but clarification of impulse, the duty of rhetoric is to bring together action and understanding into a whole that is greater than scientific perception. The realization that just as no action is really indifferent, so no utterance is without its responsibility introduces, it is true, a certain strenuosity into life, produced by a consciousness that “nothing is lost.” Yet this is preferable to the desolation which proceeds from an infinite dispersion or feeling of unaccountability. (Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric 24)

Richard Weaver’s contention centralizes the phenomenological—emotional and psychological—
promise attached to rhetoric. Rhetoric's generative power is expansive because it extends beyond the rational, the conventional. It operates on language itself, the tool by which everything else (science, the arts, law) is constructed. In shaping language it shapes the perception of rhetor as well as audience. As Lanham argues about style more specifically, "[e]ach prose style is itself not only an object seen but a way of seeing, both an intermediate 'reality' and a dynamic one" (Style 33). One's stylistic choices indicate to others how one interacts with the material world. In addition, those choices affect one's own lived experience. Choices have consequences, and being accountable is not only being counted but also desiring to count.

One might now return to Isocrates' and Gorgias' work with stylistics more directly in mind, for in recognizing that the final form of a text (or a person's rhetorical stance) can be shaped, if not predetermined, one also recognizes that stylistic strategies are the precise tools self-reflexive language users require in performing their sociocultural obligations to themselves and others. Effective communication is ethical communication in that it produces discourse adequate to and appropriate for the situation; that is, it suits the audience, subject, and purpose as well as it possibly can. Ethical discourse is motivated both from within and from without the rhetor's frame of reference--custom or social law, individual motive, and so forth. In a de Manian sense, one betrays oneself in the very act of mobilizing discourse. Every utterance, Weaver argues, carries responsibility--is able to be attached to or associated with some one. Human beings bear the weight of their discursive choices, but those choices bear the human mark in turn. This is not to say that rhetoric cannot be used for unethical purposes, but such purposes are unsuited to the task because they act against the generative nature of rhetoric, pervert it to destructive effects. Moreover, and as Gorgias so rightly implies, while stylistic choices can pervert one's apparent stance in relationship to the world, that perversion in no way mitigates rhetoric's potential for good. Communication is rhetoric is style. From that equivalency, language users cannot escape.
More specifically, then, having rhetorical choices depends on a knowledge of the ways similar communicative tasks have been accomplished in the past—which reveals another aspect of custom or usage. In engaging the words of others, one confronts the only authentic manuals for writing that exist. Nowhere but in the particular practices of particular writers does one see the choices all writers confront, the choices that never show the same face twice. What remains is determining how style functions within this pragmatic framework of prior experience. And Quintilian’s comments on figures clearly point the way: “Figures [. . .] will generally have some justification, as I shall show in a later portion of this work [. . .]. I must however point out that a figure, if used unwittingly, will be a solecism” (Training 1.5.53; emphasis in original). When Quintilian assumes that (any)one can determine whether a particular stylistic deployment is “unwitting,” he also implicitly argues that a rhetor’s intentions are available through his words. Epistemologically, however, the reading of intentions cannot account for a figure’s us(age). Under such a model, one judges a figure’s effects based on the “intended” usage rather than its actual influence on an audience or the world. Quintilian’s assumption focuses on an intention-outcome axis by excluding all intervening questions. The concept of solecism allows him to radically distinguish between so-called use (because conscious) and misuse/inappropriate use (because unwitting). These concepts define the debate so that one cannot help judging intentionality or defining us(age) only in Quintilian’s terms. Thus, misuse and unintentional use are equated, forgetting that an interlocutor might misuse a figure to produce humor or irony, for example—which are themselves stylistic strategies. Though a strategy might be used inappropriately through ignorance, ignorance is not the only reason for inappropriate use. For Quintilian, ignorance of custom would appear to be the same as ignorance of discursive effectiveness.

When Quintilian considers all inappropriate uses to be automatically and always ignorant uses, he himself ignores the intentionality that usually motivates his treatment of stylistic strategies. The examples Demetrius provides in On Style indicate that a figure may be used
effectively without explicit intention. Any native user of English will, through her natural competence, use language more or less effectively without the need for conscious crafting. On the other hand, while the language user may not have intended to use a figure, she did attempt to do something when choosing when, how, and why to speak or write. Even so, effective discourse (and style's hand in producing it) is not about discovering new ways to use language but rather about recognizing what already happens at particular moments in all discursive exchanges—and doing so in hopes that recognition will lead to a consciousness of and an influence over those moments. The most effective discourse is that which one is aware of as motivated language. The best discursive moments read directly against the expectations and customary usage of the moment, though without necessarily undercutting either. The matching of thought to form to function enacts its own meaning(s). Consequently, effective discourse is not dependent upon conscious intent but rather on rhetorical choices about purpose and potential effect. One should not worry so much about why Isocrates uses a praebamulam in Antidosis as about why he (or anyone else) might use such a strategy in that particular situation while talking about that particular subject. Drawing on one's own knowledge of how words work, one's own "mastery" of knowledge and its expression, produces precisely the self-awareness that Quintilian advocates, the proactive stance that Gorgias argues for.20

Before moving to Cicero's work in Topics, two final passages from Quintilian merit attention. I consider them in tandem in hopes of generating a catalyst for the preceding conclusions, expanding their pragmatic potential:

[f]or my part I regard the teacher who is unwilling to attend to such details [of elementary rhetoric] as being unworthy of the name of teacher: and as for the question of capacity, I maintain that it is the most capable man who, given the will, is able to do this with most efficiency. (Training 2.3.5)

it must be remembered that there is hardly a single commonplace of such universal application that it will fit any actual case, unless some special link is provided to connect it with the subject: otherwise it will seem to have been tacked on to the speech, not interwoven in its texture [. . .]. (Training 2.4.30)
Quintilian begins by stressing the elementary components of discourse construction, but these are not details of the taxonomic kind. Rather, he accentuates the importance of rhetoric's fundamental components to any effective teacher's work in the classroom and, by implication, to student-rhetors' communicative success. He does not pile up the various bits and pieces that make up rhetoric's elementary levels. (By which one can probably assume Quintilian means not elementary exercises—such as the declamatio or suasoria—as much as those fundamental principles he lays out in Book I—grammar, penmanship, etymology, and so on.) His refusal to quantify rhetorical enactment in this passage suggests that Quintilian's (over-)concern with pragmatic detail is not motivated by the benighted binary of form versus content, of static versus dynamic approaches to rhetoric. While Quintilian does get caught up in these binaries—as my exploration of intentionality uncovers—his primary concern seems to be what is most useful for teaching and learning. As anyone who spends much time thinking about his teaching knows, abstract principles alone will not achieve this end. (Student-writers have few discursively self-conscious experiences to which they might apply theory or from which they might extract it.) Theorizing must be grounded in the issue at hand by, what Quintilian calls in the second passage, "some special link." Theorizing as a material practice, one that asks student-writers to draw consciously on their own experiences with discourse, better paves the way for effective communication because self-reflection mobilizes more than a blind faith in Platonic or Aristotelian mimesis. As Quintilian's reliance on personal experience and the authority of historical experience--most especially that of Cicero--indicates, there is room for more than formalism in his institution.

One is left, then, with the second passage, wherein something else arises to trouble stereotype-driven explorations of Quintilian and Cicero: "it must be remembered that there is hardly a single commonplace of such universal application that it will fit any actual case [. . .]." These are the words of a man focused on contextual demands. One cannot help but see a stress on the particulars that seems to fall between the cracks found throughout the larger "institution"
Quintilian is critiquing—that mythical and monolithic construction called classical rhetoric. Indeed, contemporary scholars and teachers often forget that rhetoric was originally an “architectonic” art, not a “managerial” one (W. Ross Winterowd, The English Department 8). What is even harder to remember, especially in rhetoric-composition’s post-process moment, is that synthesis—the confluence of thought, form, and function—privileges generation over arrangement, distinguishing itself by how it treats the two processes and what it does with them. Each communicative moment contains clues to effective meaning-making within it. Or, as theorist Tzvetan Todorov argues, “[s]peech is above all functional; to be functional is to be fitting” (The Poetics of Prose 62).

Stylistic strategies, like all tools, meet certain contingencies better than others. Although no two situations are alike, many allow for the use of the same or similar tool. Effective discourse works on the custom, motive force, and expectation of a communicative moment, and in turn, it is worked on by them (as well as language itself). The stylistic repertoire is not infinite, of course, but that limitation exists outside of the standardizing influence of tradition and conventions of usage. As a consequence, elementary details and the actual case turn out to influence the same hermeneutic process—the interpretations that all readers and writers must make. One cannot address a given case without possessing the fundamentals, but at the same time, one cannot understand those fundamentals, come to understand them, without studying more than hypotheticals. The usefulness of this symmetrical relationship is harnessed by a theory of contingency rather than certainty. Because they rely on probabilities, contingencies require a certain praxis, a specific implementation of tentatively formulated ideas through a particular action(s).

Cicero addresses that praxis directly in his Topics—which itself means “topics” or “commonplaces” (from the Greek topoi). He establishes the terms for his inquiry by developing a comparison: “It is easy to find things that are hidden if the hiding place is pointed out and marked; similarly if we wish to track down some argument we ought to know the places or topics: for that
is the name given by Aristotle to the ‘regions,’ as it were, from which arguments are drawn” (1.7-8). Note the process described through the transitive verbs “find,” “track down,” and “drawn.” Each of them requires an object, and all of them find that object in the topics themselves, or the arguments the topics make possible. The topics are seen as a starting place, as a tool for inquiry, not as a stopping place, as the rhetor’s actual subject matter. The process of drawing arguments from these topics would then become the specific methodology (or set of methodologies) by which abstract ideas become particular actions. As with Quintilian’s dismissal of universals as sufficient indices of a particular case, Cicero’s metaphor pushes readers beyond seeing *topica* as shortcuts for thinking (especially thinking through discourse).21

Throughout the remainder of his treatise, Cicero refers to the “method,” “processes,” “mental processes,” and “discovery” that the topics generate and sustain (6.29, 8.34, 11.46, 13.53). And he interrupts his description of the concept of similarity with the following injunction:

> although all topics can be used to supply arguments in all sorts of debate, still they occur more frequently in some debates and more rarely in others. Well then, know the types of argument; the case itself will instruct you when to use them. (9.41-42)

The emphasis on the act of culling arguments from various commonplaces should, at the very least, remind one of Gorgias. The sophist’s work in *Helen* assumes *logos* is an active means of engagement, and he implicitly argues for *logos*’ dynamism as a proximate cause for the effects of rhetorical performance. While Cicero does not pursue the effects of the Gorgianic method, he does rely on the same assumptions about discursive agency. Rhetoric’s generative capacity (re)makes the potentiality of the topics into real effects in a particular situation. Isocrates’ emphasis on the enactment of principles, the doing as well as the thinking, finds its fullest expression in Cicero’s matching of the methods he outlines to the particulars of this or that case. As Cicero makes clear, without the active process of drawing connections between this commonplace and that particular circumstance, the discursive value of any topic is lost. It is the drawing out of arguments that
matters, more than where they start or where they end—if by this one means discrete, self-contained moments or utterances.

In *Orator* Cicero himself best summarizes the principles I mention, tracing them from cause through effect:

> [t]his, indeed, is the form of wisdom that the orator must especially employ—to adapt himself to occasions and persons. In my opinion one must not speak in the same style at all times, nor before all people, nor against all opponents, nor in defence of all clients, nor in partnership with all advocates. He, therefore, will be eloquent who can adapt his speech to fit all conceivable circumstances. (sect. 35-36)

Cicero’s adaptation is, in other words, the practical wisdom of Isocrates and Gorgias, the virtuous engagement of Quintilian. Eloquence is the direct result of fitting words to circumstances, not out of convenience or (any necessary) desire for deceit or coercion but rather because words are at their most powerful when they are most fitting. Thus, Donovan J. Ochs concludes that

> the *Topica* presents a methodology for inventing matter and form for an oration that is considerably less mechanical than that offered in the *De Inventione*. [...] Cicero, most probably, did not view the topical system as a mechanical method. Instead, he seems to understand its active, dynamic character, but fails to address, clearly and concisely, its rhetorical nature. (“Cicero’s *Topica*: A Process View of Invention” 117)

While one might dispute Ochs’ claim that Cicero does not concisely address the rhetorical nature of the topics—Cicero’s use of words like “pattern” and of a multitude of examples suggests otherwise—Ochs is right to place emphasis on the “active, dynamic character” of Cicero’s topical methodology. Like Gorgias’ *logos*, Cicero’s *topica* are the means to human agency, the tools through which the rhetor enacts change in the world. Cicero’s own pattern of terms and mobilization of rhetorical examples within the pages of *Topics* convince one of his awareness of the rhetorical power Gorgias irrevocably intertwined with agency—and especially to the readerly effects rhetoric could produced. The same pattern and mobilization also make clear that Isocrates’ emphasis on writerly affect is informing Cicero’s analysis. He quite rightly highlights his own focus on affect by engaging in pattern-building while simultaneously describing those self-same patterns.
If Isocrates first instantiates the importance of pragmatic ethics in rhetorical theory, Cicero and Quintilian build further, arguing that ethical discourse is most successful when it marks itself/is marked as motivated language. Without the stylistic enactment of Isocrates and Gorgias, however, such a position would be difficult to maintain. Because they model the Romans’ contentions, one winds up with more than a convenient theory, an idealized position of what should be. (As both Gorgias and Weaver rightly suggest, the agency logos provides commits everyone to a position of responsibility.) What Cicero and Quintilian leave undone is also of some importance, but any lacunae (gaps or disjunctions) should motivate a pursuit of their attitudes—and those of Isocrates, Gorgias, and Demetrius—into the work of later rhetoricians. The sense of rhetorical and human possibility inherent in stylistic strategies, their nature as discursive tools, makes such incompleteness necessary, if not pleasing. Without the work explored thus far, the accomplishments of all other rhetoricians may never have happened. By providing both inspiration and room to maneuver, the five rhetors I examine serve as well for their weaknesses as for their strengths.

An Ethics of Style

The ethical dilemma confronted by Quintilian—and the others before him—has become more important than ever to current rhetoric-composition. With the rise of politically self-conscious pedagogies, the learning process is often taken to center on ethical questions. The work of Weaver, James Kinneavy, Lester Faigley, and so many others testifies to the ethics of rhetoric’s attraction. And the rise of the discipline over the last thirty-five years has ensured that contemporary compositionists are more invested in ethics than perhaps ever before. This section puzzles through the ethical possibilities presented by “the good man speaking well” in hopes of clarifying retrofitting’s potential ethical effects. What Weaver called the “charismatic term” lies at the heart of Quintilian’s phrase (Ethics 227-28). Because charismatic terms have no objectively verifiable reference in the material world, they float free-form in the cultural discourse. Rather than being
shaped by their communicative use, they transform the rules by which communication is perceived to occur.

Language has always played a powerful role in society, of course; oracles and soothsayers rank with poets and dramatists as influential voices. The Greeks and Romans were unremittingly devoted to the relationship between language use and ethical behavior. Plato’s attempts to construct an ethical and philosophical rhetoric are still looked to today, and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* reveals as much about language as it does ethics. The medieval rise of literacy technologies—the so-called liberal arts education, the *incunabula* or proto-books—marked a climax for the relationship between morality and literacy. Written literacy was still in its infancy; writing was rarely done. Reading (the interpretation of a text) and redaction (the copying of a text) were the most common discursive means for engaging the written word. While orality was still dominant in most circumstances, Martin Irvine posits that the liberal arts’ *trivium* (especially grammar in its historical sense) was beginning to become not only the textual hub but also the sociocultural hub of the medieval period (*Grammatica* xiii-xiv). The change was slow but constant, and as a consequence of the process, the sacredness of texts grew paramount (Irvine, *Grammatica* 14). Most of the texts preserved and revered were religious in character, and when coupled with the Church’s dominance of literacy skills, it was only a matter of time before textuality took on a religious caste. That textual sacredness ultimately ensured that ethics and morality would be wed with discourse.

Contemporary rhetoric-composition confronts the ethics of rhetoric in three generalized ways. First are those compositionists who are “unaware” of or actively avoid the ethics of writing and the teaching of literacy. Because rhetoric-composition was until recently seen as a skill (rather than a technology for thinking), ethics were usually assumed inconsequential. Tools did not have ethics; only their users did. If rhetoric were used for deceitful purposes or coercion, individual rhetors were responsible. That instrumental view is a far cry from the reverence and suspicion
attached to literacy during the post-classical period, representing as it does the secularization of textuality during the Enlightenment. While more "rational" than preceding approaches to language, instrumentalism is also far more damaging to rhetoric-composition's long-term goals—awareness of and facility with various literacies. In near complete opposition are those who address ethics as a core component of their pedagogies. The post-process movement has begun suggesting ways this tack might become viable in classrooms across the country, and many so-called radical pedagogies rely heavily on the ethics of discursive (re)creation and reception. Under the influence of Paolo Freire, Frederic Jameson and other materialist scholars, cultural studies and consciousness-raising have reached confluence within the field (and English studies more generally), and morality and ethics figure heavily in most critiques globalization and other (post)modern forces. Words become more than tools in this scenario. They take on the role of sociocultural entities, effecting change as often as they are themselves affected.

Beyond these two groups, one is left with the majority of compositionists, those who neither ignore nor push the ethical dimensions of what they do. They are aware of their colleagues' ideas, but they feel uncomfortable injecting such things into their classrooms. They know there is no unsituated, apolitical position when teaching, but they choose to do the best they can without exploiting that fact. The stylistics proposed here is such a style. Ethics are an implacable function of the practices put forth, but ethics are not the center of what is explicitly "taught" in that rhetoric. Ethics are instead an integral part of what is learned by doing. The sociocultural dimensions of discourse practically demand that language users learn the rules of ethical engagement. All speakers and writers learn through their own language use what is appropriate, expected or important to the situations they encounter. Whether they choose to value what they gain matters less than whether they are aware of the ethical possibility within their discursive practices. Those in society who use language self-consciously understand the ethical dimension of communication.
And while others may not understand it, they must still confront it every time they speak, write, listen or read.

An overt address to ethics in pedagogical practices may, at times, be appropriate, but a pedagogy focused on the choices writers that make is more likely to phronetically inform what is gained ethically. The sophists, as Jarratt argues throughout *Rereading the Sophists*, were painfully aware of the ethical dilemma that rhetoric-composition faces, but understanding the nature of discourse and human interaction, Isocrates, Gorgias and their contemporaries constructed a pragmatic ethics from rhetorical principles. Avoiding the dangerous idealism of absolute or categorical imperatives (best exemplified by Platonism), these thinkers sought out an ethics whose standard was *nomos* rather than *physis* (natural order or law). This change in first principles left language users open to what some have since treated as a do-it-yourself morality, but beyond any flaws it possessed, the system did require all interlocutors to think about who and what they were engaging with their discourse. Moreover, while some might choose to deceive or coerce, they (and their audiences) would know or have the opportunity to know that their choices were unethical. Actions have consequences, and those consequences may be judged. The sophists did not redefine ethics as much as make it materially meaningful. Isocrates theorizes the ethics of rhetoric (and its teaching) in both *Against the Sophists* and *Antidosis*—the second of which is devoted to defending him from charges of an instant ethics. In *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias enacts an understanding of the long-term consequences that rhetorical practices create as well as the servitude that a non-reflective approach to rhetoric inevitably produces.

Concerned with rhetorical action as a material phenomenon, the sophists focused their endeavors on creating discursive awareness. Because a nomos-based ethics is learned over time, not inherent in language or language users, these earliest Greeks created an opportunity for human beings to choose their words and strategies self-consciously but freely. If words and thoughts are inseparable, changing the use to which one puts discourse influences one’s thoughts about the
world being engaged. Some few critics have suggested that the power gained in this relationship by teachers and others who already possess rhetorical prowess is itself unethical. Isocrates did his best to defend himself against that charge. Students who can make informed choices about their words need not be selectively blinded to the instructor’s words or actions. The sophist argued that every language user can and should be encouraged to weigh all discourse carefully, whatever its source. Regardless of his extreme positions on Hellenism and other political matters, Isocrates understood the ethics of rhetoric. And the stylistics present in these pages seeks to account for his understanding by redirecting attention toward the choices writers necessarily confront. Lanham posited nearly thirty years ago that

[s] style is indeed, as Buffon most famously said, the man himself—but the man sometimes as he is, sometimes as he wants to be, sometimes as he is palpably pretending to be. [...] Stylistic pedagogy ought to cover the whole range. Only by doing so can it perform its authentic social duty: to enhance both clear communication between citizens and the selfhood of the citizens who are communicating. (Style 124)

Quintilian’s “good man speaking well” does not join its terms through cause and effect—the hierarchical version of a binary opposition. The very structure of the phrase speaks of what Burke labeled “identification” and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca called “adherence”—both of which are explored in the next chapter. The speaker is the speaking, for what is spoken reflects her rhetorical choices, conscious or otherwise. They are her way of engaging the world and other human beings; they are a reflection of her approach to that engagement. Even dissimulators reveal something about their worldview through their discourse.

As a result of my own discursive choices and of the nature of stylistic practices, ethics is a central consequent of this project’s pedagogical goals, but an ethical system is not the center. The position that I assume here allows rhetoric-composition the opportunity to practice in the spirit of the pedagogy of Isocrates and the liberal arts of Quintilian’s Training without diverting its attentions from writing—both the act and its manifestation. If the ethical dimension of discourse cannot be escaped, there is no reason to argue that ethics should be foregrounded in the writing
classroom. Addressing ethical dilemmas and choices as they arise contextualizes the resulting choices that student-writers and teachers make. This method firmly plants them (the choices and the people) in the material world, where choices have consequences and where, as human beings, writers must confront those outcomes. If "the good man speaking well" is a charismatic term, then the best one can hope for is a way to confront its material embodiments, its discursive realities. It will at the very least become accessible, as all ideas are, through the choices that each writer makes.

The Classical Spirit in a Contemporary World

This chapter closes with a look at the work of Corbett, Lanham, and Weaver. Though far from the only ones to engage with the classical project, each scholar has allowed that tradition to survive in a discipline like none Isocrates or Aristotle could have imagined. Their faithfulness to classical rhetorical principles and tools has produced long-lasting effects, some of which are outlined here, but at no time did their fidelity translate into a blindness toward the flaws or weaknesses that any tradition carries with it. While amateurs in the literal sense of that word, they were not prejudiced against contemporary ideas. Critical of them at times, yes; but never close-minded about the possibilities adhering to the study of discourse. This project models itself on their generous approach to scholarship and teaching, and through their work, my stylistic practices become as pragmatic and life changing as any ideas could.

Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (last revised with the help of Connors) has been through four editions and provides perhaps the most cogent modern formalization of Aristotelian rhetoric. Its influence on contemporary students should not be overlooked or underestimated, as it exposes them to the ideas and strategies on which any successful writing pedagogy relies. Style is far from marginalized along the way, something Corbett is at pains to make clear in his introduction to the canon:

One notion about style that needs to be erased at the outset is that style is simply
“the dress of thought.” [...] it is certain that none of the prominent classical rhetoricians—Isocrates, Aristotle, Demetrius, Longinus, Cicero, Quintilian—ever preached such a doctrine. All of these taught that there is an integral and reciprocal relationship between matter and form. (Classical Rhetoric 338)

Although Corbett’s list did not directly affect my choice of rhetorical exemplars, it is no small matter that this project relies heavily on four of the six authors he names. Those classical figures valued the relationship between stylistic choices and material outcomes. Indeed, perhaps the strongest bond that the six writers share is their attempts to destabilize the matter-form binary. Because a binary acts to separate artificially interdependent phenomena, the (re)integration of matter-form leaves open the possibility that arrangement (form writ large) and invention (the idea as form) can be theorized and practiced as a stylistically driven series of choices. As Corbett continues,

[t]he notion of the integral relationship between matter and form is the basis for any true understanding of the rhetorical function of style. [...] Style does provide a vehicle for thought, and style can be ornamental; but style is something more than that. It is another of the “available means of persuasion” (Classical Rhetoric 338).

At the very least, style is given equal footing with invention and arrangement, and beyond that footing lies the possibility for a functional notion of style that directly challenges the modern borders assigned to it.

Corbett’s scholarly work further compels positive attitudes toward the third canon by relying heavily on stylistic analysis. In addition to his historical and contemporary sketches of the discipline, Corbett often turned to the stylistics of Hugh Blair, Jonathan Swift, and others as objects of rhetorical investigation. While “A Demonstration Analysis of Swift’s A Modest Proposal” sometimes engages in scientism (when devoted to word counts and the like), it also does a remarkable job of modeling the method I apply to the rhetors in this chapter. In speaking of Swift’s syntax, for example, Corbett illustrates exactly why methodologies like mine function so effectively:

Swift demonstrates that he knows how and when to use parallel structure. In paragraph 29, the key paragraph of the essay, he lays out his long enumeration of ‘other
expedients’ on a frame of parallel structure. The list is long, the list is important, and Swift wants to make sure that his readers do not get lost in this maze of coordinate proposals. ("A Demonstration Analysis" 35)

Relying exclusively on elementary information about the pattern involved, Corbett concisely accounts for the probable function Swift’s parallel structure. He is completely aware of the particular author, subject, and situation when exploring parallelism’s effect(s), but rather than be complicated by this web of relations, his words are clear and refer only to the most fundamental of concepts: parallel structure, the list, nothing any fluent speaker of English would not know. Exploring such material demands clarity of exactly this sort, and there are none better than Corbett at writing accessibly. Moreover, the structure of the case built on Swift’s parallelism could not be more sensible. Readers have (1) a proposition about Swift’s style, (2) a contextualized stylistic choice, (3) a single, rhetorically potent description of the choice’s effects. Swift is foregrounded in the first two sentences through action ("demonstrates" and "lays out"), keeping one focused on the active choice involved. From that choice springs a result, a resulting structure that becomes the new focus ("the list [...] the list [...]"). Corbett’s point is enacted here, of course, with his own use of parallelism before the focus again falls on Swift—the possible motivation for his choice and the tangible readerly result of it. The supposed motivation and its consequences are effectively, but not simplistically, combined with parallelism (both its mention and its enactment) in the paragraph’s concluding sentence.

It would be difficult to say too much about Corbett’s contribution to rhetoric-composition. For him to have argued style’s case since the 1950s indicates a serious commitment to the viability of stylistics and a serious belief that his commitment was worth pursuing. In defending "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric," Corbett made it clear what motivated him:

I am not calling for a mechanical adoption of figures to prettify our prose; I am calling rather for a realization of the functions of style, in all its aspects, in effecting our purpose. We are all vaguely aware of the function of style; classical rhetoric can make us clearly aware. (19)

Nowhere has it been said better. If I were to assign a primary motive to this exploration, no other
words would be necessary. In accentuating the advantages of stylistic awareness, Corbett ensures that style will not be abandoned and, more importantly, that students benefit the most: “If students adopt this functional notion of style, they will have gone part of the way toward solving some of their writing problems” (Classical Rhetoric 338). Ever thinking of his audience, Corbett made the third canon practical and user friendly without oversimplification. If I manage half as well, then perhaps stylistic rhetoric can finally find its center.

The stylistic center is precisely where Lanham takes the interested reader, and through him one comes to appreciate the broader psychological and ethical dimensions of the third canon. While these areas are not a new site of endeavor, Lanham has perhaps best communicated his work in them to others. Like Corbett’s, the methodology adopted by Lanham is reader friendly and stylistically focused, and like Corbett’s, Lanham’s attitude is scholarly without being mean-spirited. He truly enjoys his work, and his work reflects that enjoyment. One difficulty in constructing an investigation like the present one is capturing the magical quality of words without losing the intellectual and practical rigor academic work demands. And Lanham serves rhetoric-composition as much for his approach as his ideas. His generosity does, in part, also spring from his ideas, and Lanham has been style’s best, most vocal advocate. Through that advocacy, one finds new avenues for the interjection of ethics as a stylistic concern and the positing of style as the primary object of study in a (post)modern discipline.

Speaking of Kenneth Burke’s metaphor of rhetoric as drama, Lanham concludes in The Motives of Eloquence:

[s]uch a master metaphor not only made the whole rhetorical and critical vocabulary available for the analysis of society, it threw primary stress on rhetoric, rhetoric as the means of creating a frame of reference, and rhetoric finally as the substance of that frame. Comparative stylistics thus at a stroke became the central study, not simply for the critic but for the citizen. Style, from the periphery of attention, suddenly moved to the center. For if one accepts Burke’s metaphor, style is all there is. (220)

If modern existence is primarily predicated on rhetoricality, on human beings’ ability to engage in
meaningful communication, then it becomes difficult to oppose the case Lanham argues. The (already) cliché notion of America as an information society progressing through an information age only heightens the imperative of rhetoric's indispensability. When people are paid for their minds rather than their hands, the study and use of motivated language becomes important to the degree that the mind is uniquely accessible through rhetorical investigation. (And to the degree that this cliché is not true, stylistics is the key to understanding why it has come to dominate the current economy and society.) This does not preclude the involvement of philosophy or psychology or other disciplines of that sort, but it does return stylistic rhetoric to the position it perhaps should always have held. Assuming that "a theory of rhetorical style will always invoke a theory of motive, a theory of identity, and a theory of knowledge," creates the possibility for meaningful investigation of what that motive, identity, and knowledge are or may be as they are enacted through language, not as they are abstracted or quantified by other methodologies (Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence 220).

The foregoing pages of this chapter have focused themselves on defining style and understanding those who have availed themselves of its discursive power. The canon's motive and the motives it encourages are more complex--chapter 3 expends much energy in investigating the phenomenological aspects of style--but like every choice the canon presents one with, the seeking out of motive is ultimately determined by the terms on which one addresses it. If one fears sophistic rhetoric as Plato did, then one is unlikely to find any defense of rhetoric acceptable. If one trusts it to a point, as Aristotle did, the results can be more productive. If one neither trusts nor fears style but rather engages with it as a fundamental part of writing, for good or ill, the positive consequences are nearly impossible to calculate. A serious stylistic rhetoric creates questions, and opportunities for intellectual debate, where there may be debate but not focus:

pondering on dramatic motive leads us to conclude that a great deal of human behavior is simply not in the traditional ethical dimension at all. This seems to be a revolution equal in scope and implication equal to the Copernican one.
What is implied, finally, is a redefinition of ethics which still preoccupies us. (Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence* 214)

If human interaction is dramatic, stylistic in the broader sense of that term, then the rules governing such interaction must adopt a stylistic bent. What Lanham suggests about the study of sociocultural interaction builds on more than Kenneth Burke’s interest in the theatricality of rhetoric, however. As his other work (especially *Style: An Anti-textbook*) suggests, if human interaction is itself rhetorical, then one has only added to the demesne that style already oversaw. This approach does not refocus style so much as enlarge its concern to include both human interactions and the discursive inscriptions that follow them.

The form and the content of human interaction are, as it were, equally in need of stylistic analysis as well as the control consequent to rhetorical understanding. One cannot predict the future of discursive interactions, but if stylistics (and the discourse it produces) are subject to phronetic critique, then one will come to terms with how interactions can and do develop. Lanham’s version of the communicative process creates a new role for writers and students of discourse, one predicated on “controlling stylistic self-consciousness” (*Style* 27). As Lanham himself describes it, “[o]ur job is to imagine the reality for which [this or that] style would be appropriate. When we call a style inappropriate, we mean we don’t like the reality it creates, that we find that reality incoherent or jejune” (*Style* 28). His scholarship engages the imagination and curiosity that drive intellectual inquiry in all disciplines. (What is a methodology, after all, but a preferred way of asking and answering questions?) In doing so, he ensures that chance-taking plays as large a role as theory-building or groundbreaking. The play with/of language— with which all articulate humans begin—implicitly promises control over reference if not some absolute reality and is something that writing scholars and teachers need as badly as student-writers. Combining intellectual rigor with the inherent pleasure of signs and sounds, Lanham’s stylistics is as dramatic as style itself should be.
Weaver is neither as accessible as Corbett nor as playful as Lanham. He was, however, unwaveringly committed to the liberal arts, an educational philosophy that he believed was slipping away as early as the 1950s. That idealism probably feels out of place in contemporary academia, where postmodernism and its brood have not only debunked idealism of every kind but also destroyed nearly all trust in words as adequate indices of any reality. Weaver did not trust words above all else; his Platonism made that impossible. He did assume, though, that rhetoric played a fundamental part in the sociocultural business of the world. His idealism fueled this belief, but it did not blind him to the less laudable uses to which discourse might be put. Like Kenneth Burke, Weaver was fully aware of the coercion and disinformation that rhetorical principles spawned during the World and Cold Wars. He apparently felt a deep need to counteract these effects, but he did not proceed to defend the indefensible. Rather, much like Isocrates, Cicero and others, Weaver argued that injecting the ethical into rhetoric would allow control over interlocutors’ choices, if not predetermine them. (Though his idealism may have made even that seem possible to him.) The ethics of rhetoric he proposed was not dependent on the tradition that Lanham exposes but rather on the very ideals Weaver held. The closer one’s discourse approached or manifested those ideals, the more powerful (read: effective) one’s rhetoric was. This view of the ethical dilemma is more helpful as inspiration than as precursor. Weaver should inspire a belief in principles, in the larger contribution rhetoric-composition can and does make. Partner to the playfulness Lanham enacts, Weaver’s idealism provides a sense of wonder that is difficult to replicate by other means.

Having begun my advanced studies as a romanticist, I find the idealism Weaver exhibits in both his work and his life sympathetic objects. The real question one confronts is whether there is a way to transport that idealism to the present without being constrained by the Platonic and Judeo-Christian traditions that weigh so heavily on Weaver. Whether these traditions are intellectually valuable is less important than whether they allow stylistics to approach the rhetorical zenith it
deserves. Neither Plato nor Augustine and other Church fathers much cared for rhetoric, particularly style, whose tendency toward fluffery and ornament they found more than a little suspicious. Weaver knew as much and did what he could to mend fences as he developed his ideas:

if the poet, as the chief transformer of our picture of the world, is the peculiar enemy of this [monist] mentality, the rhetorician is also hostile when practicing the kind of love proper to him. The “passion” in his speech is revolutionary, and it has a practical end. *(Ethics 14-15)*

The poet and the rhetor share certain opportunities (as well as their attendant obligations) under Weaver’s scheme. Rhetoric’s particular advantage, the moment when it surpasses poetics, arises from the practical ends to which its practitioners are led. Rhetoric may transform the world, but it does so for more than passionate or revolutionary reasons—assuming these reasons are insufficient, of course. Through the pragmatic lens that rhetoric provides, rhetoricians accomplish work in the world, work that is informed by passion or revolutionary intentions but that also equally (in)forms the material world outside one’s consciousness.

Weaver’s idealism does not disqualify his argument for rhetoric’s possibility, or the need to stay grounded in what can and should be done here and now. Abstractions are troubling to him, despite his own Platonism, because they slip the bonds of human connection by moving increasingly beyond human life as it is lived. The urgent need for connection informs his work throughout and leads to moments of distinctively non-traditional thinking, as when he argues that “[i]n any general characterization rhetoric will include dialectic” *(Ethics 15)*. Rhetoric is neither causally nor ideationally dependent on dialectic, rather the latter is a part of rhetoric—or more precisely, a *kind* of rhetoric. Weaver’s desire to establish and maintain fundamental truths led him to seek out rhetoric’s mediatory influence. Through the art of speaking well, he hoped to find the thread joining ideas to instances, ideals to real human lives. If nostalgia tinges his work from time to time, if a longing for the past seems to get the better of him here and there, then it is no small
consolation that Weaver himself knew his own weaknesses and (however imperfectly) worked to employ rhetoric as a corrective.

Another of Weaver’s influential moves is less sentimental but equally as powerful in its effect on rhetorical investigation. The Ethics of Rhetoric devotes an entire chapter to “Some Rhetorical Aspects of Grammatical Categories” in hopes of “discover[ing] how the bound character [of language’s grammaticality] affects our ability to teach and to persuade” (Ethics 115). Reversing the position argued by Irvine, Weaver focuses on the rhetoricality of grammar rather than the grammaticality of rhetoric. If grammar is a description of the systemic character of language, if it represents language’s elementary structures and relationships, then it may be engaged as any other rhetorical pattern would be. The difference in this case is that the patterns themselves are “a public instrumentality” (Ethics 115). They cannot be manipulated to the degree that other patterns are because they comprise part of the custom or usage surrounding language as well as the language as system. While grammar may be formulated in various ways, its part is always more linguistic than rhetorical. What Weaver does that makes grammar more than it might otherwise seem is to apply the rhetorical imperative to grammatical categories.

Rather than asking what does grammar require of the writer?, Weaver wonders what the writer can do with grammar: “the [grammatical] pattern once established can become disciplinary in itself and compel us to look for meaning within the formal unity it imposes” (Ethics 117-18). The pattern might impel one to take meaning in this or that way, but it is no less the writer’s job to perceive that potential and harness it. Consequently, Weaver moves beyond an instrumental view of words or discursive structures without sacrificing the idealism that motivates his rhetorical project. Like Todorov in the The Poetics of Prose, for example, he treats nouns as implicit propositions that carry a peculiar rhetorical force:

a single term is an incipient proposition, awaiting only the necessary coupling with another term; and it cannot be denied that single names set up expectancies of propositional embodiment. Given [...] the term “hot,” we might expect to see “sun,”
Weaver transforms the noun as grammatical category into a potent tool for establishing "expectancies," thereby providing the framework for a generative stylistics. If one knows that "hot" is customarily associated with "stove," creating, reinforcing or undermining that expectancy is a rhetorical function, not a grammatical one. Rhetorical, because it relies on the ability of stylistics to enact such implicit propositions within the material realm. It is the rhetor's obligation to confront the world through words.

Indeed, the preceding example suggests one desire shared by Lanham, Weaver and Corbett. Each in his own way depended on the potency of rhetoric to shape people and the world in positive ways. Ethics, goodwill, and the need for human contact and communion overtly shape their projects, and in doing so, these principles allow those writers and scholars who follow them to grasp the enduring value of classical stylistic theory. And so it is with the recuperation I attempt—though it could be argued to produce a retrograde movement within both theory and pedagogy. Stylistic rhetoric’s emphasis on form, regardless of how one might present it to others, implies for some that both writers and writing enact a non-reflective and circumscribed role. In response to this attitude, however, I illustrate (and continue to argue) my approach to style as a vindication of the paralogical assumption that discursive "know-how" can be "sharpened" and "expanded" but neither codified nor taught (Kent Paralogical Rhetoric 48)—something to be further theorized and illustrated in chapters 3 and 4. I also argue that, in recognizing the traditional momentum of classical methods, this chapter should reassure every reader that there is both historical and communicative justification for reconsidering stylistics and rhetoric as I describe.

A retrofitted stylistics can and will strengthen rhetoric-composition as a whole, not produce some weakened (because "abstract") approach to the teaching and understanding of writing. It is for these and other reasons that in the preceding pages, I introduce and clarify the concept of
retrofitting as it applies to the work of rhetoricians within the classical Western tradition. It is for this reason that I interrogate some modern views of classical rhetoric as well as the effects of retheorizing stylistics as the heart of rhetoric. Pragmatically, while retheorizing the canon of style is essential—especially given what cognitive and post-process theories now make possible within rhetoric-composition—it is likely that my methodology requires the most justification. As a consequence, I fully recognize that it is only the test of use, which chapters 3 and 4 provide, that can reveal as well as enact the possibilities uncovered here.

Notes

1 In the following pages, dialectic is assumed to include formal logic, analytic philosophy, and other similar thought systems; and in particular, those frameworks developed by Aristotle, Plato, and Ramus.

2 In the case of Isocrates—who figures heavily in the coming pages—Yun Lee Too reflects the tendency to see style as a quantum by arguing that “the prose and style of Isocrates’ corpus are in fact so consistent that they offer a constant for the stylometric analysis of other authors” (The Rhetoric of Identity 44). Even those who are more forgiving in their approaches to classical rhetoric can fall prey to such minimization. Welch, in her lengthy analysis of Isocrates, partially undercuts her argument by concluding rather abstractly that the sophist’s style is “readable and evocative” (Contemporary 126). Because it resorts to the abstract categories of writing handbooks, this evaluation fails at the exact moment when Welch most needs to disrupt traditional stylistic categories. What she says is not unhelpful, but her argument’s potential is far from maximized.

3 Unfortunately, the work of cognitivists has often been so narrowly focused on metaphor that its application to other stylistic strategies is somewhat difficult. A more generalized psychology of style must be established before a “new” stylistics can succeed, and as a consequence, one of my primary goals is to do for the entire canon what Metaphors We Live By did specifically for metaphor.

4 Aristotle and Plato were rarely as reductive as others have argued. The received tradition, not the men themselves, makes my skirting of them impossible to avoid, however. Drawing a more accurate picture of their views on rhetoric (and style) is beyond the scope of this project, though there are moments when both men’s work may be of some use.

Welch and others contend that “[t]his stance [assumed by the received tradition] dichotomizes thought and discourse, severing the interaction of the two [that] Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and many other classical rhetoricians have established” (Contemporary 15). By abstracting these thinkers’ practices from their rightful context, the force of tradition has welded classical rhetorical theory into a substanceless “monolith,” reductively implying that the ancient and modern “universes of discourse” spring from “discrete” and/or separable sources (Welch, Contemporary 28, 49).

5 Which point is of some importance in chapter 4. This project argues for the potential value of teaching all students to use stylistic strategies in their writing. I assume, as does Welch, that “advanced language ability is already present in all people who write” (Contemporary 140).
Though one might disagree with the rarified air she attaches to stylistic strategies, her argument does much to vindicate the pedagogy advocated here.

6 My analysis is limited to Against the Sophists and Antidosis since the two texts best provide the framework promised earlier. Indeed, Too posits that “the actual lapse of time between the writing of [Isocrates’] individual works should not affect our perception of these texts as elements of a rhetorical structure” (Rhetoric 66). Moreover, these works were produced at either end of the rhetorician’s life and, as a consequence, represent his ideas’ development without narrowly focusing on this or that single moment.

7 “[I]t is interesting to note,” says Too, “that scholars depict Isocrates as the orator who most conspicuously experimented with rhythm and metre in his prose” (Rhetoric 33). From this assumption of experimentation, he (Too) argues that “[g]eneric coherence is affirmed less by coherence of the texts’ ‘speaking’ voice than by patterns of thought and argument, even those, as in the case of antilogy, which seem at first to indicate discontinuity and inconsistency” (Rhetoric 73). These patterns—the recurrence of strategies across and within texts—are what occupy the current exploration.

8 I find Demetrius’ use of the term deinos in On Style suggestive. While it does not alone provide proof of any direct relationship between stylistic rhetoric and writing pedagogies, the idea that words have power is not a new one. The advantage that Demetrius represents through his reliance on power is that in a surprisingly postmodern way, he takes the power of the word as the defining characteristic of effective communication. That is, powerful words are materially meaningful words and this power derives directly from language users’ choices about when, how, and why to speak or write.

9 Aristotle defined the enthymeme much more narrowly because he considered rhetoric to be dialectic’s companion. In The Art of Rhetoric, rhetoric is formulated as “only concerned with proofs,” which are “a sort of demonstration” (1.1.11). He goes on to say, “rhetorical demonstration is an enthymeme, which, generally speaking, is the strongest of rhetorical proofs; and […] the enthymeme is a kind of syllogism.” Thus, rhetoric’s most effective tool is modeled on syllogistic logic, not discursive reality.

Walker resolves the problem by making style, not dialectic, the definitional baseline: “[i]n Isocrates, a mention of the enthymeme is seldom without, and seldom far from, a reference to stylistic matters” (“Body” 49). Thus, “the enthymeme […] appears to include, or to be linked to, passionate thought, kairotic inventiveness, and style.”

10 The semantic breadth of this and other Greek and Latin terms has often been ignored, thought it will be of some importance in the pages which follow. Welch spends a significant amount of her time emphasizing the historical importance of certain keywords in rhetoric. Much like cultural critic Raymond Williams, she suggests that the multivalency and varied meanings of the terms provide some access to rhetorical practices that might otherwise be overlooked, especially when a term like logos is rendered in a one-to-one ratio into the English “word” or “reason.” Rather than providing the opportunity for multiple ways of understanding a relationship, such reductionism superimposes one means of interpreting the world over and against another.

11 One of Isocrates’ primary rhetorical strategies is repetitio (repetition)—both exact and complex (same concept, different words) (Too 53-54). As my analysis of Antidosis reveals, repetition allows Isocrates to create significant patterns across works without any but the most common of discursive tools. More specifically, one can see his fondness for the list, as evidenced in Against the Sophists, reappearing in Antidosis, where another list (of some importance to this project) is similarly developed.
12 Too explores this passage for Isocrates’ argument alone, paying little attention to any stylistic strategies or the explosion of divisions among thought, language, and function.

13 Welch also touches on this idea, though her argument is primarily directed toward the (mis)representations made about sophists like Isocrates and Gorgias (Contemporary 117-18).

14 In response to this narrow-minded attitude, Robert Wardy argues that “the Greek debate over the nature and value of rhetoric, from which all the answers ultimately come, centres on his [Gorgias’] figure” (The Birth of Rhetoric 2). Wardy goes on: “Gorgias not only inaugurated the great rhetoric debate, he also gave unequaled expression to some of its most vital components. To learn about Gorgias is to learn about what continues to matter in rhetoric” (Birth 3). Like Wardy’s, this project is “not concerned to accept or reject this condemnation of Gorgias’ style [. . .]. What [it is] at pains to emphasize is that the puzzlement over Gorgias’ merit might betray a deeper insensitivity towards what he was really about” (Birth 8).

15 Wardy shows that paradoxologia also informs Gorgias’ On What Is Not or On Nature, the very title of which indicating how significant Gorgias’ undermining of expectations is.

16 Which fact directly answers Wardy’s question about Gorgias’ paradoxologia: “if Gorgias in some matter affronts people’s beliefs, how can he successfully persuade them?” (Birth 7). It is precisely because of how he goes about his argument that his persuasion is effective.

17 The qualities of “suffering” seen here intersect with Longinus’ exploration of ekstasis ([sublime] transport) in On the Sublime.

18 Wardy’s analysis of Helen emphasizes this point throughout, going so far as to argue that “Gorgias’ list of divine accomplishments of logos [. . .] all relate to emotional rather than intellectual change, while ability to instill rational conviction is not even mentioned. [. . . W]e, in responding emotionally to Gorgias’ rhetorical seduction are equally passive, equally impotent before his active, divine, power” (Birth 39; emphasis in original).

19 In the case of Helen, one finds a work typical of its time, one of many texts now labeled oratorical literature—a speech recorded in writing, or alternatively a text written as if it were a speech (see Welch 121-22).

20 I return to this debate in the next chapter. Burke, and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca clearly draw on intentionality and ethics to sustain their scholarship, especially in their concern for so-called propaganda and its effects on those Quintilian would term the “unwitting.”

21 Directly following this comparison, Cicero enumerates the traditional intrinsic topical categories, all of which are either enactments of particular processes (definition) or of stylistic strategies (part from whole, or synecdoche). That is, all are “invented by the art of the orator,” culled and developed through discourse (Topics 4.24). I would also refer the reader to Topics 7.32, where he applies this principle to a specific topic, outlining its development through metaphor.
CHAPTER 3
A RHETORICAL HISTORY LESSON, PART TWO

When Wittgenstein said that our world is bounded by our language he did not say that we had no freedom within the boundaries. If you play chess you can only do certain things with the pieces—or you will no longer be playing chess. But those constraints in themselves never tell you what move to make. Language does not speak—any more than the law of gravity falls. Furthermore, language is changed by speech, though gravity is not changed by any act of falling or flying. (Robert Scholes, Textual Power 152-53)

While schematized for effect, the rhetorical foundation laid in chapter 2 illustrates how one might define a pragmatic yet classically minded stylistics. Indeed, maintaining a sympathetic connection between ancient rhetoricians and the contemporary discipline is hardly beside the point. Even a rudimentary understanding of the choices that stylistic strategies demand highlights style’s indispensable role in meaning-making, and that understanding depends first on an informed knowledge of the classical currents I survey. All aspects of the communicative process—thought, word, speaker, audience—are equally influenced by style, though classical rhetoricians’ arguments do not celebrate the canon’s pervasiveness for its own sake. In keeping with Isocrates and the other thinkers I cover, this chapter seeks to do more than (re)define elocutio as the master of all rhetoric. While style may be central to all things rhetorical, that involvement springs from its power to retrofit language to the needs of language users, to meet effectively the demands interlocutors face. Focusing on elocutio’s ubiquity misses the larger point to be made: every style is a way of thinking, no more or less than the means by which one discursively engages the world, others, and oneself.¹

It is in keeping with the classical spirit of possibility that this chapter devotes itself to the two pillars built on the ancient foundation provided by Isocrates, Gorgias, Demetrius, Cicero, and Quintilian. Continuing my retrofitting metaphor, I investigate several modern appropriators of the
exploration of the third canon could avoid retrofitting of one kind or another. Even so, the transformative process involved need not constrain these authors or any other language user because style does not limit choices as much as demand that a choice of some kind be made. Since there are no non-choices when engaging style or its specific practices, contemporary compositionists must confront and define the third canon’s potential use-value for both their students and themselves. The authors I name, whether ancient or modern, are most fruitful when used as models that lend themselves as easily to individual writing experiences as to pedagogy or to theorizing.

In addition, retrofitting must occur to bridge the temporal and theoretical gap between ancient and contemporary contexts. Rhetoric, whether defined as the art of persuasion or as a complete liberal arts curriculum, typically carried a pre-eminence in classical, medieval, and renaissance societies that may never be reproduced again. Literate peoples of these periods were highly self-conscious of words and how they work. By contrast, most people today do not recognize rhetoric’s influence, except to the degree that various discursive engagements are considered manipulative. No matter how much one might wish it otherwise, one must account for rhetoric’s loss of status in the culture at large if stylistics is to prosper in the writing classroom. In a so-called information age, for example, the kind and quantity of discursive exchanges has been shaped in ways radically different from any Isocrates or other classical authors could have imagined; the exigencies and needs of communication and communicators have necessarily changed over time. Style is about linguistic retrofitting—the matching of words to contexts. This chapter is about theoretical retrofitting—the matching of intellectual models to current exigencies. There is no better way to accomplish both tasks than to mobilize the metaphor (and the canon) that best suits those tasks. Preparing for the necessity of retrofitting—by exploring what about style meets expectations and what does not—furnishes a target for uncovering the canon’s elementary nature and function. In other words, foregrounding certain modern authors against the expectations
and roles traditionally attributed to style indicates what current theories may yet lack. If it is possible to take the most fruitful of the old without diffusing the new, it is only because retrofitting allows it. The real concern, however, is how retrofitting occurs and to what end. What makes it work within rhetorical practices, and what makes it work within stylistics more specifically? Through my look at Burke, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Fahnestock, I provide potential answers and, in so doing, conclude my general case for reassessing elocutio.

That said, having established my case yields nothing if it does not affect the individual practices of writers, scholars, and teachers. The pragmatic history of the rhetorical tradition, and the strategy-oriented stylistics I support, require one to begin with the concrete rather than the abstract. The tangible outcomes of this robust stylistics make it inevitable regardless of what one might think. Because motivated language is embedded in all sociocultural practices, it is highly unlikely that any broad re-evaluation of style would have no pragmatic effect whatsoever. Revisiting stylistics is, in this sense, nothing more than retrofitting contemporary views of discourse itself. How language came about or how its systemic character evolved is not at stake here, but how motivated language becomes motivated is. Understanding the nature of that process—even if it cannot be formalized or formulated—allows a power over discourse that invigorates not only rhetorical scholarship and theory but also real readers' and writers' lives. The authors in this chapter are imminently practical in this regard. They remain concerned with the real-world ramifications of language use, and all of them posit that stylistics plays no small role in the material world.

The more specific questions that make these ramifications accessible, that create the self-awareness necessary to engage material reality, fall into three groups:

- How do the processes at work in Isocrates, Gorgias, and the other authors named in chapter 1 affect what later rhetoricians do with or for style? In what ways are they
constrained or liberated by classical currents?³

• Given any classical (side-)effects, what do the four modern authors surveyed in this chapter contribute to stylistics? What is it they understand that one need rely on in formulating a generative and organizational view of style?

• What are the pragmatic results of retrofitting according to the model of Burke, Fahnestock, or Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca? What opportunities does retrofitting provide? What obligations does it carry with it?

The importance of these questions runs through my analysis of ancient rhetoricians. Isocrates' belief in *elocutio* and the enactment of thinking through stylistic strategies.⁴ Gorgias' enactment of stylistic strategies in the service of audience awareness. Quintilian's sense of the dynamic ethical dimensions that an understanding of audience creates. This chapter's authors provide the hindsight and broad awareness that must accompany any contemporary retrofitting of classical stylistics. In those authors one sees not merely what was but also what might be, though only if "what was" is seen as always active in real discursive lives.

Beyond retrofitting the foundation, then, one must account for the most current approaches in rhetoric-composition, not simply current thinking about the rhetorical tradition. A stylistics that cannot account for current work in post-process theory—especially paralogic rhetoric—is a stylistics only half complete. A methodology that cannot inform both the study of discourse and individual enactments of it is not rhetorical enough. In short, one must not be left with more formalism than functionalism. If there is one thing the authors in chapter 1 are not, it is enamored with form as separate from function. And the line of thought these classical writers represent is by no means extinct, or even marginal, in contemporary scholarship. Kinneavy, Corbett, Fahnestock, Burke, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, and many others have productively drawn on the historical practices central to a phenomenological concept of style—one that accounts for how the canon
simultaneously creates and reflects cognition. Each of them has built a body of work that testifies to style’s adaptability and utility, and each of them has done something in his or her turn to contribute to the greater understanding of discursive practices, their sources, and their effects.

Despite the array of scholarship already being done, there is much left to do if stylistics is to become a viable discursive center, whether for rhetoric or for a fragmented discipline like rhetoric-composition. That labor largely depends on the work done in these first two chapters. And by focusing here, as in chapter 1, on certain iconic figures in rhetorical studies, I argue for the necessary linkages between past tradition and present practicability. The possibility for aligning the dormant practices of the ancients with the still coalescing theories of (post)moderns is all the greater for the work of the authors I choose. In these figures one sees the outline of a thoroughly stylistic rhetoric, one equipped for the interpretive and pedagogical demands that current teachers, scholars, and writers have. This (post)modern stylistics is traditional to the degree that it draws on the various patterns present in the sophists, Cicero or Quintilian, including the collapse of binary oppositions and the belief in language as a mechanism for self- and other-centered change. But because Burke and the others use those patterns in less than traditional ways, they create the possibility for more than the papering over of honest differences about how discourse functions, a papering over designed to achieve some monolithic (and practically useless) view of rhetoric. Each of the authors in this chapter has redefined the third canon and, in doing so, realigned the traditional canonical divisions within rhetoric.

The discipline’s categorical division of the canons—which is similar to the common form-content, thought-language, and letter-spirit binaries—inevitably leads to the creation of hierarchies. In the present case, of course, invention and arrangement have long held sway, with style, memory and delivery suffering marginalization within and without rhetoric-composition. The overview presented here overcomes a hierarchical view of the rhetorical canons by arguing that all of rhetoric is stylistic, that every canon is style writ either large or small. Re-determining some
disciplinary center is much less difficult, and more productive, if the third canon is seen as the fundament on which rhetoric rests. There is no invention or arrangement or style per se; there is only rhetoric and rhetoric is stylistic. Like its lexical ancestor studo (column), style is the support on which discursive exchange can and must find its footing. There is nothing more pervasive to the use of language than the phenomena associated with the third canon. Metaphor, repetition, syntactic patterns, all of these and many more are found in the discourse of both the most inept and the most skilled of interlocutors, not only in their choice of words but also in their culling and organization of ideas. Whatever label one chooses, to speak or write is to engage with the world through style.

Burke: Audience Identification and the *Transformatandum*

Throughout his career Kenneth Burke stood as a powerful synthesizer, combining semantics, rhetoric, psychology and philosophy in imminently functional ways that continue to shape English studies. Because his work with rhetoric continually reflects the drive to retrofit, Burke situates the ideas described thus far within a larger context not normally available. His stylistic retrofitting centers on the transformations language represents and reproduces in the world—what he calls "identification"—and it is with the source of these transformations that one probably ought to begin any review of his scholarship. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke starts with a consideration of the "terms for transformation in general": the terms vary in that "many different kinds of image can perform the same function," although they are not "pairs [...] to be placed statically against each other, but in given poetic contexts usually represent a development from one order of motives to another" (11; emphasis in original). Within this proto-structuralist scheme, such pairs might manifest themselves as anything from "the Upward Way and Downward Way" to "Loosing and Binding" because the stability inhering to each doublet is more significant than the individual terms' meanings or functions (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 11). One is reminded here of Zeno's "Burkean" description of dialectic and rhetoric as being the closed fist and the open palm--most
memorably cited by Quintilian in his *Training.* The closed fist of dialectic contains within it the potentiality for rhetoric; the open palm carries with it the closed fist of dialectic as both a prior term and a future term. In serving as the *transformandum* ("the changing face") for dialectic, rhetoric is the fulfillment of the dialectal method in the world of *language-in-use*, which is something this work emphasizes and to which Burke consistently refers in *Motives*.

Burke justifies the importance of both beginnings and endings in describing the relationship of pairs of terms (and by extension, pairs of human beings) by cautioning that

\[\text{[t]his concern with the statement of essence in terms of origins (ancestry) [should not cause] us to overlook the exactly opposite resources, the statement of essence in terms of culminations (where the narrative notion of “how it all ends up” does serve for the logically reductive notion of “what it all boils down to”). (A Rhetoric of Motives 15; emphasis in original)}\]

Burke begins by mobilizing several spatial metaphors to mark the supposed disjunction between "origin" and "culmination" to produce a third (unnamed) term, a term which is really the pairing of these oppositional elements when treated as *complements*. One term provides a sense of "what it all boils down to"; the other, a sense of what "it" is. One focuses on the effect of things in the world; the other, on the things themselves. And yet, in the instance Burke cites, culminations tell one as much about the nature of a thing as origins. Burke uses rhetoric to disrupt the dialectically exclusive relationship between binary terms. Rhetoric and dialectic are both engaged through Burke’s stylistic choices here and elsewhere, and as a result, their individual natures become less distinct than one might (customarily) assume.

Rhetoric becomes a paralogic complement to dialectic—much as the palm and fist are the same object in different guises. Dialectic may the the logic of ideas, the tight loop of closed fists and syllogisms, but rhetoric is the logic of the word, the wide orbit of open palms and kairotic choices. What it all boils down to is the power of discourse, of Burke’s narrative of transformation, to produce outcomes that can be planned for but not brought to pass. One finds not logical
argumentation but paradox, word play, and *reductio ad absurdum* providing whatever discursive momentum Burke establishes here. The paradox provides the passage’s argumentative force, relying on the reader’s willingness to embrace (by identifying herself with Burke) the apparent contradictions created through a *transf” admiration. The substitution of “boiling down” for “ending up”—itself a programmatic metaphor and unstable term—reinforces Burke’s movement beyond contradictions. (If the terms themselves are not irreplaceable, how can their contradictory relationship be considered stable or immutable?) *Reductio ad absurdum* becomes a way for Burke finally to enact transformation. He does, after all, worry about what it all boils down to, what a discursive transformation’s purest essence might be. In this instance, and given his focus on binaries like dialectic-rhetoric and (in later sections) author-audience, there is no better way to determine a transformation’s essence than self-consciously using the relevant logical fallacy as a rhetorical strategy—enacting what he calls elsewhere “the efficacy of appropriateness” and creating the possibility for thought to seamlessly become word (*Counter-statement* 40). Burke’s choice destroys the contradiction supposed to inhere to binary oppositions. But this dissipation of oppositions does not ignore differences; the differences, like all verbal constructs, are *discursively created*. Changing the discursive frame through which they (the terms) are considered changes their relationship to one another and to those who are doing the considering. Differences do not disappear but rather are communicatively reconfigured.

Burke’s narrative of transformation is the story of *elocutio*’s effectiveness in tackling concepts and situations usually reserved—at least since the time of Ramus and his artificial separation of the rhetorical canons—for rhetoric’s more sophisticated cousin, dialectic (including rhetorical invention and organization):

As for “persuasion” itself: one can imagine including purely logical demonstration as a part of it; or one might distinguish between appeals to reason and appeals to emotion [..] and the like, reserving the notion of persuasion for these less orderly kinds of “proof.” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 51)
At first glance, Burke observes, persuasion—in a scheme attributed only to the willfully vague “one”—may not include appeals to reason. But as he also points out, “in the Platonic scheme, [...] dialectic enterprise starts from opinion,” and so “in its very search for ‘truth,’ it [dialectic] began with ‘opinion,’ and thus in a sense was grounded in opinion” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 53; emphasis in the original). Rhetoric, not dialectic, emerges as the persuasive baseline, dealing as it does with the stuff of opinion, custom, and probability. Dialectic may be one sort of rhetoric, and the enthymeme one sort of stylistic strategy, but it isn’t the *sine qua non* of any, much less all, discourse. Zeno’s image of dialectic and rhetoric as the closed fist and the open palm, for example, then represents the relationship further refined by Burke’s identification; whatever their labels, the initial terms are the phenomenological axes through which all identification (as both a discursive and a social process) must necessarily pass. These terms must be dealt with, but as individual quanta, they are not sufficient to explain the identificatory process. The *complex* that the terms (or individual people) represent disrupts whatever disjunction might appear to exist. This complex depends on the synonymy of form, psychology, and style and implicitly argues that concepts and interlocutors are inscribed by as well as inscribe the world they seek to engage (*Burke, Counter-statement* 40).

Given the importance of narrative transformation in establishing this groundwork, it is not surprising that Burke also defines identification through a series of propositions (a narrative of its own):

A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so. (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 20; emphasis in original)

Identification is the narrative of transformation, if you will, by which B becomes A, “[y]et at the same time remains unique, an individual locus of motives” (21). The transformation of A and B is made possible by rhetoric’s grounding in “the areas of persuasion and dissuasion, communication
and polemic" (21). Identification begins with stylistic engagement (whether conscious or not), and as it develops, it is truly an acting-together—a narrative transformation inscribed in the world, moved into the realm of the tangible reality shared by two or more people. More specifically, identification is created through the particular stylistic patterns that rhetoric inscribes on interlocutors’ thinking:

As for the relation between “identification” and “persuasion”: we might well keep it in mind that a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker’s interests; and the speaker draws on the identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience. So, there is no chance of our keeping apart the meanings of persuasion, identification (“consubstantiality”) and communication (the nature of rhetoric as “addressed”). But, in given instances, one or another of these elements may serve best for extending a line of analysis in some particular direction. (46)

Thus, stylistic identification is consubstantiality, and in its turn, consubstantiality is (the ideal) communicative action. Isocrates and Gorgias wove the same dynamic into their work, and Burke successfully invokes that tradition in the service of modern rhetorical theory. The patterns on which stylistic strategies rely—patterns all language users are familiar with, even when they cannot name them—provide the catalyst for what Burke describes. The patterns inhering to stylistic strategies exploit discourse’s potential as action in the world.

Because Burke receives the canon of style in the classicist spirit, he understands and takes advantage of its functionality, which includes expressly ornamenting a text to produce pleasure: “The rhetorical devices can become obtrusive, sheer decadent decoration [. . .]; but we have offered reasons for believing that even the most ostentatious of them arose out of great functional urgency” (A Rhetoric of Motives 66). For instance, “Cicero likens his lists of devices to weapons, which can be used for threat and attack, or can be brandished purely for show” (68). Even in the baroque practices of Gorgias or Longinus, stylistic strategies are never functionless. They are always affective, to be sure, but they are also always effective, allowing a language-user to accomplish work in the world. Burke is careful to remind readers that the identification of
audience with author is a material (read: pragmatic) manifestation of the discursive transformandum described in Motives' opening sections. Neither a different phenomenon nor a different stage of the same phenomenon, the interaction of language-users relies on the same dissipation of opposition and difference. Such dissipation is not a function of two people becoming dopplegangers--one winning an argument, the other acquiescing sheepishly--but rather of the two's agreement to share the same window onto the world and each other. (Whether that agreement need be conscious or voluntary is addressed in a moment.) The nearly precise matching of word and world, or of Self and Other, suggests that rhetoric's reach does not stop at matters of probability or within those areas not considered rational/logical.

By aligning identification and narrative transformation along the same trajectory, Burke manages to reinsert psychology and dialectic into rhetorical interaction. On the one hand, since all interlocutors (as psychological beings) are consubstantiated through style, psychology necessarily informs their identification and style's part in it. Burke's pragmatic calculus describes the third canon's psychological potential without resorting to scientism or stock formulation. On the other hand, since narrative transformation can and does disrupt traditional dialectical relationships--especially since dialectic is an abstraction from actual material conditions--stylistic strategies clearly have some influence over dialectic's discursive aspects. Beyond providing Burke with an opportunity to re-establish the influence of elocutio, the twinning of these transformanda works against "[t]he seeming breach between form and subject matter, between technique and psychology, which has taken place in the last century" (Counter-statement 31). The breach is not significant for its force (which Burke does eventually deflect) as much as its being "the result [...] of scientific criteria being unconsciously introduced into matters of purely aesthetic judgment" (31). Burke's concern arises from the imposition of non-rhetorical criteria on rhetorical matters. The suggestion that rhetoric is irrational or non-rational derives from confusions about what rhetoric does and from whence it comes. In addition, the reification of form--an objectified or
mechanized attempt to proscribe discursive phenomena—cannot dominate if the breach is to be closed. Yet that domination can only be prevented by understanding how form and content, thought and language, interact. Asserting that content (the logic of ideas, dialectic) is the sole driver of communication imposes on discourse an artificial expectation that debilitates rhetoric’s power and, more seriously, language users’ ability to create and to receive discourse effectively: “[t]he hypertrophy of the psychology of information is accompanied by the corresponding atrophy of the psychology of form” (33).

The best preventative against the contention that information is the only significant facet of discursive interaction comes in a robust style—what Burke calls eloquence, which is synonymous for him with the psychology of form. In Counter-statement “eloquence” signifies the sum total of the relations in and around the interaction of psychology and form. (It is their transformandum.) Burke’s refusal to engage in categorical separation allows him to deal holistically with the complex of sociolinguistic forces involved in discursive enactment. It prevents him (and the reader) from situating himself too firmly in one interpretive stance when investigating the canon. Indeed, Burke suggests toward the end of Counter-statement that “[t]he great danger in eloquence resides in the fact that it tends to become not a quantitative but a qualitative thing” (169). By qualitative, of course, he does not mean interpretive—since all judgments are necessarily interpretations of some thing or another—but rather measured against a dialectic metric (series of absolute criteria). Psychologizing the third canon grants one the opportunity to retrofit it according to individualized contingencies. Repetition is always repetition for what it is worth, but repetition is not always effective if weighed against a single set of criteria. To quantify style is to describe it and, more significantly, to understand the particular results produced at particular moments. Failing this understanding, elocutio (and through it, the psychology of form) becomes not a phenomenon but an artifact, not a process but an object: “[u]nder such an attitude, when form is preserved it is preserved as an annex, a luxury, or, as some feel, a downright affectation” (32-33). And, of course,
the drive to "preserve" form—like that to maintain a relic or specimen—springs from the assumption that style is "merely textual," in the most pejorative sense of the phrase.

Textuality is an expression of more than linguistics or literacy. If one believes that writing or speech is only instrumental, one misses the more influential reason any two individuals communicate. Information may be the ostensible commodity of everyday discursive interactions, but the underlying value of that commodity—especially in the twenty-first century—derives almost entirely from the sociocultural affirmation (or critique) implicit in the sharing of such information. Sharing information implies most obviously that the shared information is of some value, whether for its own sake or for what it makes possible. The sharing of information also implies that those doing the sharing have some need for one another that involves shared human existence, (dis)respect, and so forth. The increased use of e-mail and virtual communities on the Internet cannot be accounted for if one assumes simply that technology is being used only for its own sake. Whatever the needs might actually be, it is a certainty that there is some human drive to make and maintain contact with other human beings. Burke's stylistic theory assumes this need a priori rather than occluding its influence by treating rhetoric as a linguistic or dialectic science. As he eventually concludes in *Counter-statement*, "[t]he primary purpose of eloquence is not to enable us to live our lives on paper--it is to convert life into its most thorough verbal equivalent" (167). Human lives are not linguistic or dialectic objects; they are psychosocial phenomena. They definitely involve other material beings as well as the tangible material conditions within which all human beings live, but no one's life neatly confines itself to the clear boundaries of a sports field. Discursive exchange is not a game, in this sense at least, and stylistic rhetoric becomes Burke's means of understanding how exactly one plays the non-game of rhetorical interaction.

Given the contingency-based dovetailing of word and world, Burke might easily have resorted to the expressivism that has influenced more than a few compositionists and that historically has become the artistic rationale for literary romanticism. Everything rhetorical might
have been a narrow matter of my or your "personal" opinion on this or that matter, precisely what Plato saw as the danger inherent to sophistic rhetoric. But Burke did not assume that contingency immediately or necessarily produced relativism. He did not conceive of stylistic rhetoric as facilitating only self-expression—that is, expression somehow detached from the world outside one's personal experience. Because thought and word are only separate when artificially treated and because motivated language relies on a shared system of signs, all private expression is ultimately publicly shaped. Like the apparent contradiction of categorical binaries, this conundrum is overcome through narrative transformation. The third canon ensures that the private is the public. Psychology, form, and eloquence come together dynamically at the moment of discursive expression. On the one hand, discourse must serve to mold minds into compatible ways of seeing and thinking. Communication is impossible if interlocutors do not share certain ideas about the world, others, and themselves. And common terms for communicating these ideas must be established, even in this non-game. On the other hand, discourse must suit the individual needs of the audience involved. For discourse to be pragmatically effective, it must do more than express the Self; to a larger or smaller degree, it must allow all interlocutors to reach particular goals. While not purely instrumental, discourse must be an adequate means to the end(s) sought.

In Counter-statement Burke tackles the dilemma of inside/outside thinking by removing the apparent boundaries between interlocutors as well as between the terms under consideration during communication. Beginning with a phenomenological definition of form, Burke brings author and audience into discursive confluence: "form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite" (Counter-statement 31). Psychology and form are here unified and made susceptible to external influence. Moreover, an author not only influences mental "appetites" through the form(s) his discourse takes but also may help to create the very appetites to which he appeals. Generating a need in one's audience makes them dependent on one for satisfaction—whether intellectual or emotional. Fulfilling that need brings author and audience to a
moment of mutual (dis)closure. The discursive focal point represented by this moment is neither truly closed nor completely sufficient. Even so, it does serve as the ground on which further communication might occur. Through it author and audience can assess where they reside and where they would like yet to go. It is the intellectual and emotional breather that makes mutual understanding possible. One point of agreement (often created through a stylistic strategy) makes future points easier to accomplish. Burke’s undermining of contradiction is not complete, however, as an individual’s idiosyncratic appetites are only half of what makes her human: “[e]loquence is not showiness; it is, rather, the result of that desire in the artist to make a work perfect by adapting it in every minute detail to the racial appetites” (41; emphasis mine). Adapting one’s discourse to the general human desire to engage others is as significant as creating appetites that serve one’s (or another’s) individual ends. One does not engage others through stylistic strategies as if people were tabulae rasae. Creating appetites must occur, but understanding those sociocultural appetites already in place--the ways and means by which people think and feel--is equally necessary to successful communication.

Throughout his maneuvers Burke maintains the fine balance between thought and word, Self and Other that uses discourse to leverage human appetites, pre-existing or not. Stylistic strategies (eloquence) are humans’ primary tool for taking advantage of the material opportunities that any communicative exchange presents. A passage from the final pages of Counter-statement illustrates this process by exploring the concept of rhythm:

[w]e must also consider the value of formal appeal in inducing acquiescence. For to guide the reader’s expectations is already to have some conquest over him. Thus even a rhythm not categorically adapted to the reader [. . .] can increase its adaptability through the patient pervasiveness of repetitive form. (178)

The rhythm of one’s words, like any other stylistic feature, simultaneously creates and undermines expectations. Rhythm becomes more than a textual feature to the degree that it works through the audience to establish a pattern of expectancy. The catch in the present instance comes in what
follows from that expectancy. Even those readers or listeners who are not immediately seeking out or engaged through a given rhythm may be "overtaken" if that rhythm is patterned (read: repeated and repeatable). Acquiescence is induced through "the pervasiveness of repetitive form" precisely because repetition establishes what the reader expects from whatever words follow. (In some cases he will demand that they [the words] continue as the pattern indicates.) The human mind tends to think in particular ways, and patterns encourage those tendencies. What becomes discursively familiar throughout a text, whether written or spoken, becomes intellectually comfortable. As Gorgias' Helen certainly indicates, an audience is subject to the lord of language through a lulling of the mind in favor of comfort. As Burke extends the principle, the author's patience in establishing various patterns is the primary source of that self-imposition ("acquiescence"). In addition, style's suasory function produces the positive coming together of minds (the retrofitting of A and B) as well as the coercive subjugation of minds typical of disinformation and other repressive discourses (the imposition of A over B). In keeping with the present project, Burke's concern in the latter cases is for determining how coercion is engineered and how understanding that engineering might produce a remedy. He probes the ways in which all suasory effects come about, not merely what they are or how they work. Indeed, the poignancy of his work and his greatest contribution to rhetoric (form as psychology, or identification) emerge precisely because of his skepticism about the uses to which humanity might put the third canon's identificatory force.

**Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca: An Argument for Style**

Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca capture the potential Burke unleashed with his narrative transformation by focusing themselves on elocutio's inherent argumentative aspects. Concentrating first on jurisprudence (the study of law) then later on the other human sciences, they contribute an awareness that style is dialectical and argumentative as well as rhetorical and affective. Traditional rhetoric supposedly reserved argumentation for the first two canons (invention and arrangement), associating that method with the Aristotelian proofs (logos, ethos,
and pathos) as well as the later stasis theory of Roman forensics. Burke’s stylistics attempts to explain the persuasive force of the third canon in terms of human psychology. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca build on both currents and strive to represent what they themselves call “the new rhetoric”—which is both the title of the volume under consideration here and a psychological system of argumentation grounded in stylistics rather than empirical dialectical methods. As with Burke, they are concerned with disinformation, advertising and the other rhetorical “trouble spots.” Like Burke, they center themselves on the phenomenological and stylistic aspects of rhetorical interaction.8

What is most distinctive about these authors is their construction of stylistic strategies as viable alternatives to the dialectical method of argumentation found in the so-called hard sciences. Because they concern themselves with the business of how/why someone in “the human sciences, law, and philosophy” goes about creating arguments, particularly with regard to her “methods of proof,” the resulting theory is nothing short of a new stylistics (The New Rhetoric 10). This renewed stylistic dimension provides strength because it stands starkly against the background of conventional dialectical argument without denying the vast rhetorical value of argumentation. The authors admit that “[t]he theory of argumentation which, with the aid of discourse, aims at securing an efficient action on minds might have been treated as a branch of psychology” (9). Burke pursued this psychologism through the concept of identification and saw it as a (primarily) aesthetic function of discourse. In The New Rhetoric, the adherence of minds is attributed to style’s argumentative influence. The authors’ theory assumes that audience identification is as much about rational arguments as about human psychological tendencies. (During the course of the book, the two forces become indistinguishable.) The new rhetorical approach assumes that style is dialectically functional and ultimately effective because it accomplishes for opinion and probability what formal argumentation accomplishes for empirical data and certainty.
The resulting theory of argumentation does not stand in opposition to empirical methods, however; as with Burke, who retrofitted dialectic and rhetoric, the authors posit that a change in audience means a change in the appearance of the argumentation and, if the aim of argumentation is always to act effectively on minds, in order to make a judgment of its own value we must not lose sight of the quality of the minds which the argument has succeeded in convincing.

[. . .] We shall show that the same techniques of argumentation can be encountered at every level, at that of discussion around the family table as well as that of debate in a highly specialized environment. [. . . T]he community of structure between [highly speculative] arguments and those used in daily discussions explains why and how we succeed in understanding them. (The New Rhetoric 7-8)

The noted change in an argument's appearance across contexts provides one's first hint about the powerful theory being explicated. A recognition (and perhaps even harnessing) of any argument's formalfunctional malleability brings aspects of the first two canons, *inventio* and *dispositio*, under style's control. The attribution builds on Burke's psychology of form and confronts any remaining doubt about the third canon's centrality within rhetoric. As minds change, so must the arguments that affect them, and the third canon concerns itself with exactly that change of form-function-content. In essence, the new rhetoric retrofits traditional theories of argumentation to account for the more expansive definition of style—in both its study and its enactment—described in these pages.

As a moment of narrative transformation, the above passage also argues for certain fundamental structures/effects, even in the face of changes in appearance. This transformation picks up at the moment Isocrates and Gorgias leave off. In *Antidosis* and *Against the Sophists*, for example, one finds lists of one sort or another—the most memorable are perhaps the chain of infinitival phrases in the former and the priamel in the latter—and as my analysis shows, such strategies are of no small importance to Isocrates' arguments. Moreover, the strategies' similarity means that each time a common strategy like the list is encountered, one may draw on past experiences as an aid in interpreting the latest instance. The strategy is not so radically different that past experience is of no use in the present circumstance (or even the future possibility). Even
so, that similarity is at the structural level, not in those strategies’ semantic manifestations or particular nuances. While the list *qua* strategy always schematizes a given cluster of concepts, no two manifestations of the strategy look the same or produce quite the same effects on an audience, whether individually or collectively. To be effective each use of the list must be suited to the context in which it occurs, the specific purposes to which it is put, the audience toward whom it is directed, and the degree to which the author is self-conscious of (dis)advantages of these other factors.

Meeting contextual peculiarities requires a theory of argument that relies on stylistic psychology, but a common language and a shared sense of how discursive strategies work will not alone make for effective argumentation (*The New Rhetoric* 15). The psychology of style, Burke contended, relies heavily on the equivalence of style and thought. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca likewise suggest that understanding how style functions means nothing less than understanding how human thought develops: “[k]nowledge of an audience cannot be conceived independently of the knowledge of how to influence it” (23). One’s audience cannot be adequately addressed without some speculation about their situatedness. Moreover, one cannot adequately engage an audience without creating discursive situations and/or mobilizing strategies that help *construct* their stance in the world--or alternatively, that help them to construct that stance themselves:

> [t]he audience, as visualized by one undertaking to argue, is always a more or less systematized construction. Efforts have been made to establish its psychological or sociological origins. The essential consideration for the speaker who has set himself the task of persuading concrete individuals is that his construction of the audience should be adequate to the occasion. (19)

Rhetors must be students of human nature if they hope to influence others effectively (20). And “schooling” oneself in this lore depends on previous discursive experiences and on one’s own *self-construction*. Because a specific exchange’s outcomes cannot be prognosticated, every author must understand (read: remember and apply) the way(s) in which similar, though not identical, past situations have turned out. Such understanding necessarily produces a change in the author, who
cannot hope to maintain himself as he was—assuming that a fixed Self could ever be possible in any event. Effective communication produces rhetorical change in everyone, author and audience. A pragmatic stylistics must then assume that constructing one’s audience is equally a remaking of oneself. Such remaking requires (in large or small part, as the case may be) that the rhetor comprehend what creates a desire to listen to her as well as the other imperatives already described. That is, if an audience does not feel a desire to listen, one’s rhetoric can never be effective: “under normal circumstances, some quality is necessary in order to speak and be listened to” (18). Whether one attributes this frustratingly vague quality to ethos (authority, credibility, charisma) or some other rhetorical proof, the authors imply that stylistic strategies, and through them the construction of kairotic arguments, create and reinforce the willingness of others to listen.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca go on to suggest that the broader methodologies employed by an author can be categorized according to the (one of three types of) audience engaged: logic is employed with oneself; dialectic, with one other; and rhetoric, with many others (The New Rhetoric 30-31; 40-41). Their scheme presents difficulties that must be attended to, however, since it implies a certain analytic scientism that is usually unhelpful when treating stylistic rhetoric. While the authors are quick to point out that facts never “speak for themselves,” they also posit a distinction between persuading and convincing (17; 27-29). The latter creates another untenable separation and, in part at least, encourages the later categorization of audience by number. Rather than accepting the separation of rhetorical functions or the division of one’s audience, one might view the facets involved as differences of degree rather than kind. Convincing an audience may produce more lasting results than “merely persuading” them, but the means to achieving either end are derived from stylistic strategies. Similarly, the internal dialogue that all language-using humans periodically carry out is different from conversation or oratory before a crowd in its situational demands but probably not in its finding discursive strategies amenable and/or necessary. I may use
repetition with myself to remember something I wish to buy at the store or to convince myself that I should or should not act in a certain way. That use seems hardly different in kind from repetition used to create audience adherence or to build discursive momentum and argumentative force. The subject matter to which the strategy is applied will, of course, affect the strategy’s shape and deployment, but repetition is repetition nonetheless. Classical rhetoric may not have accounted for the individual interlocutor (35); that oversight does not preclude classical rhetorical principles from being applied to him.

Whether these disjunctions are fully remedied or set aside for a later time, at least one consequence of The New Rhetoric’s treatment of the relationship between author and audience bears further consideration. Drawing on Isocrates’ belief that the adherence of others reinforces and/or clarifies one’s own adherence to an idea or course of action, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca definitively suspend the schism traditionally instantiated between Self and Other (The New Rhetoric 41).9 Their reliance on the concept of adherence allows Burkean identification fully to re-enter not only the discursive process in general but also argumentation in particular. Without some sense that A and B are at work on a common endeavor, A’s convincing of B may never begin, much less succeed: “[f]or argumentation to exist, an effective community of minds must be realized at a given moment” (14). Because communication depends on the existence of “effective community,” the real task of any language user is determining precisely how to establish and maintain adherence.10 Burke’s theory accomplishes this goal through stylistic strategies, relying on an audience’s prior familiarity with and understanding of the patterns that such strategies represent. Expectation and custom provide a common endeavor on which both writer and reader can work; it is, or can become, the common negotiation of meaning and its consequences (both intellectual and material). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have a similar task, though they tease further nuances from the reception of such strategies as Burke describes. They emphasize the
nature and function of interpretation in any communicative exchange—a phenomenological aspect of discursive engagement that Burke often approaches indirectly or from a different direction. Burke deals with the problem differently in part because his theory of identification contains a ready-built hermeneutic—it already assumes a certain way of making sense of the world—and in part because his center of concern lies in the broader field of persuasion, which has traditionally avoided specific investigation of interpretive moves in favor of the ultimate effects those moves produce. The New Rhetoric is less instrumental to the extent that it focuses on convincing rather than persuading—the bar is higher, as it were, whether the former is seen as different in kind or in degree. The complexity of that process, which depends on determining rhetorical stances through more than what people say or do, requires a certain celebration of multivalence. The authors valorize the multiplicity of options available in most argumentative instances because the entire range of choices involved shapes the probable trajectory a given argument may take. Ignoring all but the most obvious or least unlikely possibilities inappropriately attempts to predetermine argumentative outcomes. As they readily admit, their “study has displayed the ambiguity surrounding the argumentative datum that is to be interpreted and the manifold and constantly interacting aspects under which it can be interpreted” (The New Rhetoric 123). Whereas Burke places these dynamics in suspension within narrative transformation so that he may investigate the underlying structures, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca prefer to follow the progression as it unfolds. The former’s study produces a time-lapse record (a dramatistic account) of the communicative process; the latter authors’, a full-motion depiction (a forensic analysis) of the same interaction. That is not to say either tack is inadequate compared with the other, as both approaches assume that discourse is “a means of action” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 8). Rather new rhetorical theory expands the influence of Burkean stylistics, resulting in not only a psychological stylistics but also a stylistics equipped to handle probabilistic argumentation.
The equipment of style to handle argument as well as persuasion derives from two related demands expressed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. First, they are concerned by the "univocity" of modern logic, which has historically attempted to avoid lack of closure or resolution (The New Rhetoric 13). The power they extract from multivalent applications of style puts the lie to any contention that argument must always be linearly (pre)determined or that stylistic strategies play no role in the invention, arrangement, or outcomes of argument. Second, they suggest that there is no clear distinction between demonstration and argument (13). To demonstrate is to argue, and while demonstration may be assumed to have no practical end—in short, to be for its own sake—argumentation necessarily relies on demonstration to prove its case. Undoing the historical fracturing of rhetoric into deliberative and epideictic components blazes the trail for a fully faceted and robust rhetorical theory, one that does not rely on artificial distinctions imposed from without. The Romans relegated demonstration to grammar (the interpretation and reception of texts) because they did not find a need for it within their forensic rhetoric. The modern scientific method dismisses it as superfluous to the "objective" process on which all legitimate inquiry is supposed to rely.

By contrast, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca posit rather forcefully that while impartiality is possible, objectivity is not, and they assume that interest in an outcome is not the same as prejudice for/against a particular result (The New Rhetoric 59-62). Because one's audience is always a composite of the actual individuals involved—and because every individual is an equivalent composite of rhetorical stances—distinguishing between these two pairs of terms may seem less important than it might otherwise be. The rhetorical self-construction of a rhetor also lobbies against ever being able to separate true interest from damaging prejudice. The criteria applied in these cases are as ambiguous as the authors promise, but the distinction being drawn may suggest a further role for style within rhetorical exchange. The deployment of stylistic strategies, conscious or not, does not reveal the intentions of the author involved, nor does an audience's response
necessarily tell one everything about them. The means for determining prejudice, for example, is itself a composite of factors, ranging from the shape of authorial utterance to the context weighing on that utterance. Stylistic analysis (and stylistic theory in general) does allow an assessment of likelihood, however, and that may be all one can or should hope for in actual discursive interaction. Barring some telepathic contact between individual beings, the best use to which stylistics might be put is judging why someone in a particular situation *might* say what they have as they have. The resulting judgments serve as an index of an argument's sources and the vectors influencing its shape. If one assumes that there is no practicable way to separate thought from word, then the word will always reveal something about the thought to which it belongs. Reliance on past discursive experience makes this guesswork fairly useful, and while it is not usually as empirically tidy as some would like, discourse (motivated language) differs radically from language as an abstract system precisely because it involves human psychology—something more convoluted and frustrating than most would like.

Concomitant with style's role as a rough index of interest/prejudice is an acceptance that style cannot remove "[i]ncomprehension and error in interpretation" as "an essential condition of language" (*The New Rhetoric* 123). Because stylistic practices grow from probability and custom rather than empirical data, there are moments when, despite the most vigorous deployment of strategies, discursive exchange will necessarily fall into disarray. That disarray is not the same as total incomprehensibility, to be sure, and misunderstanding and misinterpretation do not automatically create irrefragable barriers to communication--language adapts itself to aporias of meaning in much the same way as it adapts to any other material phenomenon. But the latter can and do cause communicative interaction to be much more tentative than it otherwise would be. Any stylistics that hopes to move beyond the prescriptive recipe for or clinical analysis of effective language-in-use must somehow (re)design itself to deal with these communicative aporias. For their part, and specifically to counteract this lack of certainty, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca
explore the possibility that rhetoric should in part become “the study of misunderstanding and of ways of remedying it”—a proposal drawn from the work of poet and critic I. A. Richards. Since stylistic rhetoric’s effectiveness is greatest when it deals with communication as it occurs, it must avoid supposing what should or ought to occur. Moreover, while *elocutio* functions best when it dictates least, its ability to handle misunderstanding can only get one so far. Because language is always (already) retrofitted to the world in which it exists—a condition that Kent and others have called its “thrownness” (*Paralogic Rhetoric* 12)—it is difficult to imagine a language-in-action free of the so-called errors to which *The New Rhetoric* refers. The quality of thrownness is the paralogical and discursive equivalent of an audience’s incarnation (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca) or transubstantiation (Burke) and occurs because language is only meaningful, meaning full, when used. (How or why should one predict that which only occurs when prediction no longer matters?)

While rhetoric may attempt to harness the third canon’s capacity to circumvent and/or short-circuit interpretive mishaps, that capacity depends on style itself—an infinite loop of causality run amok. Stylistics relies on interlocutors’ ability to perceive and be affected by linguistic patterns, and these patterns in turn rely on stylistics to define them as significant. (Repetition exists whether someone can name it as such, but it does not exist, for example, as a quantifiable entity for discursive study unless one can give it a name, a categorical reality.) If stylistic strategies rely on particular textual and psychological patterns for their effectiveness, it is only because those patterns are familiar enough to direct an interlocutor’s attention in comprehensible ways. The effective rhetor, like Isocrates and Gorgias, explodes the separation of thought, form, and function. She ensures *minimal* misinterpretation by engaging an audience’s felt sense of what is being said, in what way, and for what reasons. She ensures that her discourse contains within it the guidelines—contextually dependent markers—by which it might be interpreted.
To be sure, the ways in which discourse gets marked do not remove all possibility for frustrated communication, but they do provide a sensible (read: practicable) start at defining the boundaries of and accepting the consequences of communicative slippage. Through all of this, the central question is still why might an author write as he does, not why did he? That “might” applies to persuasion, as Burke would have it, as well as to arguments beyond dialectic, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca would have it. No use of stylistic rhetoric, whether broadly intuitive or materially pragmatic, avoids the “might” of language-in-use. The question of probability, the harnessing of the vast storehouse that rhetoric accesses, subverts questions of intentionality by looking to the commonality of experience all users of language share. It assumes that all rhetors are also students of human nature precisely because they themselves are human beings. It assumes all audience members are in like positions. And it assumes most importantly that, like Quintilian’s *vir bonus*, language users must ever confront the social and ethical effects of their words. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca bring this consequence to the fore differently than the other authors I survey because they specifically investigate the argumentative force of rhetorical strategies. Within their framework, the rhetor is not simply responsible for some general influence over others. She has the additional burden of having convinced others in reasonable (though not rigidly dialectical) ways to consider or engage a particular course of action. That unprecedented and quite broad power leaves writers and speakers with increased chances for both accomplishment and failure, especially where ethics, misunderstanding and misinformation are concerned. *The New Rhetoric* opens for investigation the idea that *elocutio* argues as well as persuades, but it yet remains to determine how far that potential might lead one or what the ultimate consequences might be.

**Fahnestock: Figures as Epitomes of Argument**

As a close follower of Burke and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Fahnestock fully explores the inventive and organizational arcs that style intersects (and the discursive relationships that motivate those intersections) by considering figures as “epitomes” of discursive exchange
Although she often works with materials from the philosophy and history of science, her work revolves around the dialectical and pedagogical outlets that the third canon provides. And her *Rhetorical Figures in Science* is unrepentantly built on the notion that *elocutio* is a collection of discursive strategies that “iconically” represent larger patterns of thought (23). Fahnestock’s definition of figures “as the formal embodiments of certain ideational or persuasive functions” reinforces the historical trajectory I favor because it accounts for style’s role as more than either a formal afterthought or even a non-dialectic form of argumentation (23). Fahnestock’s investigation of figures—including *anaphora*, *gradatio*, and *antimetabole*—as epitomes of lines of argument assumes there is both a theoretical and a pedagogical value in reassessing stylistics. By redefining such study as well as its object through her exploration of the textual performances (and stylistic markings) of authors like Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin, she is able to consider whether those performances are the sites from which scientific argument both begins and develops.14

Fahnestock concludes her introduction with a pedagogical and highly practical justification for the study of figures in scientific argument: “[s]ince it is impossible to argue without exploiting the structures identified in the rhetorical tradition, consciously or unconsciously, it would be better to use these devices consciously” (*Rhetorical Figures* xii). Her reasoning both provokes and appeals. The statement provokes because it begs the question of whether one might argue without rhetorical “structures.” The comment appeals because of the boldness with which she does that begging. Whereas Burke’s theorizing was often diluted by its ebb and flow, the intricate patterns it created as it developed, Fahnestock is clear in her position that form when accurately combined with function produces “argumentative content” (22). No chance for persuasion or possibility for identification intrudes; functional form is argumentative content. And while Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca dealt primarily with style as it influenced the argumentative theory they were
espousing, Fahnestock argues succinctly that there is no "radical disjunction between style and argument" (30). One cannot have a theory of argument without a theory of style, period. Her directness in these matters allows her to move rather quickly to the reasons behind the confluence of style and scientific argument. Moving quickly does not make for lack of rigor here as much as for the building of argumentative momentum, something that makes ideal sense for an author focused on the argumentative in both its psychological and empirical guises.

Fahnestock's direct investigation of the ways in which figures become "a foregrounding of the form of an argument" allows the reader an opportunity to discover what often gets lost in those rhetorical theories removed from language-in-action (Rhetorical Figures 40). If figures are one means for foregrounding the form of an argument, and if functional form is argumentative content, then all figures are potentially arguments in and of themselves. The content may change, but the argumentative force that stylistic strategies carry is likely tied to their figurative expression regardless of such a change. This is not to say that any two instances of *ploche* (the exact repetition of a word or phrase) are identical in their function(s) but rather that the function of repetition is argumentative regardless of what gets repeated. Every time one repeats a word or phrase, one is arguing for or against what that pattern represents, or at least for or against a particular way of looking at that representation. During the 1980s, for example, Nancy Reagan's slogan "Just Say No" became an argument against drug use through its endless repetition. In many instances adults assumed children could or would refuse to use illegal drugs by virtue of having been told over and over again that they should just say no. Whether that repetition was effective is not nearly as important as the widespread belief that the slogan functioned as it was intended; it became shorthand for the entire argument mobilized against drug use among children. Indeed, in keeping with The New Rhetoric, Fahnestock makes clear that "[e]ffectiveness does not necessarily mean persuasiveness" (n12, 198). Foregrounding an argument as effectively as possible does not guarantee an audience's acceptance. It increases the chances that one will be successful in
convincing them, but probability is never certainty. Stylistic argument is not designed to accomplish the impossible, merely to encourage the likely.

If the figure is the argument, then several important consequences must be detailed and understood. First, one must accept that “figures of speech that correspond to distinct lines of reasoning can be found in arguments of any kind—political, economic, scholarly, and popular [. . .]” (Fahnestock, Rhetorical Figures 43). Stylistic strategies, because they are founded on the patterns inherent to human thought, are not precluded from entering into the discourse surrounding any given subject matter. If human thought is involved, if human assumptions are at stake, then stylistic strategies will have some influence on their discursive enactment. Opening up scientific argument to figures other than metaphor allows Fahnestock to build her case for a more general theory of empirical argument. It also suggests to writers and teachers of writing that they and student-writers should not be held in ignorance of such strategies because they are going to be doing “only” this or that sort of writing. If style is not merely a matching of thought to world but also an argument for some worldview, then all human beings are implicated in the use of strategies like those Fahnestock investigates: “to the extent that these devices represent enduring lines of argument, it is impossible to remove them from reasoned prose” (43). Of course, “reasoned prose” implies something not all discourses may share, though whether one is describing well- or ill-reasoned prose does not seem to affect the outcome. For Fahnestock, that one is driven (by reasons of some kind) to shape one’s utterances in particular and identifiable ways matters much more.

“Reasoned” in the present instance should not be limited to empirical argument—though it does not exclude it, either. Like Burke and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Fahnestock accepts that persuasion and argumentation are not the only uses to which discourse is put, and the intuitive can/does have a role to play as long as one accepts reasoned prose as including any discursive description or enactment of one’s passage from A to B, regardless of the method(s) used. A writer may have only an intuitive (read: emotional or paralogical) sense of a given relationship, state of
affairs, or group of facts, but that kind of rhetorical stance does not preclude his successfully employing stylistic strategies to argumentative or other effect: “it is even possible to discover arguments stylistically [. . .] by using the figures generatively, allowing the form to find the content” (Paralogic Rhetoric 31). Because stylistic strategies rely on “the common stuff of human reasoning,” they may provide precisely the catalyst a felt sense or vague idea requires to reach tangible, communicable fruition (44). Fahnestock simultaneously provides stylistic strategies with the suasory power of empirical argumentation and the generative power of rhetorical invention. She does so without resorting to an illegitimate conquest of all things discursive, however, by reminding the reader that “[t]he fact that all disciplines inevitably use the same patterns of reasoning does not [. . .] mean that they are all the same kind of enterprise” (43). Although all disciplinary endeavors employ discursive enactment to one degree another, that enactment need not be identical or identically situated. Making use of the same, or at least very similar, tools does not automatically translate into making use of those tools for the same, or even passingly similar, reasons.

Writers mobilize stylistic strategies by virtue of their usefulness in accomplishing whatever pre-existing work calls to them. They (the writers) ask not what word or phrase do I choose? but rather what sort of work must I do? The strategies do not change that work’s fundamental nature or complexities. They affect how discursive work gets done. Thus, “the sciences differ from other disciplines less in the arguments used than in the consequences expected. The forms of argument, epitomized by the figures, are endlessly generative, but as far as outcomes are concerned, they are often spectacularly incorrect” (Rhetorical Figures 43-44). The consequence of stylistics’ involvement in empirical argumentation is two-fold. On the one hand, strategies like those Fahnestock explores are capable of inventing and organizing empirical arguments—generating “an argumentative scheme” (26)—because they themselves are inherently arguments for or about the world they describe. They contain within themselves the potential for creating and sustaining
argumentative force, or as Chris Anderson concisely has it, “style is best understood as a reflection and enactment of a content and a point of view” (Style As Argument 5). On the other hand, those same strategies are so broad in their generative power that they may not be well suited to the particular task a scientific investigator faces. Roger Fowler celebrates the broad reach of stylistics, its “catholicity and flexibility,” as does Fahnestock throughout her book (“The New Stylistics” 4). But individual strategies in practice are not always accurate predictors of scientific truths any more than they are always accurate predictors of human realities. It is the writer’s responsibility to understand when and why any given strategy might work to her advantage, not only argumentatively but epistemologically as well. If effectiveness is not always persuasiveness, neither is it always empirical accuracy.

Underlying the project outlined here is Fahnestock’s abiding fascination with style in general, and she shares that fascination with the reader by showing him how she comes to feel as she does. While this methodology might be expected in any legitimate scholarly work, she follows that course for reasons that go beyond the need to appeal to classical and other authorities on stylistics. Rather than accepting that the various theories of tropes and schemes are accurate because they are theoretical enough or because they are customary to all sorts of discursive exchange, she tests them against the actual work writers do. Stylistics is not an excavation of textual features, and she proves it by showing the reader how what gets said about style does (or, equally as often, does not) ring true in practice. Fahnestock’s highly successful analyses are anchored always in the assumption that the patterns that various figures represent (on an elementary scale) can and are capable of being extrapolated to the macroscopic scale traditionally dominated by invention and arrangement. Fahnestock is among the first contemporary rhetoricians to argue convincingly for viewing entire texts as being motivated by patterns generally thought to occur within the word/sentence/paragraph. For instance, in her fifth chapter, Fahnestock posits that antonomasia (the use of a proper name as a categorical label) and similar single-word strategies are
"strategic adjectives," labels intended to schematize as well as label (Rhetorical Figures 161). Antonomasia represents, in the first instance, the transference of identity from an originating individual to some other(s)—as when the name "Hitler" is transferred to another person in "He is a little Hitler." This transference is a retrofitting of the term's core meaning/function to be sure, but it also makes it more likely (though not certain) that further references to "he" will assume the qualities associated with the historical Hitler. Once the comparison has been made, the interlocutor's ability to forget it or place it under erasure lessens, particularly when further attacked by repetition. And the rhetor's decision to choose Hitler and not some other historical figure as a point of comparison reinforces that situation, suggesting as it does that the comparison reflects some worldview, is chosen for some definable reason(s). In the second instance, then, these strategies affect how material is culled and organized. To use a biological metaphor, the strategies themselves tend to self-select for certain qualities throughout a given discourse.

The same relationships would hold true for syntactic patterns as well. The priamel Isocrates uses so effectively in Antidosis, for example, is effective only to the degree that it builds momentum by cataloging several kinds of prose before dispensing with all but the last kind named. The strategy would likely fail if Isocrates were to disrupt the formal expectancy that the priamel carries with it. Were he to list the same items in reverse, the effect is highly suspect since the items to be dismissed are placed in a linear and chronological position of emphasis, one that overshadows the item to be kept. The dispensable items come later and, therefore, would be fresher in the reader's mind. Moreover, since readers tend to see the final item in a list or statement in a paragraph as "what it all boils down to," to use Burke's phrase, placing the disposable items last misleadingly implies they are Isocrates' ultimate goal. For the rhetor's purposes, listing the items in reverse then telling readers "Never mind what I have just said, let us return to square one" would be anti-climactic as well as counter-intuitive. One expects that a writer might weigh all available options before reaching a conclusion. One does not as often expect that she will have made up her
mind beforehand and will list the alternatives merely for the sake of listing them. Like *antonomasia*, the priamel influences the trajectory of the reader’s expectations as much as it does that of the discourse in which it appears. The origin and arc of the passage’s success depend on the appropriate use of the appropriate strategy.

Because Fahnestock’s work represents the theoretical and methodological model this project emulates, I return to her frequently in the remaining chapters. I want to close this section, then, with two broader consequences of her analysis in *Rhetorical Figures*. The canon of style, and the specialized study of it, carries as much inventive and organizational power as decorative appeal. The term *ornatio*, Fahnestock points out, means “equipment/armament” as well as “ornament,” something to which Burke also alludes in the reference to Cicero I cite (*Rhetorical Figures* 18-19). Some might argue that the former is perhaps a better description of style’s functions and possibilities within discourse. After all, by viewing words as weapons, one could productively rely on various widely held assumptions, as reflected in figures like “cutting remark” and “sharp criticism,” without ignoring the broader influence of *elocutio*. Like armed engagement, stylistics involves both strategy (the study of discourse) and tactics (the enactment of discourse). Additionally, as Burke and others are quick to point out, and as Fahnestock makes clear throughout her investigation, there is built into the concepts of argumentation and persuasion an implicit disjunction between author and audience, speaker and interlocutor. One would never feel the need to persuade or convince, this line of reasoning goes, if not for the phenomenological gap inhering to discursive engagement. “Discourse as combat” is also likely to remind one of the discursive negotiation often cited in communication theory. Both descriptions reflect the give-and-take of minds engaged through discourse, whether in cooperation or competition. Even so, and unlike most combat, the stylistic endeavor depends as much on the interlocutor’s willingness to engage—or at least his inability to or lack of desire to oppose it—as on the rhetor’s art. There is more than sheer discursive force at work when two human beings communicate.
As I emphasize throughout this investigation, architectural retrofitting matches the case more accurately than equipment-cum-armament. Moments when verbal threat, intimidation or deceit might be deployed are accounted for, of course, but the baseline is assumed to be constructive. I raise the issue now, because the attitude such an approach takes is dangerous to any recuperation of style. While Fahnestock points out the multivalency of ornatio, she does not carry it single-mindedly as far as others have or will. I second her caution in the matter, and as the next section on ethics reveals, there are good reasons to avoid seeing motivated language as inherently violent. While it is true that words do shape the world as much as that is phenomenologically possible, enfigurement is generative and usually employed to bridge the disjunction of Self and Other, not because that gap is seen as oppositional but rather because what lies on the other side is seen as complementary or necessary to oneself or one’s ends. Discourse can be violent--hate speech immediately comes to mind--but in those instances where it is used violently, its purpose has been corrupted; it has become anti-rhetorical and, therefore, unethical. Ethical uses of rhetoric rely on having eulogia (good reasons; ethical and/or justifiable assumptions) for using words in particular ways. The power with which Fahnestock instills rhetoric is neither invitation nor license to abuse, and I believe my own avoidance of the armament metaphor produces the same caution and circumspection.

On a more positive note, because style serves as a metaphor for discursive strategy, Fahnestock’s work in Rhetorical Figures and elsewhere focuses not on individual cases as individual cases but rather on these cases as epitomes. The metaphor clearly parallels her contention that the figures themselves are epitomes of argument. Whether intentional or not, this parallel provides for a clear formulation of style’s relationship to not only empirical argumentation but discourse more generally. Because the figures are epitomes, they are not by nature bound to a discursive context. The patterns they create/represent do not fundamentally change. Because they are figures, however, they do take their rhetorical force from the situation in which they appear.
The nuance and expressive force found in any given instance cannot be exactly replicated outside that instance. Discursive exchanges are not all equivalent. Stylistic strategies may be a writer’s equipment, but like their metaphorical namesakes, how and why they are mobilized matters as much as what their effects are. A rhetor who attempts to engage an audience without accounting for the possibilities/constraints of the situation is less likely to succeed. Fahnestock provides precisely the right combination of strategy and tactics—the study and the enactment, or more theoretically, the principle and the contingency. She accounts for The New Rhetoric’s redefinition of argumentation as a stylistic and psychological phenomenon. She accounts for the stylistic identification for which Burke argues. But she goes beyond these principles by recognizing that rhetoric is inherently stylistic and by clarifying how important stylistic strategies are to the creation and development of empirical arguments. What is often viewed as objective and/or immutable (the so-called scientific method, inductive reasoning, and the like) becomes under her scrutiny yet another strategic mobilization of discourse. Whether that mobilization is designed to meet expectations, to satisfy convention or something else entirely, it is still about retrofitting, to return to my own metaphor. These materials may be static as concepts, though that point is itself debatable, but like their elocutionary compatriots, they do take on individualized forms in particular circumstances.

The case for the confluence of the first three canons could not be clearer than in Fahnestock and Marie Secor’s description of the classical stases (grounds for argument), which have traditionally been associated with inventio alone:

[the stases] represent a full set of possibilities from which an author, in a particular rhetorical situation, under a particular exigence, addressing a particular audience, selects. The author may stay in just one or two of the stases because that is where he or she can meet the intended audience, because that is where the audience’s needs and interests lie, or because that is where they can be reached, no matter where the writer wants to take them. In other words, the stases are not only an invention device and a principle of arrangement; they can also become a sensitive tool of audience analysis. ("The Stases in Scientific and Literary Argument" 431)

While more broadly formulated than I show it, the fitting of discourse to audience bridges the
“figure/topic separation” Fahnestock also engages in *Rhetorical Figures* (31). According to the present formulation, lines of argument serve as tools for analysis as well as tools for persuasion, yet as all of this chapter’s authors argue, style functions in this exact same capacity. The three canons lose their artificial distinctiveness if seen as three competing ways of approaching the same kairotic puzzle. Fahnestock (and Secor) provides for the coming together of a vast onrush of ideas and influences by focusing on discourse both pragmatically and holistically. By their very nature, words are about varying ways of getting at the world and the ideas that the world activates. And it is these competing approaches to making sense of things that are actually being negotiated when people engage in meaningful communication. Their engagement has been, can and should be productive, inspiring, ethical. Even supposedly formulaic classical handbooks like *On Invention* or *Ad Herennium*, Fahnestock and Secor make clear, are better treated as "manuals for negotiating power inequities. We teach rhetoric to give people power against social and material differences" ("Classical Rhetoric" 107).

Working against sociomaterial differences, combatting their negative impact on human beings is not a question of what but rather of how. No viable argumentative or stylistic theory ignores or fails to address the *methods* by which interlocutors engage with one another. As Fahnestock and Secor rightly suggest in critiquing the so-called Toulmin model of argumentation, "we want to know not just what slots to fill in, but something more about how to fill them in" ("Grounds for Argument" 136). More tellingly, the answer to this question becomes Fahnestock’s overriding goal at the end of *Rhetorical Figures*’ first chapter: the common need for stylistic epitomes in all discourses, regardless of their teleology,

should encourage students, who now believe they must choose between science and non-science, to cross entrenched curricular boundaries, and should stimulate experts, who have the knowledge needed for important policy decisions, to have faith that basic patterns of reasoning can be used in communicating with the public. (44)
An Ethics of Pedagogy

When retrofitted with the other practices I analyze, Fahnestock’s generative stylistics provides a powerful argument for retheorizing rhetorical strategies as the source of discourse (and meaning) creation. Her scholarship also offers an opportunity for addressing the pragmatic and pedagogical consequences of a writerly rhetoric like the one detailed in these pages. But Fahnestock’s willingness to address her idealism directly does more than inspire or make one feel good about rhetoric-composition. Her disclosure encourages others—particularly those who are committed to teaching as a calling—to ask whether (or how) it is possible to be idealistic about one’s scholarly and teacherly work without idealizing the object of study. Can one believe in rhetoric without believing in some master narrative about it? Can one thereby provide others with the same opportunities for idealism without imposing a master narrative on them? Fahnestock answers these questions affirmatively in Rhetorical Figures, and in so doing, she measurably alters the book’s argument. Her (above cited) comments about crossing curricular boundaries reflect that shaping, and her preface makes the point as firmly, if more broadly:

[i]t is [. . . ] hoped that this study, like others in the rhetoric of science, will help to chip away at the profound division in our culture between science and the humanities. [. . . ]If the thinking styles and language habits of the two are essentially similar, as a demonstration of the figural patterning necessary to many scientific arguments suggests, there is little point in such division. We might pursue instead a “one mind” hypothesis, that the same cognitive/verbal skills serve any subject of inquiry. What matters is that these generic skills be strengthened. The consequences for our educational schemes could be profound. (Rhetorical Figures xii)

In contrast to many contemporary scholars, Fahnestock devotes direct attention to the broader (humanist) value of rhetoric—something often lost in a postmodern morass of meta-theories and sub-subdisciplines. Teachers and writers deal daily with other human beings, and it behooves them to make good on the resulting (and unquestionably humanist) obligation that gets written into their work. Far from humanist myth, it is pragmatic reality to accept the human “element” on which writing and teaching depend. Indeed, the truth of this dependence ought not stop at the classroom
door; student-writers also deserve the opportunities provided by a dialogue, not a lecture, about the human in "human communication."

The humanist obligation that Fahnestock enacts is not perfect. She assumes a generic set of cognitive-cum-verbal skills that arguably oversimplifies discursive enactment. Stylistic choices can be generalized only in limited ways, and while repetition is always repetition, for example, the reasons and customs for using it vary according to context and the dynamic of form-content-function. Generalizing is a necessary aspect of all theoretical practices, and it is difficult to imagine a theory that refuses to make assumptions about its subject. Whether that generalization becomes counterproductive, however, depends on whether theorists recognize their own limitations. Fahnestock's overextension of rhetoric—or rather humans' relationship to it—does rely on its own master narrative, but she does not explicitly use that narrative to carry her argument. Because no theory is without limits, one's best response is almost always to accept the situation and to use it as a motivating force for future inquiry, and Fahnestock appeals to idealism's authority to push her audience beyond her own theory's limitations. Such an appeal does not mean that a belief in rhetoric is equivalent to a belief that one already has all the answers; Fahnestock does not treat her work as the last word on rhetoric and science or stylistics. The idealism she exhibits limits itself to the project at hand and does not strive to serve as an uber-theory of scientific rhetoric. Rather than recycle stale ideology/opinion, she enacts humanism to its best effect by relentlessly contending that rhetoric matters to flesh-and-blood human beings.

In this section I investigate the obligation on which Fahnestock depends by considering the work of three contemporary compositionists: Kent, Jarratt, and Vitanza. These current scholars exemplify the sites within rhetorical theory most prone to idealization and, more importantly, the means for incorporating this idealistic attitude into stylistics without falsely situating rhetoric in the writing classroom. Since I fully explore my own pedagogical practices in chapter 4, I devote myself here only to the task of retrofitting the premises illustrated in chapters 2 and 3 to their
broadest pedagogical applications. Retrofitting writerly practices to the composition classroom requires more than the formulation of an algorithm for producing texts, and in the case of stylistic rhetoric, rhetorical strategies, *kairos, phronesis* and all the rest must be balanced against the needs of one’s students—who themselves vary from course to course and year to year. The variety of contexts writers face, even student-writers in first-year composition, should instill a sense of possibility, since it is through engagement with real contexts that the effectiveness of one’s discourse is put to the test of material use. The struggle that student-writers face in matching their rhetoric to a situation is perhaps the most powerful tool to which either they or their teachers have access, and the writing classroom ideally devotes itself to a dialogue on that very subject. I argue here that pedagogy becomes effective only when it functions as a conversation about writerly authority—why and how one speaks and gets heard. To assume that pedagogy means dispensing solutions to students’ “problems” is to submit to the worst kind of idealization.

Context, not literacy per se, determines what counts as meaningful discourse, and students who face the choices with which *kairos* confronts them need to understand the authority words (re)create. Belief in rhetoric can provide that understanding if it attaches itself to the appropriate qualities: possibility, self-awareness, influence (if not full control) over what work one’s words accomplish. Most student-writers enter the classroom knowing that words matter—they have experienced the power of discourse in their own lives long before they enroll at a college or university—but few of them enter believing that they can make a difference in how those words function. Discourse is transparent to most of them because they experience its effects without ever having the opportunity to understand those effects’ source(s). Convincing student-writers of rhetoric’s capacity for enacting change in the world depends on having a dialogue about how words work as well as encouraging them to see for themselves what that work really means. Student-writers should not be expected to appreciate what other writers do with words when they are rarely given the opportunity to *experience* writing. That process should be at the center of any
pedagogy one chooses to deploy, because without it they have little or no chance to confront anything beyond fear or disdain for the blank page/screen. Students who enroll in a writing course need to know that no writer is perfect, that the fear of freedom many feel when they are challenged by writing can be turned to their advantage. Barbara Couture describes the motivation behind these teacherly principles in a recent essay on writing-process pedagogies:

[w]e need to move both composition theory and pedagogy beyond the dualistic device paradigm that separates our acts from ourselves and begin to understand and teach writing as design. To move from device to design, we must study writing as it expresses the integration of human will and action, of thinking and expression [. . .]. Writing is both will and action, internal agency and external product. ("Modeling and Emulating" 31)

Many compositionists would already claim a commitment to other human beings as the primary reason they teach writing, or write at all, but they can be mentors and advisers--without simultaneously becoming nursemoids or mother figures--only if their pedagogies self-consciously create opportunities for mentoring and advising in their classrooms. Teachers become enablers for student-writers’ misgivings and “failures” if they (teachers) refuse to acknowledge that changing student-writers’ use of words changes who they are in the world.

Preventing the destructive idealization of rhetoric--whether it is cast as omnipotent force or rote skill--requires some effort, however, and compositionists have devoted much of their time to determining exactly how it is that pedagogies can become so misdirected and/or misapplied. Three master narratives account for most of the damage being done in current writing classrooms, and it is these assumptions that are best counteracted by Kent, Jarratt, and Vitanza. The first and easily the most troublesome narrative depends on a Platonic view of (sophistic) rhetoric as skill, in the worst sense of that word. Rhetoric can easily be taught, the story goes, because it amounts to little more than a managerial approach to language. Give a literate person the proper form (usually the five-paragraph theme), and she can produce a serviceable discourse regardless of context. Writerly writing--what would traditionally be called literary writing--does not count, since it occupies a
special place outside rhetoric-composition’s primary venue. Words are neither tools nor actions because thought and truth transcend whatever words are used. The skills-based approach to rhetoric derives most of its force from the connections that Plato long ago drew between (sophistic) rhetoric and, what he called, “knacks” like cookery and self-adornment:

[465c] as self-adornment is to gymnastic, so is sophistry to legislation; and as cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice. But although, as I say, there is this natural distinction between them, they are so nearly related that sophists and orators are jumbled up as having the same field and dealing with the same subjects, and neither can they tell what to make of each other, nor the world at large what to make of them. (Gorgias; translator’s insertion)

Here and elsewhere, Plato’s narrative casts the sophists as the cause for rhetoric’s “jumbled” state and, by extension, for their students’ supposed failings, moral and otherwise. He contends that something so mundane as rhetoric—it is a learnable skill—should not contaminate the other concerns that sophistic rhetoricians often addressed: ethics, politics, philosophy, culture, and society. Sharp disciplinary divisions are integral to his plans for an effective philosophy, and rhetoric only muddles the situation when its practitioners aspire beyond the field’s customary bounds.

Disingenuous rhetorics, and narratives of rhetoric, like Plato’s have not disappeared, merely taken on new guises. The writing-process movement quickly degenerated into a formulaic narrative—pre-write, draft, revise and edit—although it was originally supposed to break student-writers out of the linearity of thought-word favored by tradition. Naming the “stages” in the writing process ensured business as usual no matter how often process scholars emphasized that writing might simultaneously involve all or many of these stages. By contrast, expressivism has sidestepped the problem of rhetoric by resorting to the literary, itself a (neo-)romantic formulation, and arguing that writing expresses the Self best when it works outside traditional pedagogy altogether. Students who “free-write” or are otherwise allowed to express themselves will eventually come to a voice of their own. The means by which this “finding of voice”—which
sounds suspiciously like a Platonic knack—occurs remains shrouded in metaphorical mystery. Most notably, Elbow has described that search in terms of “cooking” and “growing,” effectively turning the writing process into an awkward amalgam of Platonic and romantic phenomena. (See especially Writing Without Teachers and “The Uses of Binary Thinking.”)

It is only with the rise of post-process theories of writing, especially paralogic rhetoric, that a truly effective counter-narrative has appeared. Paralogy, according to Kent, relies on assumptions that work against rhetoric-as-skill, specifically assuming that no rhetoric can do more than help communicants speculate in an informed way about their discourses’ effectiveness:

[When we communicate, we make guesses about the meaning of others’ utterances, and we, in turn, guess about the interpretations that others will give our utterances. This guesswork is paralogical [“beyond logic”] in nature because no logical framework, process, or system can predict in advance the efficacy of our guesses. [...] The knowledge of language is necessary but not sufficient for communicative interaction; we must also know how to make moves within the language games we play, and these moves are thoroughly paralogical in nature. (Paralogic Rhetoric 5)]

Through paralogic rhetoric, form and function (re)converge with content-subject of inquiry as they do in the older theories of Isocrates, Burke, and others. By expressly concentrating on the probable and the contextual, paralogic convergence opens the way for a substantial improvement in writers’ understanding of discourse. Kent’s attention to rhetoric-as-hermeneutics directly targets prior narratives because it purposefully relies on narrative—the interpretation of phenomena—as its methodological model. This narratological reliance effectively redefines rhetoric in terms of narrative, or rather narrative-as-interpretation, thereby subverting, even appropriating, the processes that have often undermined the efficacy of rhetoric’s prior incarnations. That language is necessary but not sufficient for communication, for example, works against rhetoric-as-skill without directly attacking it. Paralogy simply treats language differently, and in so doing, it establishes an idealism about how words work—they are always necessary—that refuses simultaneously to idealize them—they are never sufficient.
Because paralogy is rooted in the Nietzschean hermeneutic tradition, paralogic rhetoric also transports *in toto* the apparatus by which rhetoric scholars (and writers of all sorts) understand words to work. All interlocutors, according this view, have "prior" and "passing" theories at the ready during communicative exchanges, and those theories are supposed to replace whatever rhetorical system was attached to language by older narratives. Prior theories exist as a direct consequence of one's prior experience with discourse and represent what one believes one's own words (and others') mean or will come to mean (Kent, *Paralogic Rhetoric* 86). Passing theories are the theories (read: interpretive moves) one uses during any exchange as it happens (86-87). Together, prior and passing theories constitute the hermeneutic guesswork that Kent places at the center of paralogy, and one's understanding and use of discourse is seen consequently to depend on actual communicative experiences (and one's use of those experiences) rather than any rules that language itself might provide. The paralogic rhetor deploys and actively shapes language-in-use, whereas in many older narratives, the rhetor makes meaning by drawing exclusively on the principles of language-as-system. As a pragmatic stylistics, paralogy argues that context largely determines how effectively one's words accomplish their work. If nothing else, the shift away from skills-based rhetoric calls into question the existence of universal discursive principles and the value assigned to rote drill in those principles.

Kent's emphasis on one's skill in understanding language, not one's skill with language itself, redefines interlocutors' relationship to discourse, and language more generally, because users of language are no longer directly reliant on or bound to some abstract system. Their first allegiance must of necessity be to the particular situation they confront at any given moment. Indeed, Kent's largest contribution to composition studies may be his argument for the hypercritical importance of externalism to rhetoric-composition. According to Marcia Cavell, whom Kent cites in his initial treatment of externalist theory,
[a]n externalist, anti-subjectivist, view holds that while introspection and self-reflection are certainly important activities, they can yield only a very partial view of the nature of the mental. [...] Rather, we are creatures who, through our interactions with other creatures in a world we share in common, come to mean something by our utterances. (as quoted in Paralogic Rhetoric 103)

Within an externalist framework, discourse does not create the world, nor does it merely describe it. It is the keystone of the hermeneutic circle that traces the human mind's interaction with other minds and the world. Since discourse serves to complete the arc of human experience, Kent's Paralogic Rhetoric relies on the hermeneutic tradition--stretching from Nietzsche to Derrida--both to deal with the indispensable role of language in the world and to bridge the conceptual gap that has too often existed between philosophy and rhetoric, or in other words, the logical and the rhetorical. Even so, and although it can be theorized, the logic of rhetoric is not the logic of classical philosophy. The narrative roots of paralogy again make it possible for rhetoric to work within its own logic rather than to draw on a philosophical tradition largely dominated by Platonic (and to a lesser degree, Aristotelian) misrepresentations of sophistic rhetoric.

Paralogy synthesizes the philosophy of interpretation and the rhetoric of use to produce something more pragmatic than a generalized system and less distorting than an overly optimistic idealization. Modern rhetoric-composition has built itself around invention and arrangement, particularly in its pedagogies, because of the drive for practicality that has traditionally dominated the discipline. Paralogy enhances both study and enactment without limiting either of them to a discrete formulation of invention stages or of organizational dicta. Its hermeneutics disputes compositionists' self-perceived obligation "to bring it [theory of any kind] to the classroom because many believe that to be the testing ground for composition theory" (Dobrin, Constructing Knowledges 64). The narratives underlying paralogical study and enactment provide their own testing ground, and those narratives' usefulness depends on the speculations they engender instead of the immediate material benefits they accrue. If theorizing is a legitimate intellectual activity, then compositionists (and their students) are better served by the pragmatics of paralogy than the
skills-based practices of other more staid pedagogies. Dobrin continues, "[t]he new ways these ["non-practical"] theories help us to see discourse undeniably influence how we think about discourse, about our pedagogies, and about how our students learn. This is certainly enough to warrant these theories as valuable" (83; emphasis in original). Prior/passing theories, for example, emphasize one’s self-awareness about language and the discursive effects that awareness makes possible—one must interpret contexts fully in order to make meanings effectively. And the larger theory of paralogy refuses to dichotomize creation and reception in the service of a system that takes both processes to consist of discrete skills unique to themselves.

Paralogic rhetoric’s narrative does not fully commit discourse to either the linearity of philosophical rhetoric or the circularity of hermeneutics. Through externalism paralogy productively assumes that communication relies on the recurrence of guesswork over time. That is, the making of meaning and the creation of agency can be re-envisioned as involving repeated, but not repeatable, processes. One must always make interpretive guesses when communicating, but the nature of that guesswork is taken to vary materially from moment to moment. An optimistic desire to help, or even “liberate,” every single student-writer does not cloud paralogic rhetoric’s commitment to developing a better understanding of how discourse functions in the world. Pedagogies that draw on paralogic ideas should not be expected to reinforce or further encourage some compositionists’ need for something that is easily codified/taught or immediately gratifying. Writerly results can be had from any theory of discourse that recognizes the value of meaning-making and human agency. Little else is required as long as that theory-cum-pedagogy does not inflate human beings’ ability to control discourse, or rather discourse’s capacity for being controlled. Student-writers have every chance, according to paralogy, of gaining writerly authority by exercising it in their own writing, but they are not automatically guaranteed agency. No rhetor ever is.
Paralogic rhetoric instead gives writers access to the sources of narrative—whether theoretical or historiographical, distortions and all. That access brings a better understanding of the ways in which reality gets (mis)represented, and as a result, it empowers writers to overcome various misrepresentations and to create more effective discourse. That is, paralogy aids writers and scholars because its own narratives disclose what can go wrong (and why) when discursively generating meaning/authority. In *Rereading the Sophists*, Jarratt constructs a similar argument, additionally suggesting that *nomos*-based interpretative narratives (*mythoi*) may be the *only* way for rhetoric-composition to avoid further undermining agency through its idealized rhetorical histories and pedagogies: “[r]ecovering the sophists’ processes of argument within their own political moment is worth pursuing toward the end of challenging hierarchies in discourse and in the institutions those hierarchies keep in place” (xxiv). These argumentative processes do not spring unbidden from the extant fragments of sophistic texts; Jarratt must (re)construct them through her own writing. But that act of (re)construction is also her argument. Narratives may recover meanings and sources of authority as easily as they may hide or distort them. The result is ultimately determined by the work one has set out to do. Drawing meaningful patterns—interpreting events and phenomena in meaningful ways—differs materially from the imposition of some master narrative, ready made before the fact. As I argue throughout this project, discursive strategies like the narrative are the rhetor’s task and the rhetor’s tool. Even so, only a self-awareness about how strategies function can turn the conceptual power of discourse back on narrative and other utterances. All texts carry material traces of their effects—communication depends on one’s words *accomplishing* something—and precisely because of these traces, reflexive narratives can encourage the pedagogical practices necessary to a belief in rhetoric that does not substantively distort its object of study.

Jarratt’s solution to the narrative dilemma resides in the sophists’ own writing, which is framed as an organized response to traditional misrepresentations like those found in Plato and
Aristotle. And the argument depends heavily on Jarratt’s own narrative extension of sophist uses of the strategies *antithesis* and *parataxis*—an argument from “opposites” and a loose association of clauses without connectives, respectively. The sophists’ various deployments of the two figures allow Jarratt to (re)theorize them much as Fahnestock reinvigorates *elocutio* in *Rhetorical Figures*. Protagoras and Gorgias, in particular, are shown to have mobilized the two strategies as governing principles, inventive and organizational frameworks that generated arguments (narratives of logic) across entire texts. For the sophists *antithesis* was “not a dissolvent force in language but rather [an establishment] of the conditions for constructing socially functional, but always provisional, rhetorical speculations” (Jarratt, *Rereading* 22). Such speculations provided discourse with a pragmatic imperative—that is, a true social function—and a sustainable argumentative momentum. They served as the means by which the sophists narrativized their own sociocultural positions, most especially in those texts treating the provisional nature of meaning-making. Similarly, *parataxis* “create[d] the effect of [discourse] evolving in time, through sound striking the ears, minds, bodies of its listeners in a temporal experience” (27). Paratactic utterances thus wedded meaning to material effects, a psychology of form akin to Burke’s. In both cases Jarratt recognizes these strategies’ effectiveness, even necessity, while avoiding traditional idealizations of rhetoric. Narrative becomes indispensable to her readers’, and her own, understanding of the sophists’ impact on rhetoric and of the possibilities their ideas still reveal.

The *elocutio* of *Rereading the Sophists* is a fully figured canon, and the sophists and their stylistic practices become the means by which Jarratt may also address the broader rhetorical problems of historiography, feminist criticism, and teaching. Building on what she discovers about *antithesis* and *parataxis*, Jarratt ultimately posits that the sophists’ formulation of *nomos* might be better viewed as the penetration of Platonic *logos* by *kairos*: nomos “signifies the relativization of logos—the real conditions [. . .] under which texts are produced in specific times and places” (Rereading 74). As the force by which the word negotiates its place in the world, social custom or
mores signify the epitome of language-in-use, a diegetic representative of discourse’s “thrownness.” *Nomos* mediates the pure, and therefore impossible to achieve, binary separation of *logos/truth/literacy* and *mythos/fiction/orality* and enacts a social epistemology that does not depend on *logos* or *mythos* becoming actors in their own dramas. Because sophistic social custom disrupts traditional subject-object positions and works against the narratives implicit in Platonic and Aristotelian epistemologies, Jarratt’s sophists take on the role of the metaphorical Other in the historical narrative of rhetoric and, from a feminist critical view, might be seen as a social analogue for women and other marginalized groups. Because the “two exclusions--of women and of sophists--may be related,” Jarratt “question[s] the uses to which that relation could be pursued both for feminism and for studies in the history of rhetoric” (63). Without minimizing the power of traditional narratives to exclude those for which they cannot account, Jarratt uses the exclusionary status of the sophists to reassess the Other’s place in rhetorical history as well as in composition classrooms and other discursive arenas. Pedagogy and criticism are wedded through a narrative rooted in the sophistic tradition, one explicitly working against dominant formulations of discourse, knowledge, and human relations.

These various mirrorings and pairings leave rhetoric in a much stronger disciplinary position. Because they focus a badly fragmented endeavor on a single complex of sociocultural and discursive relations, they tell a powerful story about current composition pedagogy and the ways teachers and student-writers may *choose* to construct themselves through their writing:

> many compositionists continue to explore the role of the writing classroom in empowering students as participants in the democracy. I find the historical precedent for this approach to literacy in the educational theory and practice of the first sophists [..] (Jarratt, *Rereading* 85)

The sophists’ rhetorical strategies and formulation of *nomos* demonstrate an appropriate pedagogical imperative, one that operates from within the social context that teachers and student-writers inhabit and that leaves them with the possibility for shaping, not simply responding to, their
material circumstances. This pedagogy prepares writing classrooms for the dialogic investigation of writerly authority by directing teachers and student-writers toward both the obligations and opportunities attendant to being “participants in democracy.”

Appropriately, then, Jarratt’s own vision of the praxis of sophistic rhetoric and nomotic ethics “redefines the composition classroom as a collective inquiry into the function of discourse in a democracy, in which students and teachers are equally engaged” (Rereading 95; emphasis mine). As the emphasized terms indicate, this concept of rhetorical awareness depends solely on real human beings’ collective but equal engagement with and inquiry about humanity’s shared existence in the world. In short, Jarratt (re)makes pedagogy through her sophistic narrative, effectively treating it as the dialogue for which I agitate. At the same time, one would be wrong to categorize that narrative as a new addition to the many liberatory pedagogies already found in rhetoric-composition—even despite what Jarratt says about empowerment or democracy—because the narrative does not privilege some idealized vision of student-writers (or teachers) or suggest that “inquiry into the function of discourse” will magically save the discipline and cure the world’s larger ills. Jarratt’s belief in empowering student-writers depends on their gaining an understanding of the material work that discourse does to and for them. And the primary concern lies with rhetorical education—the social and ethical effects of rhetoric in the world—and the ongoing dilemmas, whether material or discursive, faced by teachers and students in their roles as writers and human beings.

Other dilemmas—including those resulting from sophistic narratives of language-in-use—are Vitanza’s primary concern in Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric. If Kent and Jarratt integrate narrative into both communication and various pedagogies of rhetoric, then Vitanza speculates about whether even their work is enough to achieve idealism without idealization. His text is fundamentally a search for some third way, an alternative to the conceptual binaries—historical, social, and ethical—that have tended to dominate narratives of rhetorical
historiography and theory. Vitanza’s own term for that alternative, “Third Sophistic,” describes it best, because that is exactly what Vitanza gives readers. Appealing to the history of the First and Second Sophistics—periods in which first the Greeks, later the Romans relied on the rhetorics of Protagoras, Gorgias, and Isocrates—the term “sophistic” links the project to its sympathetic predecessors but does not deny its own pressing confrontations with the present. The label also appropriately suggests the search for a third means of constructing selves in/through rhetorical theory, a means centered on how “the so-called presocratics [. . .] were systematically misrepresented, misappropriated, and then characterized as children-thinking-philosophy” (Vitanza, *Negation* 47; emphasis in the original). Vitanza’s disruption of the received narrative, and the distortions it engenders, opens an avenue for those seeking to justify a return to sophistic rhetoric, but more than that, the disruption helps Vitanza to illustrate the danger of rhetoric’s power to (un)make the world in the rhetor’s image.

Indeed, *Negation’s* core argument also works against the sophists’ own narratives: the sophists—limited as all humans are by their historical/cultural moment—were not immune from the conceptual dangers that narrative necessarily presents. As Vitanza has it, “[f]or Isocrates, what is true is what reflects the culture, *paideia*,” but that paideia-generated model of truth also ensures that “[f]or Isocrates, there [is] a danger in too much democracy, or freedom, or too much loose speech” (*Negation* 155; emphasis in the original). A reliance on *nomos* does not ensure that (meta)narrative distortions are automatically avoided or rendered insignificant to rhetorical engagement. Isocrates believed what he did apart from the possibility that, because his beliefs were dependent on cultural mores, there was a distinct difference between what was then accepted and what might be accepted in the future—assuming one could ever determine that future. The retrograde desire to maintain some idealized *status quo* still shapes rhetorical theory, and Vitanza’s analysis of Isocrates stands as a call to self-reflection from which no one should be exempted. Thinking that one knows what works today is no help in predicting what will work tomorrow, and
thinking one knows what is true today is not the same as knowing what will be thought tomorrow.

One need not be blind to one's own theoretical and sociocultural biases, nor the flaws in one's narrativizing of the world. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca long ago suggested that being invested in an outcome does not automatically imply some prejudice toward other alternatives because their theory of probabilistic argument relied heavily on rhetorical self-sight.

Isocrates appears to have erred, on the one hand, by not contemplating the consequences of his own situatedness. On the other hand, according to Vitanza, the Greek's view of rhetoric may be ultimately at fault:

Isocrates trusts naively, for he never suggests that *logos* might speak through human beings in any dangerous, imperialistic manner, unless it be democratically (*demos* = mob) spoken. [...] My assessment of Isocrates is that he, [...] along with Plato, established the conditions of the possibilities for imperialism and colonization.

[...] Therefore, I return to Isocrates [...] *questioningly*, and return to take a closer look at Isocrates' *hymn* to and innocent faith in the *logos*. [...] (165; emphasis in original)

If the word becomes meaningful through its instantiation in the world—that is, by coming to be used—then it is a small matter to understand that personal, social, or cultural dependence on a rhetorical narrative might influence how the word is used. A belief in the importance of the word, argues Vitanza, is not a license to an idealizing blindness or a socio-ethical ignorance. The means by which language users come to know the world matters, but it does not matter so much that the resulting effects (of that knowing) are inconsequential. Furthermore, the ethics of rhetoric that Vitanza lays before readers becomes even more imperative in an information age. The preponderance of information technologies such as the Internet makes it easier than ever to "express oneself" with little or no regulatory impulses, whether Self- or Other-imposed.16 New problems require all possible solutions to be revisited; no single narrative will resolve the multitude of difficulties confronting human beings in the twenty-first century. For Vitanza, narratives of idealization, instrumentalism or other "ideologically loaded" constructs cannot adequately account for the complex set of consequences deriving from discursive enactment, and
one’s rhetorical practices are effective only to the degree that they account for this discrepancy--and, if possible, turn it to one’s writerly advantage. Isocrates, for example, was by all accounts (including his own) an elitist, nationalist, and xenophobe as well as an idealist. These qualities are not highly esteemed, of course, but they do tell scholars and writers much about the pragmatic reality of rhetorical practices and the narratives that hide so much of them (those practices) from users of language. My project, Vitanza’s, and others do not have to accept Isocrates as a sainted philosopher in order to make use of his ideas and practices. A pedagogy that questions him even as it benefits can be constructed--how could one develop a writerly pedagogy without investigating the dangers Isocrates and others exemplify in their own rhetorical lives? That Isocrates’ practices might be useful, despite their origins in an epistemology of domination, only illustrates how complex, how variously effective, the right narratives might be.

Not surprisingly, then, the Third Sophistic comes finally to fruition through Vitanza’s own willingness to interrogate the Self as well as the Other. Neither term of the original binary pair is given free passage. Like Burke and others in the past, Vitanza suspends the disjunction between one concept and another, not merely the terms used to label them. By doing so, he moves to understand the difficulties presented by the particular material circumstances within which a rhetor is discursively situated. Moreover, and moving beyond Burke, Vitanza argues that neither side of a binary pair may hold, neither is sufficient to construct the third term. His third way is a response to both originating terms, but it contains neither within it. The concept of logos, for instance, is dangerous if constructed merely to stand against mythos, but an idealized synthesis, like Jarratt’s nomos, can produce an equally dangerous (meta-)narrative if it is displaced from the very real material interaction that exists between interlocutors. It is through Negation and the works of Kent and Jarrett that one sees these larger stakes, stakes riding on any investigation of rhetorical theory. All three dispel as many of the myths of rhetorical interaction as they are able, and that one should care deeply about words, their uses and abuses comes as these scholars most significant message.
But caring deeply is not equivalent to blinding oneself to the stereotypes and idealizations that all writers and teachers of writing carry with them. Words are not important for their own sake. Style cannot materially remake the world simply by being defined more broadly. Discursive exchange is no less messy for all of the theorizing that goes on.

In the next chapter, I consider how one might bridge the apparent disjunction between idealism—believing in rhetoric for its own sake—and pragmatic reality—the tangible outcomes created by/through rhetoric—by suggesting ways student-writers’ prior knowledge of discourse, especially stylistic strategies, can be leveraged into current practices that are both generative and organizational. Rather than assuming student-writers know little or nothing about academic discourse, for example, I focus on what they already know about other “categories” of discourse and how what they know is, stylistically speaking, much more significant than one might think. The historical currents I outline still require retrofitting in the classroom, and a pragmatic and stylistically driven narrative, itself built on the writerly pedagogy explored here, makes this retrofitting possible. Student-writers know as much about discourse as any other writer; they do not, however, yet have a means of converting that felt sense (experience-based knowledge) into conscious choice (agency-driven understanding). As Vitanza and other compositionists clarify, knowing something about discourse guarantees little if that knowing cannot be shaped into understanding—a writerly acceptance that all words are provisional, even one’s own. Having finessed the outlines and functions of elocutio, it yet remains to see them enacted in the world. And enacted in ways that disrupt both one’s own and others’ idealizations about language and the world that language continuously creates, receives, reinforces, and dismantles. As I say of ethics in chapter 2, expecting less than a continuous drive toward understanding is really expecting too little of others, oneself, and the words in which one is invested. In the present instance, at least, words themselves are only the beginning of the story.
Notes

1 In Rhetorical Figures in Science, Jeanne Fahnestock argues that “[t]he figures epitomize lines of argument that have great applicability and durability, and [. . .] they gain their greatest force in the stylistic concision of a recognizable figure. In a general as well as a very particular sense, then, a style argues” (xii).

2 The greatest intellectual product of the modern authors considered here is their investigation of discursive experiences, especially as those experiences inform and/or affect an individual’s thinking about meaning-making—what might be called more generally “rhetor-fitting.”

3 This method is also akin to tracing what Harold Bloom calls “the anxiety of influence.” Because the ancient writers covered in chapter 1 are not usually received as I suggest, their influence is directed through other channels. It is also perhaps a de Manian question: do the modern authors named work against themselves in their reception and use of classical thought? Do they reveal in their implicit response to various influence or stimuli more about stylistics than they themselves explicitly speak to?

4 When looking at Isocrates, one should not overlook the connection between theory and vision. The Greek theorein means literally “to look at,” and by extension, “to make sense of what one perceives.” If looking is understanding, then Isocrates’ blurring of the lines between theory and practice makes good sense. Doing becomes knowing, with little distinction between intention and outcome or an (internal or external) phenomenon and one’s knowledge of it.

5 By dialectic Zeno would have meant formal logic. Here and in the next pages, I assume the term also includes (to a larger or smaller degree) analytic philosophy and other similar thought systems, particularly those of Aristotle and Plato.

6 Burke’s Counter-statement suggests a similar pairing at work in eloquence—defined as “the frequency of Symbolic and formal effects” (165): “[t]he profuse embodiment of eloquence cannot be accomplished without coexisting discipline (resistance) and exposure (non-resistance)” (185). That the initial terms are not normally in opposition until renamed as (non-)resistant indicates how easily opposition becomes complementarity and vice versa.

7 I think here especially of recent projects like Stark’s “Clichés and Composition Theory.” In such a case, the cliché ensures that Burkan identification can not only begin but also be developed according to a shared framework beyond the initial moment of discursive contact.

8 The new rhetoric’s phenomenology mirrors what Burke described above as “the less orderly” means of persuasion (A Rhetoric of Motives 51). The intent of this description is ironic, of course. As I have indicated, Burke undermines dialectic’s claim to order/logic throughout Motives and Counter-statement. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s interest in argument beyond the hard sciences indicates that stylistics can center on a less traditional definition of order. Stylistic rhetoric then takes on a productive role in understanding argumentation, one unavailable to the third canon when argumentation and/or Aristotelian proofs are restricted to dialectic (the logic of ideas).

9 The influence of custom or received opinion (nomos) again bears on the human relationships established through discursive engagement. The New Rhetoric depends heavily on that assumption, and as a consequence, the book follows a decidedly sophistic bent. Although the sophists were less likely than Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca to accept the possibility for logic and dialectic to exist independently of stylistics, both assume that being invested in discursive
enactment does not destroy the possibility for fair and complete interaction between individuals—a fallacy into which more relativistic theories often stumble.

10 The need to explore adherence fully was never more necessary than at a time when more and more people are asked to work with their minds rather than their hands. The Internet and other information technologies have changed, and continue to change, how human beings conceive of themselves and others and have ensured adherence is the very fabric from which discursive engagement is cut. The challenges that the current situation presents could not have been envisioned in the localized Greek city-state, and it is for Burke, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, and others to begin retrofitting Greco-Roman rhetoric for a (post)modern techno-society. The rampant spread of unsubstantiated rumors and scandal on Internet bulletin boards and mailing lists, for example, depends in large part on people’s tendency to believe as others do. Combating adherence run amok (and the [mis]use of technologies that make it possible) may be one of the greatest challenges rhetoricians face in the twenty-first century.

11 Interpretation as the sine qua non of communicative exchange has been most recently and most strongly argued within rhetoric-composition by Thomas Kent and other paralogicists. The valorizing of discursive hermeneutics is much older, going back at least as far as the medieval Biblical exegetes. Its significance for this project, however, arises when stylistics moves beyond ornamentation—though one’s ability to judge figures as ornament does require interpretation—and into a concern for invention and organization. Paralogic rhetoric posits a need for retrofitting one’s past assumptions based on current circumstances through the interpretation of a given discursive exchange. That interpretation (grounded in custom and expectation as much as prior experience) in turn shapes the choices interlocutors make about what to say and how to say it.

12 In The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Richards more fully explains that “[r]hetoric [...] should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies. We struggle all our days with misunderstandings and no apology is required for any study which can prevent or remove them” (3).

13 In Counter-statement Burke describes that guidance: “The affective shades [of a word’s meaning . . .] differ with the individual reader, and can normally be either fostered or canceled by the designs of the artist” (159). Context may also play a direct role in the shepherding of readers, especially since “[t]he underlying pattern is best observable when words refer to no specific thing—as ‘liberty, equality, fraternity.’ [...] In such cases, the contexts in which the words appear will generally be constants” (159).

14 Fahnestock’s Figures follows closely from Hallyn’s Poetic Structure of the World. The so-called “four tropes” (metaphor/simile, synecdoche, metonymy, and irony) provide Hallyn with the means for explaining how scientific arguments in the works of thinkers like Johannes Kepler are generated. Unlike Fahnestock, he is most concerned with how the tropes help generate scientific theories in the first place. His methodology will be of some importance in the next two chapters and stands as yet another example of stylistics’ inventive and organizational powers.

15 I more thoroughly explore Kent’s use of Frederich Nietzsche and others in chapter 5. Nietzsche’s value to paralogy is striking since he was both a stylist and a student of style, especially metaphor and allegory. That happy coincidence only reinforces the possible opportunities paralogic rhetoric creates for writers and teachers of writing who believe in the importance of style.

For more on the relationship between Burke’s theorizing and Nietzsche’s, the interested reader should consult Debra Hawhee’s “Burke and Nietzsche.”

16 Understanding the narratives built around communication technologies is part and parcel of understanding rhetorical agency, and writing pedagogies will surely have to rely on Vitanza,
Gregory L. Ulmer, and other electronic literacy advocates in the coming century. Vitanza’s work with hypertext and other information technologies accentuates the increasing importance of rhetoric to electronic agency. The World Wide Web, for instance, depends on a radical concept of textuality and audience—pages may be in a constant state of flux; surfers may arrive from anywhere in the world at any time of day. How one comes to have the right to speak and be heard must consequently be retheorized to account for the various (meta-)narratives being written into cultures and social customs at an increasing rate.
CHAPTER 4
(RE)WRITING PEDAGOGIES WITH STYLE

In treating technique as rhetoric, I may seem to reduce the free and inexplicable processes of the creative imagination to the crafty calculations of commercial entertainers. The whole question of the difference between artists who consciously calculate and artists who simply express themselves with no thought of affecting a reader is an important one, but it must be kept separate from the question of whether an author’s work, regardless of its source, communicates itself. (Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction xiv)

Theorizing writing and analyzing the texts of others will not magically improve one’s own discursive effectiveness. Even so, while contemporary English studies and other academic departments tend to separate the creation of texts from their reception—even separating certain “kinds” of creation/reception from others—I contend that how one reads directly affects how one writes and that the stylistic principles of thought-form-function enacted in one’s reading will necessarily influence one’s own writing.  

Self-consciousness need not involve spending hours studiously choosing between synonyms or deciding whether to phrase a clause as a statement or an interrogative. Through concentration on how and why stylistic patterns and strategies work as they do, one comes to understand that some choices are important enough to ponder while others may produce an acceptable effect in any event. Stylistics encourages readers to approach texts as if they were always already writers, and through such encouragement, it may turn prolonged thought about how others use words into a habit of mind that affects one’s own writing. This view of the reading-writing relationship does not involve mimesis in any strict sense, since I do not ask student-writers to create their own versions of the Declaration of Independence or Virginia Woolf’s “Letter to a Young Poet.” Rather student-writers are asked to engage with texts like these to contemplate how or why a particular writer might accomplish a particular kind of work in a particular way. There are few definitive answers for the question of why writers do X instead of Y,
but the very act of weighing discursive possibilities pushes readers to imagine themselves as simultaneously making meaning from another's words and making sense of how writers can and do manipulate their words.

Arguing for writers' dependence on the kind of thinking I describe is certainly more "natural" than suggesting all essays are structured in identical ways or asking student-writers to assume that their audience is always some vague Every(wo)man. Because stylistic strategies can be made tangible through the readings I assign and because student-writers can draw on their experiences as readers who have encountered such strategies, a sixteen-week writing course can accomplish much more than traditional approaches might indicate. Student-writers work toward understanding style's role in writing not only to add value to their readerly encounters with texts but also to increase their own effectiveness as writers. Textual literacy then becomes not merely lip service paid to reading and writing but a pragmatic means for grappling with the two-fold roles that all literate human beings must assume: always readers before they are writers, all writers come to a task with their reading experiences in tow, consciously or unconsciously, like it or not.

In other words, stylistic rhetoric depends on material conditions as well as on the numerous contingencies that those conditions embody and/or create. Elocutio's pragmatic bent greatly heightens one's understanding of the need that word and world have for one another, and at the very least, stylistic rhetoric should ensure that their unique link remains not only intact but also valued. The overriding purpose of the present chapter is to preserve and to extend the potential benefit of the word's "thrownness." I explore the pedagogical consequences of that (co)dependence, though its broadest outlines can be seen in the writing of the rhetoricians I investigate. Following Burke and others, I place under erasure the traditional relationship between theory and enactment in order to determine what a stylistic pragmatics actually looks like in the composition classroom—or by extension, any other site where writing and other verbal literacies are put to some use. Suspension does not guarantee that the theorizing of chapters two and three
will be “faithfully” adhered to, but it does much to suggest the potential for a complex of material actions that complements the theoretical practices illustrated there. Consequently, this exploration is perhaps better taken as a narrative of what occurs when, through informed enactment, stylistic rhetoric assumes its proper role in rhetoric-composition and beyond.

Because the narrative form serves as an investigative strategy, it also allows me to confront directly the disjunctive relationship that is sometimes seen to exist between theory and enactment. Both theorizing and enactment matter a great deal, and in an ideal situation, they would probably be taken to occur simultaneously. The mutual retrofitting of theory and practice occurs in the moment, what cognitive linguists call “on-line processing,” regardless of how one might treat it (mutual retrofitting) after the fact. Given that discrepancy, and precisely because the suspension detailed here is real rather than ideal, it can go only so far in (re)creating what occurs at the moment of discursive creation or reception. Because both real and potential failings are analyzed in the final pages of the chapter, and within the larger paralogic movement in chapter 5, let it suffice for now that I take them as seriously as the positive effects on which the majority of this chapter concentrates. A stylistics that does not accept the complexity, and ultimate impossibility, of an ideal communicative event cannot long provide the opportunities that writers of all stripes—whether teachers, students, or professionals—must seize if they are to be effective. As importantly, these discrepancies can initiate the self-reflection on which all successful rhetors rely when tailoring their discourse to its context. Knowing how to turn weaknesses into strengths is often more important than knowing how to exploit pre-existing advantages. While the circumstantial strengths of any set of practices provide the momentum necessary to push forward into material change, weaknesses serve as sites of tension around which a rhetor might pivot, alter course, and move back into action—all the while better preparing herself for the meaning(s) yet to be made. Addressing style in both its inventive and organizational roles, however, will not automatically produce the robust stylistics for which I argue. Other considerations that suit the third canon for
self-conscious reflection and rhetorical engagement should not be forgotten along the way. It is important to recognize and define the work style manages within the traditional canons of invention and arrangement, but it is equally vital that one recognize the strengths inherent to the canon as traditionally defined.

The most significant of style’s strengths, and one that figures in my choice of the retrofitting metaphor, is a concept I describe for student-writers as the rhetorical complex. Briefly, all utterances--whether a single word or an entire book--function as rhetorical complexes to the degree that they are designed and/or suited to perform multiple roles. Like a building that is both the same pleasing structure it has always been and the most earthquake-resistant edifice in the neighborhood, a purposeful utterance should be complex without being complicated, effective without seeming artificial. In other words, an effective utterance is suited to several different, perhaps even competing, functions. Three primary functions--and three attendant reasons for valuing those functions--will arise as the chapter progresses, all of them related to style’s architectonic nature, but I outline them here to indicate how important suspending the theory-enactment binary is.

• An effective utterance says something. Because all discourse is an embodiment or enfigurement, it must necessarily take on a particular form. That shape is determined by various factors, beginning with a given language’s phonology and morphology and ending with authorial choices about sentence, paragraph, and chapter breaks. The moment one uses language, it takes on some form or another--a kairotic expression of itself. Language-in-use is necessarily language-as-form.

• An effective utterance means something. Even those terms one might label “gibberish” carry a psychological value for an audience, who seek authorial presence, identity, and position in an author’s words. At the moment I determine an utterance to be gibberish, for example, I also begin to adjudge the utterer’s reason(s) for using
gibberish. Did I mishear? Did he misspeak? Why was the utterance made in the first place? Winterowd describes the relationship between utterance and meaning—cum-intention more fully:

> a number of factors make reading more or less difficult for the “good” reader: familiarity with the concepts developed in the text; the accessibility of the syntax employed by the author; cultural biases in the text; the clarity of the print; and so on.

> In the process of reading, the reader must construct, more or less clearly, a concept of intention and hence supply a writer. (Composition/Rhetoric 269)

• An effective utterance does something. As established in the preceding chapters, if an utterance has form, then it also has function; likewise, if an utterance has form, it carries meaning either explicitly or implicitly. Whether an utterance’s function is defined through classical categories—to please, to instruct, to move—or is divided more intricately, effective utterance is purposeful action. Understanding this relationship depends on making conscious one’s intuitive knowledge that words always have effects on people.

> Though schematized to ensure clarity, these three functions are not separable when enacted through discourse. They coexist in the utterance, each representing its own direction and tensions within the larger whole. Some utterances are almost entirely function—including many greetings and other phatic statements—while others rely primarily on form or meaning. But the whole still exists and should still be investigated as a complex. “What’s up?” in contemporary spoken English may as easily be answered with “Fine” as with “Not much.” Both the literal and figurative meanings of the question allow a range of responses, but under neither is “Fine” a semantically driven response; that is, unless semantics (or structure) is less important than function. Meaning still exists. All fluent speakers understand the question as equivalent to “Hello” or “How are you?”. Form still exits. There is no reason that the shortness of the question cannot be driven by efficiency, for example. What the utterance does, however, in large part determines how one comes
to understand its semantic and/or formal properties. Yet while function may be the overriding concern, it cannot stand alone. Every utterance requires an interpretive frame robust enough to account for all three facets and their various interactions. No framework is foolproof, but it must account as fully as possible for the interpretive leakage that makes my analysis of “What’s up?” (and utterances like it) possible. A stylistics of retrofitting accomplishes that task by accounting for the equivalence of form, meaning, and function as well as contextual concerns like audience and other immediate exigencies.

The power of retrofitting is more obvious in the written word than in the spoken because in writing the moment of utterance is not the moment of reception. The various keys that help interlocutors determine what response is appropriate or necessary, for example, must either be imbedded in the text--so as to survive the temporal disjunction it will undergo--or be imported by the reader at the moment of reading. Successful communication through writing is most efficiently accomplished by providing interpretive clues/rhetorical traces within a text, for “style is accessibility” (Winterowd, Composition/Rhetoric 271). Not all texts need provide step-by-step instructions, of course, but then, not all texts are meant to be efficient. All of the foregoing comes down to two interrelated points: (1) the interpretation of a text must account for form-content-function; and (2) the act of creation that generated that text will to some varying degree depend on the same interpretive framework. The effective author never believes that she will be successful in communicating with an audience while also believing that the audience is incapable of meeting the demands of her utterance. To be effective is to possess some means for shaping the audience’s interpretive processes. And a pragmatic stylistics makes that means feasible by refusing to separate one discursive function from another or to contend that theorizing exists separately from enactment. The only standing requirement is the exigency of the moment: the moment of utterance must be made to coincide more or less with the moment of reception, or the entire process fails in being effective.
Given the principle of exigency, a pragmatic stylistics makes communicative sense. In an information age, for example, the necessity of absorbing vast amounts of verbiage quickly and without major error should be self-evident. The time required to confront the number of websites, e-mails, memoranda, letters, phone calls, television programs, and films—to name just a few genres—is significant, if not staggering. Traditional communication theory posits a phenomenon called "noise" to account for anything that occludes or deviates from an utterance’s principle message. Likewise, the rhetorical complex works against noise by focusing attention on the madness of an utterance, its existence as a shaped occurrence. If one needs to convey something as quickly and efficiently as possible, then it is incumbent (both communicatively and ethically) that one proceed in reducing the burden that the utterance places on the audience. This is not to say that all work must be done by the author, rather that the work of transmitting the message should be fully shouldered by its originator. As an auditor or reader, I should be able to concentrate on meaning, function, and possible effects; I should not have to wrestle with the medium itself. Self-conscious language in this instance is not knotty language, though knotty language may at times be necessary to make or prove a given point—whether that point be informational, intellectual, or emotional.

Stylistic rhetoric argues simply that words should be “thrown” into the world in a reflective and purposeful way. Noise may be reduced almost completely if one concentrates on the utterance’s complex of functions, on doing as much with as little as necessary, but noise should not be the primary reason one relies on discourse’s functional complex. The complex is most effective in its self-consciousness of purpose. Turner agitates for the preservation of purposefulness, saying, “the nature of the figure has been confused and uneven, but its anchor is the notion of pairing [form with function]” (46; emphasis added). And the pairing he describes should hold true even when it does not dominate the utterance per se—knowing when such exertion will have little
or no effect is also part of the process. One should probably not repeat something that is unimportant (or at least less important relative to other things). One should probably not engage in chiasmus ("crossing over") if one does not desire to draw out two terms' interrelationship. The rhetorical complex asks the rhetor to consider what he wishes to accomplish and what means for doing so makes most sense. Emphasis need not always be accomplished through repetition—short sentences, climax, and (when not overused) exclamation come immediately to mind. And in instances where repetition might induce boredom, for example, some other means should be found. An utterance or text is rightly complex to the degree that it best effects the purpose driving it without sacrificing its sense of audience and material conditions.

All of that said, the proverbial need for transparent or noiseless language may not be the exact equivalent to rhetorical complexity. While it is true that the language used to express a thought should not inhibit comprehension, if thought and word are one, then language cannot transparent without thought itself disappearing. Rhetorical effects should not be hidden or recede into the background. Stylistic strategies are most useful when they call attention to themselves in order to increase the possibility for effective communication. A reader who sees not only information but also well-used repetition, for example, will tend to pay special attention to the information because of the repetition, not in spite of it. (The use of italics to emphasize a word typographically is no different in calling attention to itself and amounts to precisely the same motivated choice.) As a consequence, my purpose in detailing style's inventive and organizational potentialities relies heavily on the belief that language-in-the-world must always be motivated as well as situated. But as Fahnestock has argued, for example, discourse is not always or only motivated by informational hypertrophy. In many cases, invention and arrangement are as motivated by saying (form) and/or doing (function) as content. If rhetoric is stylistic, then no facet of that art may escape the influence of figurative or schematic forces. If discourse is situated, then no aspect of the utterance may exist in the world without relying on those same forces.
Interludium: Retrofitting the Rhetorical Canons

Before turning to invention, let me emphasize that pragmatic stylistics does not define or mobilize the five canons of classical rhetoric as chronologically driven or as incremental steps in some discrete process. Rhetorical enactment is not an Aristotelian narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Invention, arrangement, and style function as three complementary frameworks for approaching any utterance. Each represents a different lens through which to consider discourse, but those differing lenses should not be taken to represent different objects of inquiry. Moreover, none of the three should take precedence over the others, and none must necessarily occur before/after the other two. A. Kibédi Varga describes one possible methodology for preserving the interdependence of the first three canons:

[e]very [rhetorical] phenomenon should be defined at its own level but it should also be comprehended at each higher level. Every figure should be defined as part of elocution, but at the same time it should be mentioned in relation to the topic within which it usually appears and functions [. . .]. (“Rhetoric, a Story or a System?” 86; emphasis in original)

Varga’s model encourages the application of several interpretive frameworks to the same discursive phenomenon. No single framework can fully describe a phenomenon, and Varga’s methodology accepts that state of affairs a priori. More specifically, a figure is not defined in terms of itself alone but rather in combination with its other, some might say broader, rhetorical functions. Cross-category definition disrupts traditional views of the rhetorical canons without disposing of those views entirely. The model synthesizes them (those views) instead of conglomerating them, thereby guaranteeing that the methodology remains fully active across traditional canonical boundaries. Even so, such an approach still maintains a hierarchy among the canons--note Varga’s use of “higher”--and is unlikely to account for style as the primary force within rhetoric. This approach’s reliance on “usually” also assumes some normative relationship between individual topics and specific strategies. The connection between stylistic strategies and
invention seems to depend on the prevailing influence of a given topic, ensuring that invention is favored and that traditional separations continue to haunt the canons.

A truly stylistic rhetoric must be able to address the way(s) in which tropes and schemes themselves generate and organize material. The how and why need to be valued as highly as the what if one hopes to do more than shore up the same originating assumptions that motivate current-traditional and other “limited” approaches to rhetoric. The retrofitting required builds on synthetic approaches like Varga’s, but it moves beyond the limitations of their drive to narrativize the rhetorical process. The resulting narratives are anti-rhetorical—they make all rhetorical enactments linear and/or hierarchical—and require not an opposite but rather a transformandum. The trick is to accept that theoretical narratives are only half the solution. Retrofitting manages that trick by accepting the categories that theory requires while problematizing the work that those categories accomplish. Rhetorical enactment may be viewed through various lenses of varying power, but to integrate those lenses into a single instrument demands more than a master narrative or a grand scheme.

Retrofitting accomplishes the necessary integration without promising utopian stability. A retrofitted building incorporates the best of the old into its newness, but no building is completely safe against earthquakes. The building remains verifiably safe only until the next tremor hits; it may still fail, no matter how much the probability of failure is reduced. The building must always retain some of the older structure’s weaknesses, and retrofitting adds to them whatever flaws the newer structure possesses. Stylistic rhetoric obviates the need for separate categories treating invention, arrangement, and style, but its methods are good only until the next discursive engagement. No prior theory of discourse can undergo an infinite number of applications intact. Rather than striving for perfect coverage or assuming that it already exists, retrofitting accepts failure as a necessary part of the rhetorical process, one absolutely necessary to moving forward. According to this view, and at a bare minimum, miscommunication and misinterpretation are
productive if and when they make later discursive engagements possible. By retrofitting the traditional canons, stylistic rhetoric necessarily disrupts much of what was valued in rhetoric's older narratives. However, it reappears as needed within an integrated stylistics. Rhetorical canonical divisions return as interpretive frames that self-select for particular discursive qualities. Invention and arrangement become, or are treated as, the necessary outgrowths of a rhetor's stylistic choices. Beyond the retrofitting of pre-existing structures or approaches, stylistics strives to exploit strengths and minimize--or when possible, leverage--weaknesses in a given context, and through that process, any newly discovered weaknesses only add to the future strength of one's rhetorical understanding. Just as fluent speakers and writers increase their discursive proficiency by actually using the language, so stylistic rhetoric is sharpened by its application to the materials at hand. No amount of theorizing can perfect either previous systems or the one promulgated here. The test of material use makes retrofitting both possible and powerful precisely because style is a child of (con)text.

Stylistic Invention and Governing Principles

In The Art of Rhetoric, Aristotle defines the whole of rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject matter whatever" (1.2.2). Through part-for-whole substitution, he makes the art of rhetoric synonymous with invention--as it was later defined and developed--and that substitution has shaped attitudes toward rhetorical theory to the present day. Modern rhetoric-composition has relied heavily on the idea that written rhetoric is primarily a matter of invention (and, to a lesser degree, arrangement), and it is only in the last decade or so that anything has been done to seriously challenge that assumption. Aristotle's intention will remain forever unknown, but it is equally as likely that he meant for rhetoric to be treated holistically, not piecemeal. While The Art of Rhetoric is in many ways the most effective Greek articulation of rhetorical theory, it is also at times quite chaotic. Aristotle lays in the broad
outlines of the various canons, but he does not work overly hard to minimize cross-contamination. He seems more concerned, as do Varga, Scholes and others, with focusing attention on the preferred means of interpreting rhetorical phenomena than on claiming one canon ought to precede another in practice. Aristotle's focus, not The Art of Rhetoric's underlying system, produces the bias later exhibited and extended by many rhetoricians and compositionists.

Several centuries after Aristotle, Cicero more narrowly defined inventio as "the discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments to render one's case plausible" (On Invention 1.7.9). Though the translator renders the Latin excogitatio as "discovery," it might more properly be seen as "thinking up" or "contriving." These latter terms avoid the suggestion that the first canon is somehow about uncovering pre-existing arguments or ideas, and this avoidance is of paramount importance if one hopes to reintegrate style with its two more valued siblings. These alternative translations foreground the madeness of the topic(s) developed, and in doing so, they emphasize the importance of rhetorical choice in producing any discourse. Ideas must be thought up and thought through, not simply found, as if conveniently waiting on the tip of one's tongue or pen. Reliance on common lines of argument need not be synonymous with specific tried-and-true arguments, though the latter are sometimes highly useful. For example, since an appeal to authority may take many forms in a discourse on freedom or democracy, it does not always express itself as "Democracy demands free and fair elections." The commonplace itself can and should be separated from any single argument it might spawn, no matter how ubiquitous that specific argument. As with any other space, metaphorical or physical, the commonplace may be inhabited by numerous--even competing--logics and arguments.

Because ideas and the arguments they influence do not spring fully formed from the rhetor's brow, the classical rhetoricians developed first the topic system, best exemplified by Aristotle, and later the stasis system--which is really a system within a system and is best exemplified by Cicero--to help rhetors in generating material. These two methodologies highlighted possible sites of
tension within a given case, but because they were generalized to suit the building of an abstract system (*ars rhetorica*), they have not always been seen as heuristics—a term which, not surprisingly, comes from the Greek *heuriskein*, to discover. Having largely lost their identity as ideational generators by the time of Quintilian, the topics and stases became rote subject matters—not unlike the proverbial summer vacation and life-altering event essays still assigned in some writing courses. The task of the present section, then, is to recuperate the place of invention-as-making within rhetoric and, by doing so, to indicate why style must necessarily be generative as well as suasory and argumentative.

To that end, I turn again to Cicero, who succinctly describes the broad group of sites for invention in *On Invention*:

> [w]e may say that all *probability* that is used in argument is either a *sign*, or something *credible*, or a point on which *judgment* has been given, or something which affords an opportunity for *comparison*. [...] Instances and descriptions of these principles will be given with the rules for style. (1.30.47-49; emphasis in original)

The Roman’s list is composed of terms that can be traced to Aristotelian topics of the same or similar names, ones that are still with us to a greater or lesser degree. The importance of his emphasizing them as he does lies in their functioning as points of departure, not as full-blown arguments. The terms literally rupture the page—as items or “points” on the list—even as they figuratively rupture the space left open for inventional thought/writing. Those ruptures carry with them the sorts of questions necessary to developing an argument, and those questions are actuated by the very interest one takes in them (the topics) as sites of meaningful articulation. For example, how does one know X is a sign? What might it be a sign of? Why might X stand (or be able to stand) for Y while some other term(s) do not or cannot? What consequences might follow from the relationships implied by that linkage? And so on. The key concepts are more or less inherently generative, though each has its own idiosyncrasies and is always affected by context. In every case something is being thought out/through by the rhetor, and in every case that thought process is tied
to probability. Each term points to *what might be the case* instead of what is—a distinction accentuated by the use of “may say,” “probability,” and “opportunity.”

These topical sites’ connections to style are, of course, equally significant. Both “instances and descriptions of these principles” are reserved for Cicero’s later exploration of the third canon. One might rightfully ponder the reasons for that, though such questions are in most cases a result of the bias that has so long separated the canons into discrete domains. Comparison and sign readily lend themselves to pairing with figures such as simile/metaphor and synecdoche/metonymy respectively. This topic-figure equivalence suggests that arguments might be generated by applying the principle of comparison or signification to a constellation of features rather than an individual characteristic. Instead of comparing the single term X to the single term Y, for example, one might produce a narrative of sorts describing the comparison of X to Y, X to Z, Y to Z, or alternatively, various aspects/features of X to Y’s and/or Z’s equivalent characteristics.\(^5\) The first difficulty in understanding Cicero’s mention of the third canon comes with the topics “credible” and “judgment.” Neither of these terms seems to have a simple (or rather, *single*) corollary in the rhetorical catalog of schemes and tropes. What specific stylistic strategy makes something credible or indicates judgment? Reconsidering sign and comparison, however, these other corollaries may become clearer. Cicero’s sketches of sign and comparison most easily match the strategies mentioned above, but that matching does not necessarily tell the entire story. He appears to be gesturing toward the functions of various arguments and/or strategies as much as the arguments or strategies themselves. That is, one might just as easily think of signification and comparison as *acts* that have material effects on an audience.\(^6\)

Thus, Cicero’s foregrounding of function leaves the two remaining terms on his list in a similar position, standing as actions rather than static configurations. Other figures beyond those previously correlated with comparison and sign might also serve to compare and to signify, with
all of the effects attendant to those actions. Irony involves an implicit comparison of statement with reality as well as the resulting disjunction between the two. And prosopopoeia serves to signify in certain contexts as easily as metaphor/simile. Likewise, numerous figures or schemes might be mobilized to make something more credible or to indicate a judgment for or against some person, thing, or action. Again, prosopopoeia can lend credibility to a situation as effectively as any fact or piece of testimony. I have not hesitated to personify the third canon in these pages—it often serves as an agent in statements about style and/or stylistics—in order to make my arguments more direct/tangible and, therefore, more believable. No proficient reader who comes across these instances is likely to believe style is a walking, talking entity, of course, but discourse often demands the immediacy that personification helps create. Formulating an opinion or expressing a judgment about something also depends on one’s stylistic choices, though in a more elemental way than those associated with credibility. Whether I choose to express an action by describing it as “to kill” or as “to murder” will implicitly suggest a judgment about that action. Another instance of words’ customary valencies comes in the classical figures bdelygmia (“nausea, disgust”) and apodioxis (“a chasing away”)—both translated into Latin as abominatio—which rely entirely on the reader’s ability to recognize a critique that focuses on a person’s or thing’s perceived wickedness or harmfulness. The strategy may differ according to context, but the function clearly remains grounded in the act of judging. Indeed, one is not splitting hairs to investigate the difference in judgment created when one argues against murder rather than against killing. In English the terms do not carry the same valencies, even if they are seen as roughly synonymous. The latter (to kill) seems to encompass a broader range of variables, including but not limited to those circumscribed by the former (to murder). The Biblical injunction “Thou shalt not kill” apparently leaves no room for exceptions, whereas the alternative “Thou shalt not murder” creates an allowance for certain actions that produce the same result as killing. The judgment rendered in this case is moral/ethical—or in another context legal—but even assuming ethics works within a closed system, the same
principle would apply to judgments of value within other systems—social, cultural, economic, and so on. The judgment would direct one to a position within the relevant system or continuum. If one prefers to speak in terms of X rather than Y, then one has said as much about one’s relationship to the value system underlying one’s utterances as about some subject matter.

And yet, detailing how invention might draw on stylistic strategies does not suffice if the larger goal of stylistic rhetoric is to harness the discursive phenomena imbricated by invention. Let me return, then, to the premise with which I started this section in order to pursue it in a different direction. If one assumes that invention is the stylistic construction of ideas and their associated arguments, then what exactly is being constructed and how? One does not find ideas floating freely above discourse; they occur in a specific context, are given one by their interpreter(s), or as with Weaver’s “charismatic ideas,” they carry one with them. It would be difficult to imagine invention constructing something from nothing, especially if form, content and function are fully reliant on one another. Crowley and Hawhee deal with this complex of generative relationships by positing that “invention [. . .] encourages a kind of ready stance, in which the rhetor is not only attuned to the history of an issue (chronos), but is also aware of the more precise turns the arguments surrounding an issue have taken and when they took those turns” (Ancient Rhetorics 35). One does not invent an issue or an argument as much as come to see it through its relationship to other ideas and other contexts. In doing so, the rhetor as well as the idea become kairotically situated, they must each take on a “stance.” That posture carries specific discursive implications that determine what is taken from a given utterance as well as what work that utterance might accomplish. Stylistic strategies provide the means for embodying an issue within a context by retrofitting the language that gives it (the issue) meaning. Without that embodiment an idea is not an idea as one normally defines the word.

Sententiae (maxims or pithy sayings) exemplify the position a charismatic idea—or at least an idea purporting to that status—might take because they so often assume a confident stance; that is,
they present themselves as truths. “Hard work leads to success” appears too direct ever to be a misstatement. The deeper context the proposition carries with it, however, suggests otherwise. Beyond the so-called Protestant work ethic that informs it and other similar maxims, one finds a miniature narrative. Hard work is a journey that leads one to a desirable destination. Moreover, that journey is not dependent on anything other than hard work (as a generalized category) since the statement places one, the individual, in the object position: “Hard work leads [one] to success.” Because work is the active force within the proposition, it is supposed to produce success almost automatically. One finds no subjunctive or conditional mood because the statement does not work to account for alternatives or conditions of any kind. The causal relationship between hard work and success suggests a linear one-to-one ratio, a zero-sum game of inputs and outputs. All of this material lies latent in five words, words that nearly every speaker of English has heard over and over again.

The stance taken by the foregoing proposition need not mirror the material reality of a given situation because that stance is part and parcel of the proposition itself. As a charismatic idea, it draws on various cultural contexts (nomoi) that supersede the discursive contexts in which the phrase appears. The various critiques one might lay against the statement, and its several implications, will as a consequence rely on the ways in which the proposition’s charismatic context is different from the context currently under scrutiny. A student-writer might come to me about a particular assignment, wondering why five hours of work on a two-page paper did not produce a passing grade. (After all, hard work leads to success.) My response would be to ask what sort of work she did in that five hours. Time spent is not the equivalent of time well spent; and hard work is not the same as well-directed work. That is, the assumption that any “hard work” will lead automatically to “success” carries argumentative force but only as far as one allows its charismatic character to overshadow the particular instance in which the proposition is mobilized. I describe how the proposition stylistically manages to do its work. That analysis easily accounts for the
reason(s) it does not, or at least should not, work on me in this hypothetical conversation with a student-writer. The stylistic power inhering to the proposition derives from the particular form it takes on; if it were reworded as “If you work really, really hard, then you will be really, really successful” or as “Working as hard as you can guarantees you success,” the implications remain. But the stylistic force does not. In the first instance, the conditional mood generated by the if/then construction disrupts any claims to absolute truth; in the second, the input/output relationship becomes dependent on ability/willingness (“can”) rather than work per se. Neither carries the stylistic weight the maxim does, and as a result, neither does the work such a strategy should.

Of the psychological influence had by utterances like the well-formed sententia, Burke says, “[w]e are prepared less to demand a certain qualitative progression than to recognize its rightness after the event. We are put into a state of mind which another state of mind can appropriately follow” (Counter-statement 125). “Hard work leads to success” attempts to create a state of mind that supersedes material circumstances and, therefore, prepares the reader/listener for further engagement on principle. In the same way, it prepares the rhetor for that engagement by providing the commonplace from which further utterances will grow—-it privileges further choices that can or should be made. Stark’s “Clichés and Composition Theory” suggests that the cliché, which maxims like the present one often become, is “a commonplace figurative expression that secures an immediate connection with other participants in the ordinary discourse of a culture” (462). In my illustration the student-writer’s inability to convince me of her “rightness” derives from my refusal of, not my inability to recognize, the foundation on which further discussion would supposedly be predicated. The maxim’s ineffectiveness results not from my current state of mind but from my unwillingness to accept the state it seeks to create. Moreover, I may be sympathetic to the student-writer’s case and still find myself refusing the maxim’s particular invitation, since my sympathy may rely on assumptions very different from those proffered (or perceived to be proffered). Indeed, thickening the fog surrounding style’s generative capacities is the removal of
the utterance from its moment of formulation. That displacement leaves interlocutors with the traces of thought processes, rhetorical stances, and the like. It does not leave them with the thoughts themselves. And *sententiae* raise further problems precisely because the meaning they communicate is culturally contained as well as individually motivated. Where the cultural signification ends and the individual stance-taking begins cannot normally be determined.

Discourse is the material signpost of what has already occurred, and its materiality is tied to meaning and function rather than directly to thought. The traces of thought are certainly to be found in every utterance, but the thought itself can only be incompletely recovered through the meaning(s) an utterance generates. Stylistic invention aims to make that recovery possible by recognizing the importance of form and function to the meaning being expressed. Stylistic strategies then have the virtue of being effective tools for aiding audiences in understanding what has been communicated as well as for aiding writers in understanding what might be communicated. This dual benefit makes the study of various strategies a necessity to those writers who would more effectively generate material for any particular audience. It allows them (writers) to assume the interpretive stance likely taken by an audience *while* also maintaining their own situatedness. Again, in my illustration, the student-writer involved has done everything she should to deploy the *sententia* correctly. The move's failure resides in my own ability to recognize the move *as a move*, one designed to create particular effects in me. I was able to see both the authorial choices being made and the effects those moves had on me, whereas she did not, or could not, account for the resulting effects as I would perceive them.

The situation might easily be reversed, of course, were I to tell the student that writing well matters because "writing is thinking" or some equally ubiquitous pedagogical commonplace. I and many of my readers may accept this statement as generating precisely the right worldview. A first-year Chemistry major, however, may see things quite differently. He may see the activity of writing, whether well or poorly, as punishment, unimportant, or he may not see anything in the
activity at all. In this and the previous instance, the self-regulating, dual-vision mechanism that style provides was not foolproof. Many of the choices made when communicating are automatic (that is, unconscious) and, because of this, cannot be strictly planned in advance. Stylistics must not rely purely on strategy (forethought or planning) when tactics (material action) may be the only thing one can control. Stylistics is perhaps most effective, then, when writers use it to become more self-aware of language-in-use than when taken as a universal remedy for miscommunication, misinterpretation, or ineffectiveness. One comes to see when to make self-conscious choices about one’s words as much as how/why those choices should be made in the first place. Not every word needs to be chosen carefully in order to be effective, though that is not to say words never need to be chosen with care.

Stylistic invention focuses the writer’s attention on the demands placed on her decisions, zeroing in on the productive relationships among form, content, and function and aiding in her choices about which utterance(s) best suit which contexts. Whether a writer should consciously deploy this or that strategy depends on whether the situation warrants such attention. Because not all contexts are equal, not all choices about discursive engagement are equally important. Invention may in some ways seem more significant because it deals with the teasing of meaning from ideas and arguments; that is, it works on what is usually taken to lie behind the words people use. However, since a pragmatic stylistics posits that ideas cannot be separated from words or their function(s), there is no reason to assume that invention can be separated from arrangement or style, nor should be. More importantly for stylistic invention itself, postmodern theory suggests that when one generates ideas/meanings, one also generates an expression of one’s worldview, and my examples bear that contention out. One must also consider that any such worldview expresses the Self as a many-faced actor existing within a singular and fleeting moment (kairos). That is, the dynamic, postmodern Self is not definable outside of its context—it is always situated—and for this reason, the worldview associated with the kairotic Self also depends on context.
Lanham incisively describes the dynamic relationships among the kairotic Self, its contextualized worldview, and the third canon in *Style: An Anti-textbook*:

[prose styles] are not neutral, dependable, preexistent objects that everyone sees the same way. We must be trained, as Americans for the most part are not, to see them at all. And to see them in the same way (this is what an education in “taste” really means) takes a good deal of training indeed.

Move the argument one step further. Each prose style is itself not only an object seen but a way of seeing, both an intermediate “reality” and a dynamic one. (33)

Styles are realities because they ultimately serve as material signposts, discursive traces, of rhetorical choices. Styles make both discourse and the Self generating that discourse tangibly meaningful. But the interrelationships of form, content and function do not, as a consequence, make styles irrefragable structures with some abstract or idealized quality about them. The principles of stylistic invention tell one that no two choices are ever the same and that, because of this kairotic difference, no two utterances can be identical either. Utterances differ from top to bottom, regardless of whether they are expressed in the same words, because they each accomplish a specific kind of work especially well/poorly. For Lanham, all writers (including student-writers) are better served to understand that how they communicate—that is, the style they assume—is not who they are but a way of seeing and/or a means for accomplishing work in the world being seen. Giving student-writers conscious choices about their language use initiates a process that cannot be duplicated by any particular training in one kind of discourse or another. Those discourses can only be understood by confronting and moving through them in both the world of ideas and the world of material realities.

Many of those reading my project have academic training similar to my own, but their writing styles are no more or less like mine than their scholarly interests or their life experiences. Compositionists usually manage to communicate within a common discursive framework because they are quite often at work on the same or similar endeavors. No framework, however, can single-handedly accomplish the work every person sets out to do.7 In the next section I explore how two
writers, Virginia Woolf and a former student, work through the inventionaL process using frameworks that sustain not only their own work but the needs of the audiences they address. My exploration reveals the effectiveness any writer might achieve if he explicitly contemplates the utterances he creates. Neither Woolf nor my student are held up as paragons of writerly virtue—all writers foul up from time to time—but each accomplished the work she set out to when putting words to paper, and while they began with similar premises, they found themselves in very different places. It is the odd mix of similar strategies and dissimilar results that intrigues me most, and as the next section unfolds, I show why that intrigue matters as much as it does.

Exemplum: The Rhetorical Question

Because language-as-system necessarily imposes constraints on discursive invention, post facto description cannot produce an algorithm for future speech acts. Utterances are both constrained and liberated by the language within which they are expressed. Stylistic invention harnesses these competing influences by questioning precisely how it is that an utterance gets linguistically regulated without being discursively predetermined:

If a convergence of form and content is the essential characteristic of figures, then normal sentence patterns in English syntax figure the fixed or chosen interactions of the sentence elements. [. . .] The language user's construction of meaning [. . .] is formally constrained by the conventions of grammar [. . .]. (Fahnestock, Rhetorical Figures 38)8

Rather than eliminating choice, linguistic proscription limits the kinds of choices that matter. Understanding how that limitation occurs, and what effects it has on discursive enactment, is appropriate fodder for stylistic analysis. The third canon was originally intended to describe the shape that ideas assume in the world with an eye toward controlling that transformation. Stylistics can uncover a great deal about all discourses, especially those not considered figurative, by focusing, as I do, on what Fahnestock calls the "functional nature of identifiable forms in presumably non-figured discourse" (38). In this section, for example, I address the linguistic and discursive facets of the rhetorical question. The strategy appears in many contexts and functions in
several ways, and its appeal largely derives from its position as a basic linguistic-cum-grammatical structure in English. Both direct and indirect rhetorical interrogatives flourish in the language, and that flowering provides an enormous resource for coming to understand the ways in which effective rhetorical questions are generated.

Although there is no formula adequate for generating effective discourse, meaning is necessarily initiated according to some logic or another—that is, it must follow some principle of enactment—and stylistics opens that logic for critique. The label given to a given generative logic will vary according to the interpretive framework one deploys, but such categorization is part and parcel of reflecting on one's words. By arguing for a stylistics of invention, I am simultaneously arguing for an acceptance of the madeness of arguments and of the third canon's influence over that making. The first proposition is unlikely to elicit protest; few rhetoricians or writers would argue that arguments are not made, though there might be more disagreement about the status of the ideas underlying those arguments. My second proposition, however, is less traditional, and as a consequence, it likely requires some clarification. I contend that invention's power often resides in interlocutors' prior knowledge of grammatical structures like parallelism (syntactic repetition), apposition, and rhetorical questions. Since all fluent users of English have experience with them—and having had that experience, used the strategies themselves—stylistic invention makes the generation of meaning more accessible than it might first appear. If one knows that grammatical apposition destabilizes the valency attached to a term or phrase, for instance, one can also grow to understand how apposing ideas might work on a scale larger than the sentence.

Returning to this section's proper subject, then, stylistic invention forces one to ask how the rhetorical question might be involved in the shaping of paragraphs or chapters as well as sentences. How exactly does such an economy of scale play itself out? While the answer is complex, though not necessarily complicated, a reading of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in tandem with a former student's essay—which draws partly on Woolf—can produce a working understanding
(phronesis) of the task facing a writer who chooses to mobilize her words around the rhetorical question or any similar strategy. To be sure, rhetorical questions are not the only choice a writer has when generating material, but working to understand those questions provides an actual choice, one that can be seen in action, instead of an abstract hypothetical that may or may not be stumbled upon if things turn out ‘right.’ Understanding individual stylistic strategies becomes tantamount to having choices, and through these choices, one creates the opportunity for effective communication. Not knowing one has a choice, ignoring possible choices, or limiting oneself in one’s choices serves neither rhetor nor audience. Context often dictates quite clearly which choices will be effective, but context does not produce the choices in and of itself. Thinking up/through one’s arguments occurs, consciously or otherwise, in the moment, and the only way to ensure that thinking proceeds efficiently and effectively is to avail oneself of the proper materials. Stylistic choices made during inventional moments must truly become second nature—the core of a trained sensitivity to discourse. Making meaning is, after all, the primary motivation behind all communicative engagement. Should that making fail, little else remains for any of the canons to shape or interrogate.

Virginia Woolf begins A Room of One’s with a series of rhetorical questions, both explicit and implicit, thereby providing her readers and herself with a means for moving into the subject at hand—the female writer’s place in twentieth-century society and culture. As any good commonplace would, these rhetorical questions help Woolf determine her argumentative focus while also equipping readers with an explicit means for becoming part of that determinative process. The investigation of possibilities that her questions makes possible is simultaneously the subject matter and the strategy by which Woolf keeps readers engaged, and these parallel tracks—form, content, and function—best exemplify what I contend:

But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction—what has that got to do with a room of one’s own? I will try to explain. When you asked me to speak about women and fiction I sat down on the banks of a river and began to wonder what
the words meant. They might mean simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few
more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under
snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George
Eliot; a reference to Mrs. Gaskell and one would have done. (A Room of One's Own 3)

Woolf begins her text by juxtaposing its title against the hypothetical thoughts of her audience.

That juxtaposition is achieved through the conjunction “but,” which itself is rhetorically placed at
the beginning of the sentence--thereby breaking the rule every grammar handbook holds dear:
never start a sentence with a conjunction. Her use of the conjunction-as-fulcrum draws a functional
contrast between a simple statement of her subject (“a room of one’s own”) and the ostensible
topic on which she has been asked to speak (“women and fiction”). Woolf accounts for the
discrepancy by immediately engaging in the rhetorical question one can imagine her audience
asking themselves. That question provides the narrative that propels the rest of the paragraph, and
as I take up in the next paragraphs, it establishes a pattern for the further questions that she poses.

Woolf moves from her question into a short sketch of her response to the topic she has been
given before proceeding through a series of writers/subjects that might fit under that heading. This
strategic catalog matters most because it represents a series of possible answers to the question
Woolf supposedly had been asking herself: what do I say about women and fiction? Furthermore,
appearing as it does in the middle of her mini-narrative, the list raises as many questions as it
answers, particularly since her explanation still seems far from substantively connecting a room
with women and fiction. The further questions readers might ask themselves as she checks off the
authors on her list are precisely what Woolf needs to keep readers engaged, to maintain the
momentum of the initial (explicit) question and to provide the proper amount of suspense or
intellectual hunger. At precisely the moment when the tension surrounding her catalog is at its
highest, Woolf turns back the way she has come, undermining the narrative’s momentum by again
leveraging her readers’ attention:

But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction
might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it
might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the
fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. (3)

Again, Woolf turns to the conjunction “but.” This time, however, it pushes us not into the audience’s possible question(s) but rather into Woolf’s own (alternative) thoughts on the subject she has been asked to address. Her own galloping thoughts about women and fiction are foregrounded even as the most acceptable and “simple” way of addressing the subject falls away. Once in line with Woolf’s train of thought, the questions gush forth. Implicit and overridden by the use of repetition and polysyndeton (“many bonds,” the use of multiple connectives), the interrogatives are there nonetheless. Did you mean? Might it mean? These are the questions Woolf is asking and answering in the passage. As before, she does not expect the audience to answer; the questions are as rhetorical as they get. Even so, she does force the reader to begin asking the same questions of himself, pushing him to consider more about himself while also uncovering more of Woolf’s subject.

In both of the passages I cite, Woolf’s argument grows directly from her use of the questions she poses. The material addressed is the question posed, and by relying on that mode of inquiry, she is able twice to invoke a strategy that sustains her writerly momentum, engages the audience’s own curiosity and/or doubts, and moves the relationship between women and fiction and a room further toward convergence. That convergence takes six chapters and more than one hundred pages to manifest itself, but the path Woolf will chart has been established in less than a page. Indeed, Woolf clearly ends her work by returning to the concern with which she began, and the way she accomplishes that goal is traditional in its explicitness but groundbreaking in its function:

How can I further encourage you to go about the business of your life? Young women, I would say, and please attend, for the peroration is beginning, you are, in my opinion disgracefully ignorant. You have never made a discovery of any sort of importance. You have never shaken an empire or led an army into battle. The plays of Shakespeare are not by you, and you have never introduced a barbarous race into the blessings of civilisation. What is your excuse? (112)

Woolf carefully marks the conclusion to her essay by posing a question that any speaker might
rightfully ask herself at this point in a discourse. The difference here is that readers quickly discover that Woolf is not posing this question as evidence of her own thoughts on the matter, rather she is simultaneously parodying the way essays are supposed to end and the way in which men have traditionally perceived women. She overdetermines the ending by explicitly stating that "the peroration is beginning," thereby reinforcing the question she has just posed. The question is used to mark the ending as ending: what further remains? The self-reflexive use of "peroration" in the peroration overemphasizes the end is coming. And metaphorically speaking, it is the end of women's current role in society, for the words that follow are not Woolf's, but those of the stereotypical early-twentieth-century male--words designed to up the emotional ante in a truly classical way. The abrupt transition from literal to figurative occasioned by the question provokes thought, as readers attempt to determine what Woolf is up to, even as it provides her with a final opportunity to engage them through questions. Again, the reader is not intended to answer either of the questions posed, rather each in its own way poses questions bigger than the essay. Woolf can do no more to encourage her audience; her work is done. There is no excuse for what women have 'failed' to accomplish; they had never engaged in the activities she names because they were never allowed to. There is no more to say; there is no excuse.

Yet there is more to each topic (and to the two in combination) than gets said. (Why haven't women already begun?, Woolf seems to be asking.) The frame provided by these twin interrogatives circumscribes a moment something like Woolf's essay in miniature, serious minded yet incisively satirical, thought provoking and too easily passed over, all at once. The stylistic choices Woolf exhibits here do as much as any passage can to suggest the means by which stylistic commonplaces turn words into arguments. Questions begin the essay, questions end it, and none are easily answered. In each instance, the questions provoke and enlighten even as they complicate something that initially seems quite simple (if not simplistic). The use of rhetorical questions to draw out what might otherwise go unnoticed or taken for granted recurs in the work of my former
student—whom I will hereafter refer to as Beth—and as I show, that complication again grows productively from the use of rhetorical questions. Beth's use of questions is less direct than Woolf's, if by that term one means obviously designed to engage readers and push the essay forward. To think up and to think through are the heart of invention, however, and even in subtle ways, rhetorical questions generate discourse. In the paper I examine, Beth had been asked to respond to her own writing and thoughts about writing by modeling Woolf's method in *A Room of One's Own*. I wrote the assignment in hopes of encouraging a certain self-conscious in student-writers while also providing an opportunity for them to experiment with the stylistics of the essay. I believed (and still believe) that Woolf's approach could become a middle term in the slow transformation of students from users of language to writers.

If that transformative process were narrativized, then Woolf would stand as the Burkean *transformatandum*, what Todorov calls the "'intermediary'" or "narrative transformation" (*Poetics* 14). Donald Bialostosky argues for a similar goal in dialogic terms:

> it is more important to cultivate students' understanding of their ambivalent situations and to validate their struggles to remake themselves and the languages imposed on them. If they see that they do not already possess a finished authentic identity and an authentic language, [...] they may also see that the new languages do not promise to provide such an identity but only offer new resources for seeing and saying. ("Writing with Teachers" 17)

Finding resources for seeing and saying motivates my argument for stylistic strategies as generative tools, too, and Beth's essay illustrates the degree to which student-writers (and writers in general) struggle with the choices writing involves. Choices are often cast as a positive outcome of freedom, proficiency, and the like, particularly in a contemporary society driven by the value inhering to any range of choices, whatever they may be. The more choices I have, the better off I supposedly am. If Bialostosky is right, however, the choices themselves do not remotely guarantee a fixed outcome. One choice inevitably leads to another, or several others. The notion that choice
leads to stability of Self or of discourse--to some inherently positive stopping point--cannot stand unquestioned precisely because of the nature of discursive choice itself.

The way in which one makes choices matters much more than how many or what kinds of choices one has, and stylistic invention helps Beth navigate that problem as she begins her essay: 10

To write about my own writing style, I would have to first get one, plainly put. It seems my most relevant papers lack unity and cohesion which are the fundamental building blocks in an effective paper. My options then are to write about someone else's writing style, and do a compare and contrast (which would be dull since that would be the expected writing technique, used by most writers since third grade), create a fictitious writing style and evaluate that one (always an option), or I could actually try to decipher my own writings. I could try to create some sense out of it all.

The paragraph generates itself in response to Beth's implicit assumption that she has no writing style--or more likely, no style 'worth' studying: I do not seem to have a (valued) style, so how am I supposed to complete this assignment? That question, like Woolf's more direct counterpart, pushes the paragraph forward into the list of options Beth sees herself facing. The three choices that she provides herself and the reader move from a staid technique, what she describes as more appropriate to the "third grade," through something supposed to be completely free and creative ("a fictitious writing style"), to the option she finally chooses: her own writing style, regardless of how it now appears, in hopes of understanding it better. That movement may not occur but for the question she implicitly poses, for it is the question that helps her reconsider her own writing over and against someone else's style--the voice of tradition and its typical compare/contrast essay--as well as no one else's style--a consciously fictive Self serves as her horizon of possibility. Her eventual return to her own writing, and that with some resolve, suggests that the other choices were not as appealing as they first seemed. But the question that generated them, implicit or not, helps shape her response by carrying with it something else, more questions: Do I not have a style? If not, why not? If I do, why does it seem so unappealing?
In her second paragraph, Beth takes up the challenge by explicitly questioning her decision, thereby uncovering still more about herself as a writer and moving toward a fuller understanding of what she does when putting words to paper:

One can then ask, why does it matter? It matters because only by examining my own writings can I then get a sense of what my writing style is, was, and could be. This would allow me to improve any flaws or add new techniques to my own writing style. So if I can then recognize my writing style, how can I improve it? The answer would be to use someone else’s writings as a model, to see what another writer Woolf does (who is a great example of a writer that defies the two techniques in writings that I’ve learned about, summary and analysis, we shall refer back to her later on), that is effective and isn’t, and then compare it to my writings. This would then lead to growth, progress, and more “effective” paper (I use this word loosely since we all have a biased idea of what constitutes effectiveness, yet I can think of no other word that could contain so many different ideas to all).

The initial question is dual-voiced, reflecting both the reader’s question about Beth’s present work and Beth’s own question about her decision to consider her own writing. Its dialogic nature opens several possibilities, a range of choices, that Beth must navigate as she did those presented in the first paragraph. That journey again brings readers into the process, asking them to ask themselves similar questions even as they ponder Beth’s next move. She builds a causal chain from here—“it matters because” and “this would allow me.” The chain springs from her question without being overdetermined by it. She might have chosen any one of a hundred reasons for why her investigation matters, but once she has chosen a reason, the question helps direct her thinking along fairly exacting lines. Without examination, her own writing style would remain unclear, at least in her own mind, and the decision to examine that style reveals something of value to her—a sense of possibility. That feeling of openness in its turn produces another thing to be valued—not just any possibility but rather the opportunity for improvement.

The path charted above leaves Beth with an answer that she seems to view as provisional, but she accepts and accounts for that lack of stability by formulating another question: if the point of considering my own style is improving its effectiveness, then how do I go about doing that? It is here that she draws herself back to the assignment she has been given, indicating that the best way
to work on her style is to compare it with Woolf's. As a writer and the model for this assignment's methodology, Woolf becomes the obvious means for Beth to work her way out of the puzzle she is in. In the space of less than a page, Beth has managed to tie her own writing style to Woolf's work, and while Beth decides to compare/contrast—something she previously disdained—the reader has a clear sense that she is actively engaging the problem facing her. That engagement comes through the questions she has posed, and the interrogation does not end with a ready answer to the questions of how and why Beth should examine her own writing. Even here, she is prepared to preempt a question implicit to her solution. What one means by 'effective' depends on something more than the dictionary, and Beth again accepts the lack of stability her conclusion provides by acknowledging the problems built into any word like 'effectiveness.' The questioning does not stop at the moment Beth's writing finds its way to Woolf's, rather the strategy continues to push her forward directing her beyond an answer that might, at first glance, satisfy. Readers are simultaneously engaged with the same series of questions, notwithstanding whether their answers agree with Beth's. This writer's ability to invoke intellectual curiosity in others as well as in herself is maximized by the use of rhetorical questions, and even when those questions work under the surface of her writing--inform it implicitly--the traces of their influence are evident throughout. As a direct consequence, Beth finds herself having moved well beyond her initial indecision about her own writing and the course she should chart in her paper. More importantly, she has moved beyond it without ignoring where she started or sacrificing that initial moment to some larger concept of unity or coherence. The path she takes carries a unity and coherence clearly adequate to the task, if not perfect, and it springs not from concern for these abstract values but from Beth's willingness to push a strategy to its generative limits.

Both Beth and Woolf come to find voices of their own by taking on the strategies that rhetors have used for millennia. They do not ignore them or discount them. They do not use them in stock
ways or treat them as throwaway moments in their respective works. The two manage in similar ways, despite the vast differences in contexts, to engage both themselves and their readers in productive intellectual work. They do for their audiences and themselves what effective writers always strive to: share a way of seeing or doing with one’s audience as clearly and powerfully as one can. Rhetorical questions help these women confront the reality of a given audience in several ways because the third canon always already depends on the material conditions surrounding an utterance. The balancing act required of anyone who confronts an audience of actual thinking, feeling human beings should not be minimized. No writer adequately engages every reader who encounters his work. The means of expression may be shared—I assume, for example, that my readers are fluent in English—but the choice of expression never can be. Writers’ dilemmas come not from who they think or know their audience is but rather from how that audience will react in the present case. Writers cannot know until after the fact what will happen because the utterance is not only removed in time from its receivers but it also cannot be retrofitted, re-uttered, based on the (re)action it produces.

Retrofitting influences invention because effective words must necessarily match their context and because arguments themselves are not always seen as arguments. A point is not a point without some work on the rhetor’s part. Making one’s argument accessible is not the same as making it understandable or useable. The hypothetical reader who asks what it all means may very well know what one has said without understanding it or finding it useful. No amount of retrofitting will remove the possibility for one or more readers who are unconvinced. Retrofitting does not work this way. The process can, however, ensure that such instances are held to a minimum if rhetoric is applied consciously and properly to the task at hand. Few competent readers could honestly argue that either Woolf or Beth is unable to make a point, even if they do not agree with it or find it perfectly expressed. Success in this instance springs directly from retrofitting the idea to the context in a way that makes its status as idea visible and compelling.
Woolf might have chosen metonymy to formulate the foundation of her argument, to connect a room with women and fiction. Beth might have chosen apposition to create a connection between her writing and Woolf's. And either of these or other choices might have been effective. The choices they made were determined by whatever knowledge they possessed about questions as an inventional strategy and the way(s) the strategy suited their audiences and purposes. In the next section, I take what Woolf and Beth have revealed in their work and apply it to arrangement. If stylistic strategies can and do help writers generate meaning, then the next rhetorically minded step is to consider how that meaning is consequently organized under those strategies’ influence. I briefly touch on the problem of arrangement in the preceding pages--one cannot separate the generation of meaning from its discursive manifestations--but I want now to explore it as the prime mover in a process that only begins with invention. Whether arrangement is or can be motivated by style matters less than how the second canon allows writers another opportunity for matching word to world, making direct use of an utterance’s shape as material action.

**Stylistic Arrangement and Shaping Ideas**

Any attempt to measure arrangement’s stylistic potential immediately reveals two concerns of some theoretical import. One must first accept that invention and arrangement can never be, and have never been, separated as clearly as they are in traditional rhetorical theories. Once one begins culling ideas using, for instance, the principle of comparison--one term as it converges with or deviates from another--one has implicitly created a binary structure--one term juxtaposed with another. The ideational structure need not be oppositional or complementary, but the discursive structure will almost certainly be viewed as reflecting some binary relationship. Pairs of terms demand as much, at least in Western thought, unless special care is taken to disrupt conventional approaches--the mutually exclusive middle and the zero sum are two such methods. Additionally, the resulting comparison(s) will necessarily be linear--both logically and chronologically--by virtue of their being expressed through words. Linearity can and often does produce the
hierarchical dominance of one term over the other, even if the terms are intended to relate in other ways. Because the value judgments behind those attached qualities—they are not naturally occurring—are so easily applied in the making of meaning, organizational attributes of some sort, whether real or imagined, will always inhere to discursive terms. Those qualities are as much about the source or purpose of ideas (invention) as about the ideas' shape or arrangement. An understanding of organization cannot be separated from an understanding of the ideas/words being organized because all utterances (re)create or disrupt meaning-making by taking on, according to their linguistic natures, some form or other. In this and other instances, the investigation of a text's shape is also an investigation of its governing principles. Though relying on separate interpretive fields, both invention and arrangement manifest themselves from within the same set of phenomena. That convergence is incomplete only because one rhetorical canon self-selects for an utterance's shape; the other, its source. Deploying one method does not render the other inconsequential, much less ineffective.

While my explanation might seem more akin to term-switching than stylistic investigation, one must remember that style's ability to generate information is concomitant with its reliance on formal structures, the structures that are taken on a larger scale to compose the canon of arrangement. That is, stylistics assumes that all formal structures—but especially those associated with rhetorical schemes—are inseparable from the meanings they generate, and as a consequence, the shape of an utterance is seen as inseparable from its origins. The kairotic nature of effective discourse demands that it be suited to its context, and as a consequence, much of what I say about invention will apply equally well here. Rather than cover the same ground again, I focus on the second theoretical concern that the stylistic treatment of arrangement reveals: the formal variability that any given ideational structure/pattern possesses. In the remainder of this section, I argue that ideational arrangement (the logic applied to one's ideas/arguments/meanings) often diverges from
Repetition, for example, may involve the repeated use of a word or phrase in exactly the same form (*ploche*), but it can and often does present other faces including repeated sounds, roots, affixes, syntactic structures, and more tenuously, semantic fields. In a so-called letter to the editor, one might choose to emphasize the word “freedom” by using it several times. In a longer text, such as an essay or a book chapter, the word’s semantic force might be more effective if shared with other terms like “liberation,” “openness,” and “lack of constraint.” All of these terms may carry the force *ploche* makes explicit, but they carry it with various nuances and valuations that may be of some contextual use. Repetition of an idea need not always rely on strict repetition of a word if that idea is larger, more semantically voluble, than the word itself. Such complexes are quite common in practice and need to be accounted for in any systemic treatment of stylistic rhetoric. The difficulty, of course, is that they do not follow the traditional pattern laid out in *ploche*, *homoioteleuton* (repetition of word endings), and other related schemes. Their divergence from the rhetorical norm affects form, content, and function in ways that only stylistics is equipped to describe.

Considering any two “parallel” texts--one containing exact repetition of a word like “freedom” and the other with a complex of related words--would show that the argumentative paths pursued and the shapes those paths take is markedly different as a direct result of the rhetor’s (mis)use of stylistic principles:

> an argument need not be epitomized, need not be expressed succinctly [through a figure]. It can be phrased or paraphrased in wordier ways. The argument survives though the figure disappears. There are, in fact, many degrees of adherence to an underlying figure [...]. (Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Figures* 40)

The stylistic choices (or non-choices) one makes produce these divergences, and it is quite likely that two or more diverging texts would be judged as differing in “style,” even if the root cause
might be traditionally categorized as invention or organizational. Retrofitting the basic structure of repetition according to context may produce countless variations on the formal pattern built into a scheme like *ploche*. The choices affect invention since the word “freedom” carries different extensions and arguments than its many semantic variants. The choices affect arrangement since strict repetition necessarily requires a more rigid ordering of ideas and words than the complex described in my earlier illustration. The source and shape of the two hypothetical texts would differ because the choices involved in producing them diverge.

The first three canons become difficult to unravel at such points, and one’s recognition that invention and arrangement are similarly and equally influenced by stylistic principles depends on an attendant recognition of the power of retrofitting. Fahnestock provides further detail by specifically citing the retrofitting that metaphor often undergoes:

> [t]he malleability of various lines of argument to verbal compression or expansion has been made familiar in the many studies that treat metaphor as constitutive rather than ornamental. A metaphor can spread throughout a text in an extended analogy or allegory; it can provide a principle of organization in an extended comparison, or it can be succinctly expressed in a single word choice. *(Rhetorical Figures 41)*

Despite this variation in deployment, the case for arrangement as a stylistic maneuver is more easily made than that for invention and requires little more than a basic understanding of the discursive structures all fluent users of a language have known since they were old enough to listen/speak. Assuming that language users are more likely to rely on structures with which they are already familiar, it is quite easy to see how *climax* and *enumeratio* might become the core of the five-paragraph theme (or its predecessor in classical oratory). Lists surround people on a daily basis and narratives of all sorts, ‘fictional’ and otherwise, rely on climax for various effects. Likewise, the grammatical conjoining of items in parallel clauses (so-called parallelism) underlies the list as scheme, and climax relies on the language’s tendency to place items of emphasis at the end of an utterance (as in “That’s my book” and “I threw him the ball”). Building outward in concentric circles of influence, the process is more than a sentence-based theory of discourse. The
kairotic demands placed on a given pattern are remarkably different within a sentence than within a paragraph or a section. A broader structure must account for and accomplish more than its sentence-level sibling due to the different work they must do, but the basic retrofitting that occurs is easily envisioned as differing in scale, as being a matter of degree rather than kind.

A simple list does not three paragraphs of support make. But a list does lay the foundation for the work those three paragraphs as a whole must accomplish, and that foundation need not be dismissed because it finds its roots in stylistic or grammatical principles. Stylistic arrangement invites a rhetor and his audience to rely on what they already know about ‘smaller’ patterns when creating/interpreting larger implementations of them—here the economy of scale found within invention recurs. Foreknowledge operates whether one is consciously relying on it or not; the advantage to conscious reliance comes from the choices available when one is able to think up/through a particular deployment. Winterowd, for example, argues for “the list as an alternate grammar for writing,” suggesting that “the list gains coherence because of the semantic field that it establishes” (Composition/Rhetoric 209). For this reason, “the ordering of elements is more important than the elements themselves, and it seems that one can have an intuitive sense [. . .] of this coherence, this elegance” (209; emphasis in original). In this view, meaning produces coherence, and arrangement makes meaning possible. No organizing principle is meaningful in and of itself, rather through the meaning-making that a specific principle facilitates, one comes to associate the pattern with coherence. A recognizable pattern is a meaningful one. At the same time, the list need not be identical in its verbal manifestations, since various purposes require various deployments of the list-as-strategy. As long as meaning is made, the audience (and the rhetor) can choose the process by which a given idea/argument manifests itself contextually: “it is not unreasonable to posit that our perception of form is contingent upon recognition—intuitive or otherwise--of a set of relationships [. . .] that can gain a variety of surface realizations” (Winterowd, Composition/Rhetoric 248).
The mapping of tropes, where changes in meaning matter most, would be no different or more difficult because a change in meaning is a change in the organizational pattern and its surface manifestation. So much has already been done with metaphor that scholars’ understanding of the process is well established. Still, what exactly would it mean to deploy a less familiar trope such as *occupatio* (“a putting off,” deferment of one’s point) in the way one mobilizes analogy or allegory? What is known about metaphor tells writers that if they were to choose *occupatio* in organizing a text, then they might best begin with the purpose at hand, not the trope itself. Assuming that I wanted to build toward my point so that readers receive it with anticipation—that is, they receive it because of a need created in their minds—forestalling might be the perfect strategy. Throughout a paragraph, for example, I would hint at my point, push toward it from the edges, but never quite address it fully, until the end, when it would be completely—and one hopes succinctly—made available to the reader. The situation and audience determine whether this strategy is successful or merely frustrating (in its most negative sense), and because form is content, the strategy probably best lends itself to contexts that require surprise, tension, and/or climax. An event might be effectively described in this way, as might an argument requiring a capper (an enthymemtic statement or other “finishing touch”). Successfully matching trope to purpose and purpose to trope must remain the operational goal. Seeing what work is required by a given situation stands tantamount to understanding what organizing pattern will be most effective. Any forestalling of a point, no matter how manifested, may be used/perceived as *occupatio* providing the context allows for that recognition-cum-interpretation. Success depends on communication occurring, more or less, and no organizing principle would be evident if something meaningful were not communicated: lack of discernible form produces lack (or even total absence) of meaning.

With a few notable exceptions including simile—form and function are clearly bound up in its use of “like” or “as”—tropes rely on semantic functions more than syntactic patterns. Whereas schemes are almost always recognizable through their embodiment of a particular formal principle,
tropes typically assume a broader range of guises because of their reliance on semantic patterns. Since arrangement relies on the ideational structures built into all discourse, the canon has difficulty accounting for tropic organization without the aid of style. From the beginning, style has described tropes in terms of their semantic function, and it thereby provides a useful (because ready-made) means for grasping how arrangement might be implicated in tropes' application across large runs of discourse. Winterowd goes as far as to argue that there is a grammar of coherence (or form, for in the following, the two terms are virtually synonymous). If one perceives form in discourse, he also perceives coherence, for form is the internal set of consistent relationships in any stretch of discourse, whether poem, play, essay, oration, or whatever. (Composition/Rhetoric 222)

But since form is function, one must not neglect the functional roots of any formal coherence. Metaphor is literally the transference of meaning, for example, and the organizing principle at work is easier to theorize and/or enact when one keeps this function in mind. Transferring meaning from one term to another is a viable principle for organizing discourse if and only if that transference can be used to impose a particular order--one chosen by the rhetor--on the meaning expressed. (Meaning-making is, after all, the use of language as a tool for understanding the world.) Whatever order is chosen, it must also be functional, just as metaphor or occupatio is. There must be a purposive reason--suasory or argumentative, for example--for mobilizing transference in a particular way. Enacting the principle of transference for its own sake does not make for especially effective discourse, nor does it produce the desired effects with any probability of certainty. As with the individual statement, transference must mirror the form and content of the subject at hand. Tropes that might be mobilized in the way I advocate are accomplishing particular kinds of work rather than 'merely' taking on particular (textual) bodies. The work determines the most appropriate kairotic incarnation. In the case of metaphor, transference accomplishes its work whether meaning is generated from inner to outer, lesser to greater, top to bottom, or any other relevant scheme. The organizing principle overlaps the functional principle to the degree that
certain functions require one to choose from a range of forms (both ideational and discursive). But the form chosen is seldom the only possible form, nor perhaps in the case of ineffective discourse, is it necessarily the best form. In this dissertation, by constructing a relationship between architectural retrofitting and stylistics, I choose to select those features that suit my purpose at a particular moment. In one instance that purpose dictates an inner/outer comparison; in another, it is manifested as a holistic combination of inner and outer spaces, neither taking precedence or privilege over the other. My organizing principle grows from a need for semantic transference and, therefore, directs my formal choices, but it does not by itself limit those options to one or two surface realizations.

The next section pursues stylistic retrofitting through its organizational outcomes in Richard Rodriguez’s *Hunger of Memory*, another text I use in my first-year writing courses. Rodriguez organized his text according to a scheme (*enumeratio*) that works in tandem with the inventional principle he had selected (division/classification). The two are stylistically one and the same; division/classification represents the construction of a taxonomic list. Rodriguez makes use of these parallel tracks to generate meanings beyond his ostensible subject (his life in/through language) and to reinforce the work that those meanings accomplish. One sees the writing process after the fact, but the patterns the text contains are so easily accessed that it represents a good starting point for anyone interested in applying the principles outlined over the last few pages. Because invention and arrangement are so closely aligned within the book, it also represents an opportunity to study the significant overlapping that occurs among the first three canons. At moments in the analysis, it is difficult to distinguish between statements about one from statements about the others. This ‘messiness’ should not be overemphasized, as the entire point of stylistic rhetoric is to dissolve the artificial boundaries among various facets of rhetoric. If treated appropriately, the cross-contamination uncovered in *Hunger of Memory* simplifies the process of coming to understand style’s role in producing and arranging texts.
Exemplum: Enumeratio & Division/Classification

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of arrangement is its influence over what an audience believes they have encountered during communicative exchange. A discourse may be shaped in many ways by many influences, but the organizational pattern that affects the discourse’s ultimate development is more than a template. Organizational patterns ensure that the meanings generated through invention assume some material (truly meaning-full) form. Without arrangement utterance would be formless and meaningless in a way hard for any user of a human language to imagine. No tongue spoken anywhere by any group of people manifests itself in discourse without coming under the combined influence of invention, arrangement, and style. All languages are equal in that respect, and while the particulars certainly differ, that thread of commonality has some bearing on Rodriguez’s work in Hunger of Memory, which is primarily concerned with languages and literacies. Because the entire puzzle of discourse remains at the center of the book throughout its eight sections, it makes an ideal text for writing courses. The particular benefit someone else’s writing about writing provides is the self-reflexive opportunity one has to study language use even as one experiences it. (The same is true of student-writers’ own writing about writing.) If rhetoric is both the study and the enactment of discourse, then there is no better way to practice rhetoric than to engage in both simultaneously.

Rodriguez devotes his prologue to sorting through various labels for the text readers hold in their hands. The goal throughout appears to be an act of definition, dividing his material into its component parts and classifying those parts according to their discursive affiliations. Thus, his is “a book about language”; several “[e]ssays impersonating an autobiography” (Hunger 7). Yet it is also, as the prologue’s title suggests, a “middle-class pastoral”: “The middle class [. . .] is tempted by the pastoral impulse to deny its difference from the lower class—even to attempt cheap imitations of lower-class life. (‘But I still am a shepherd!’)” (6). Rodriguez describes the work as functioning in other ways, too, drawing on various genres and discursive traditions—
autobiography, parable, and history are all mentioned. None of these categories seems quite to suit his purpose, however, and his attempts at multiple labels suggest a desire to resituate himself as a writer as much as a drive to resituate the book’s identity. He struggles with the work he hopes this text can accomplish, even in the face of his editor’s pleas for “more [stories about] Grandma” (7). Perhaps there is much too much going on for him to feel comfortable in limiting himself or his work to any one sort of discursive framework, but whatever the reason, the author resists that trend toward narrow application with his frantic renaming of the work he has composed. The dilemma he faces—to treat the work as autobiography because it shares his life experiences or as essays on language because it avoids being too narrowly personal in all the right ways—pushes Rodriguez to make choices about organization that provide ample opportunity for seeing the power of stylistic organization. The pattern in Hunger of Memory reflects the dilemma by relying on the invention of division/classification and its underlying stylistic strategy, the taxonomic list.

Rodriguez defines, classifies, and situates his work in relation to himself and his audience, and he chooses a governing principle and an organizational pattern that further this goal. He uses the book’s formal structure as an aid in charting a course between the two poles earlier identified, and a schematized look at the section titles he uses begins to indicate how:

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On the left are the section titles dealing specifically with language, discourse, and the like and, on the right, those titles focusing on what appears to be something more personal-cum-autobiographical. Each of the phrases on the left carries an overt association with language. The pastoral is a genre of poetry, though “middle-class pastoral” only becomes clear through a reading of the prologue. “Aria,” literally an operatic solo, moves one beyond speech to the music of words.
“Credo” (from the Latin for “I believe”) brings the religious, and specifically Roman Catholic, nature of language before readers. “Profession” is less clearly oriented toward discourse, at least on initial contact, though it turns out that beyond being a writer, Rodriguez had trained to be a literary critic, specializing in the late Renaissance and Shakespeare. Finally, “secrets” carries with it the connotation of knowledge that cannot be spoken, of meaning that is not shared. It is a label (Mr. Secrets) that both describes his relationship with his parents and indicates the experience all writers share to some degree: the utterance often reveals more than one thinks or expects; secrets are disclosed in spite of one’s words as well as because of them.

My rough summary cannot do justice to the titles Rodriguez chose, but I hope it indicates the basic path he charts in his book’s 195 pages. Arrayed in parallel to the sections explicitly focused on language use are the two apparently more autobiographical sections. Within these two the reader discovers not less commentary on language but rather a commentary intended to bridge gaps that otherwise begin to appear between sections. “The Achievement of Desire” works toward explaining Richard’s transformation from a Spanish-speaking boy who can neither read nor write English to a literate speaker of English who resents the loss of the Latin Mass. The boy is in many ways preverbal, dependent on how sound makes him feel to determine his relationships with others, to experience family intimacy. He is a boy whose experiences with language hinge on the lyric quality of spoken words and of song: for that boy “the voice [of a singer] stretches out the words--the heart cannot contain!--the voice moves toward pure sound. Words take flight” (37-38). For the grown man, the vernacular Mass with its “we believe”--rather than the traditional Latin “I believe”--strips the ceremony of its gravity and authenticity: “By translating credo into the English first person plural, we believe, the Church no longer reminds the listener that he is alone. ‘We believe,’ the congregation is encouraged to say, celebrating community--but only that fact” (106; emphasis in the original).
As a result of his education, Rodriguez moves from seeing words only as emotive registers to knowing words as a gateway to philosophical and religious truths as well. He describes this gain as being likewise a loss, and the balancing act that education comes to represent is another source of struggle in the pages of “Achievement.” How does one define who one is as a result of one’s education? What does it mean to be ‘educated’? By answering these and other questions, Rodriguez comes to see what he has lost from his childhood, though he sees it as a necessary loss, as well as what he has gained in his sensitivity to words’ effects on the world. The principle of division/classification makes it possible for the writer to block out the sets of experiences that have shaped him in these ways. The experiences are not presented chronologically—past, present, and future often commingle—but that expected arrangement would be counterproductive to the effects his chosen pattern may produce. As with “Achievement,” “Complexion” deals with definitions, this time circulating around his ethnic and racial origins. The struggle the teenage Rodriguez undergoes to define himself both through and against his complexion again poses fundamental questions. Can one define oneself against the definition(s) imposed on this or that ethnicity or race? Does complexion as a physical attribute represent something about the mental or emotional character of a person, not inherently but due to the social and cultural pressures acting on one from without?

Rodriguez’s exploration of the monumental effect a translation of Latin into English can have pushes him into a consideration of how it is that he is alone—as well as who and what he is and hopes to be. That search for identity naturally extends to his professional training, especially since much of it becomes possible as the direct result of his qualifying for Affirmative Action. In this way, the problem of (self-)definition becomes a significant part of the author’s eventual training in language and literature. His status makes that training possible even as it makes him painfully aware of the burdens, social and individual, that such an opportunity provides. The categorical imperative, the drive for definition, here becomes equally a subject for consideration as
well as a means for Rodriguez to explore his experiences. Writing about the life he had as a graduate student, and later a perpetual ABD, is in the most important ways only possible because he pursues an organizational pattern that suits his subject and the generative strategies working on it. Having achieved so much for himself, while also suffering a sense of irrecoverable loss at his life prior to any formal education, "Mr. Secrets" returns Rodriguez to his family's relationships. As he and his siblings grow older, learn English, move away, get married and have children, the family is less in tune. They say less, share less, and Rodriguez is acutely aware of the part his (and his siblings') education has played in that decline. His parents' worry over his willingness to divulge things about his family is juxtaposed to his own worry that if he does not write about the loss he feels, he will never recover or understand the past he has left behind. Again, the problem of categories confronts both writer and audience, indicating just how central it has been throughout the book. And how ineffectual the book would be if it were organized differently.

One cannot recover the past except to make it meaningful through writing, and the burden that division/classification imposes on all writers should not be underestimated. The very act of naming, of expressing meaning through words, is an act of classification, the very action Rodriguez so skillfully confronts. Whether my analysis of his organization is effective matters less than whether readers have a sense of how important competing definitions, meanings, and forces become to Hunger's effectiveness. The book is a paradoxical pairing of continuous currents of competing meanings and continual efforts to shape those currents in specific ways. Through his organizational pattern, the writer does not make clean that which had been so contaminated--there are no master narratives here--rather he works through the rhetorical overlap to produce the interleaved structure the book takes on. One can never know whether the choices Rodriguez made about invention and arrangement were conscious or premeditated. And yet, seeing this complex set of forces at work provides writers and readers with the word in action, a dynamic series of
utterances that allow one to ask and answer the most valuable question stylistics can pose: why
might a writer choose to develop and organize his material in this particular way?

Any text that allows one to experience simultaneously the study and enactment of discourse
can be especially valuable in comprehending retrofitting’s influence on discourse. Rodriguez does
more than write about writing, however, since his governing principle and his organizing pattern
not only coincide but overlap with the subject matter he explores. The parallel paths each of these
processes and series of choices follow make for a density and complexity that ensures effective
communication. Figures are most effective when generated as concisely as possible; their formal
compactness reinforces their discursive effects. Likewise, the interleaving of invention and
arrangement—with each other and the subject matter at hand—makes for mutually reinforcing layers
of meaning that cannot be avoided by readers. Declined, deferred, or disputed that meaning may
be, but the patterns within Hunger cannot be ignored. Writers and readers alike can self-
consciously ponder the individual issues that are raised in the course of this autobiography, and
fruitfully come to a more robust understanding of them all. Nor should one forget the set of more
fundamental forces that lies beyond the particular series of effects achieved by Hunger. Meanings
are given form by, take their shape from, the choices involved in generating material in the manner
Rodriguez did.

On reflection, the work Rodriguez manages seems much more daunting than it would if the
book’s easy, conversational style matched what forces were at play. That the book does not bog
down in tensions and contradictions is testament to the further effectiveness of Rodriguez’s
methods. While the handbooks have traditionally counseled that the best style is one that does not
show, that does not become its own object of admiration, Hunger and other works like it prove that
a self-conscious (and self-evident) use of style need not detract from the content of a discourse.
Rather the content becomes easier to engage and more helpful to one’s understanding precisely
because it is paralleled by stylistic strategies on all levels. Whether the book would be ineffective
without these strategies is something else that one cannot predict using 20/20 hindsight, but it is certain that the intensity with which ideas confront and move through the audience would be greatly diminished. If the book had been written another way, it would no longer carry the kairotic appropriateness that makes it so effective in tackling the difficulties of definition and categorization. Despite the likelihood that all of these propositions are accurate, one should not forget that detailing a principle of organization’s influence over content, and its origins in a simple stylistic scheme, leaves out many of the nuances that the book offers. No two readers will come to the text in precisely the same way because no two people are themselves identically situated. Any sense of the complexity offered by Rodriguez’s writing will necessarily be grounded in individual experience. As a consequence, I hope my reading has been suggestive rather than categorical.

Similar outcomes can be seen in any thoughtful text, and many of the student-writers with whom I have worked have applied organizing principles in ways that are as effective as any Rodriguez pursues. If the conceptual relationships ‘behind’ a trope or scheme are translated into conscious strategies that student-writers use when revising, the traditional patterns of arrangement—and many others besides—are suddenly available if those writers choose to take advantage of them. No longer need a pattern be imposed before the fact. No longer need a student-writer limit herself to a single pattern. Knowing one’s options beforehand makes revision both easier and more likely to produce an effective text. Like all choices, informed choices about writing are better choices to make regardless of the outcome.

The primary advantage of employing organizational patterns during revision comes in the chance they provide writers for envisioning what their final text can say and consequently do. If student-writers have not been too early committed to a particular pattern when drafting, they have a range of choices to make when revising. Even if they have had to commit—as when a teacher requires the five-paragraph form or the materials-methods-conclusions sort of research paper—they still need to understand how the chosen form reinforces and/or undermines the work they are
setting out to accomplish. I frequently model this approach during the first few days of any essay project so that student-writers can begin weighing the available options. Does one’s subject, purpose, and audience encourage a particular organizational choice? Does that choice present any advantages that make it arguably more effective than some other option? Are there disadvantages that one must work to minimize or remove, and is that even possible? Speculation can be directed in various ways, but for my part, I assume that student-writers ought to experience the difficulty as well as the success or failure of making choices about arrangement, though only after we have thoroughly explored several scenarios during class discussion. One writer might visualize his text as a funnel; another as an algebraic equation \((a + b = c)\); still another as a circle divided into various parts. Whatever choice the writer makes, she must struggle with subject, purpose and audience, and she must internalize the network of relationships adhering to a text if she hopes to speculate about outcomes.

For example, one student-writer in a ‘basic writing’ course--here called Jessica--determined to have her final research paper work against stereotypes that suggest ‘student-athlete’ is really a euphemism for ‘dumb jock.’ As a pole-vaulter on the university’s track team, this was a subject of some interest to her, and she began her draft by recording her own thoughts on the issue, particularly those that motivated her to address these stereotypes in the first place. The first draft was incomplete by traditional standards; it lacked any introduction or conclusion, and Jessica had yet to do more than the most cursory research. Having discussed the importance of arrangement to revision and having covered a multitude of the most common patterns—order of importance, chronology, process/sequence, and so forth--she and her peers began considering how they might finally conceptualize their texts. Because she was attempting to undermine various stereotypes, she eventually determined that she would arrange her material around the contrast between what she eventually labeled the ‘myth’ and ‘reality’ of student-athletes’ academic performance. That is, the
interaction between her subject matter and purpose suggested a particular pattern for her revision. Having made this choice, Jessica was then able to determine that she would also need some frame of reference, including research of various kinds, and consequently began her second draft with an opening section that described her subject, purpose, and reasons for approaching the topic as she did. This frame also encouraged her to include some discussion of her methodology, including why she chose the arrangement she did. The reinforcing relationship between arrangement and content works against the form-content binaries that compositionists have largely abandoned and invites the writer to internalize the “why” and “how” questions that drive analysis and critical thinking.

Having spent two weeks revising, researching, and conferencing with her peers and me, Jessica’s final draft consisted of four parts: an opening frame, an analysis of student-athlete stereotypes, a response to those stereotypes, and a closing. The order of material within these sections did not necessarily depend on the comparison that determined the text’s overall shape. Those secondary choices had to be made as well; Jessica had to consider what other patterns might reinforce the ironic comparison she was trying to draw. But even at the end, the broader pattern of comparison was helping her to determine what would/should happen, and the final paper included a title (“Where is the ‘student’ in ‘student-athlete’?”) and three headings (“The Myth,” “The Reality,” and “What Now?”) that structurally reinforced the pattern she had chosen and made it that much easier for readers to follow and engage with her approach to the topic. Given my necessarily linear description, the process seems rather simplistic or at least easier than one might expect. This appearance should not be taken as a suggestion that the two weeks Jessica spent were largely uneventful, but the outcome was largely shaped by her ability to check herself and her writing against the pattern she had adopted as her governing strategy. Every time she drafted a paragraph, chose an example, inserted a citation of some kind, she had to ask herself whether doing so made sense within the pattern she had chosen. Where does X belong? In the frame, the second section on myths, the third section on realities? Should it appear earlier or later within that specific
section? Where might it best accomplish the goal I envision for it? The pattern itself does not ask these questions, but it does make answering them easier.

I could, of course, list a multitude of instances like Jessica's revision through arrangement. The weight of evidence, however, is not as likely to convince as the pragmatic and pedagogical applications of the idea itself. Few working writers create their texts with an eye toward some abstract 'unity' or tripartite cohesion, and student-writers should be given equal opportunities to engage in the real work of writing, no matter how important or convenient the older methods appear. Teaching patterns of arrangement as rhetorical strategies that writers choose to mobilize creates a multitude of benefits. First, student-writers are inevitably faced with the task of turning whatever freewriting or drafting they have done into something less like a personal journal and more like a finished essay. That process is often difficult, as it is even for experienced writers, and it should not be exacerbated by requiring students to tailor their writing to their arrangement rather than the other way around. In effect the five-paragraph theme, and the handbook injunctions that have replaced it, does precisely that: it leaves student-writers with little choice about what their finished texts will look like or do. Encouraging student-writers to see an organizational pattern as a means for accomplishing a particular kind of work can only occur if they actually have the awareness and the opportunity to make choices involving arrangement. Second, providing choices that help student-writers suit their material to their goals encourages them to consider that more than single words or sentences ultimately affect the shape and effect of their words. Too often student-writers' notion of revision is local and narrowly editorial, and anything that encourages a global attitude about words, and how they work in the world, should be welcomed by teachers of all bents. Third, making informed choices about arrangement reflects more than some isolated awareness about the global features of a text. Making choices also reinforces the relationships between local and global that make the best writing so effective. For instance, choosing a pattern that emphasizes the points of comparison and/or contrast between two ideas is tantamount to
extrapolating a larger pattern from the sentence-level comparison or contrast seen in metaphor, simile, or analogy. That is, global patterns of organization encourage students to draw on their knowledge of local patterns and to consider the strengths/weaknesses built into the economies of scale that turn the local into the global or vice versa.

Choosing an organizational pattern that suits the particular writing situation--subject matter, purpose, and audience--allows writers to visualize what can be done to turn an initial draft into a finished text. That is, the pattern itself acts as a metric against which student-writers can compare their material, indicating (though not dictating in any absolute sense) where particular examples or points of evidence might best fit, where additional material might be generated to fill 'holes' in the draft, and where particular effects might best target the audience for engagement. Just as Rodriguez faced the proposition that definition and categorization are never easily accomplished if context is rightly accounted for, I have worked to provide an accurate sense of the complexity that stylistics, no matter how pragmatic, requires. That complexity, like the density of a well-written text, makes the phenomena involved more accessible as long as it is directed in the appropriate way. My use of Rodriguez, Woolf, and my students Beth and Jessica has been driven by a need for pragmatic inquiry as well as for texts that exemplify the qualities I would privilege. These writers do their work in ways that lend themselves to the spirit of this project, and not unlike Hunger's layering of reinforcing patterns and influences, I believe they contribute more to one's understanding of invention and arrangement than any amount of theorizing could. Understanding is not necessarily material or practical, and it is only through phronesis that theory and enactment come into tangible convergence. The difficulty Rodriguez faced was how to determine what convergence means, what name to give it.

In the final section of this chapter, I turn that question on my own writing, looking specifically at what goes unnamed in the process of naming I have initiated. For every proposition that rings true, for every observation that makes its point well, there are issues on issues that are
either unresolved or left out entirely. The nature of naming makes oversight inevitable, but the nature of inquiry makes that inevitability a site for productive exploration. Rodriguez and Jessica manage to account for these gaps in meaning/vision by working at the problem from several directions at once. Woolf and Beth use rhetorical questions to generate a line of reasoning that problematizes any set scheme or approach to their material. I now turn to the methods modeled by these four writers. Beyond analyzing the choices their texts reflect as well as the forces produced by those choices, I turn to the effects my own choices have on my analysis and on the conclusions I draw from my inquiry.

**Horizon of Pragmatic Possibility**

The narrative I construct might normally stand as the final word on stylistics in classrooms and other writerly spaces. No narrative can account for everything that occurs within a discursive exchange; there are too many variables at work to achieve surety. From one point of view, since narratives rarely concern themselves with what gets left out, whatever omissions there are might be safely ignored. As George Pullman points out,

> [r]hetorical narrative is not bad historiography; it is the inevitable result of the search for coherence and unity among disparate texts and practices--the inevitable oversimplification that language always performs on experience, like using “Emig and others” to signify the thousands of different compositionists who have taught and written in this country over the last two decades [. . .]. (“Stepping Yet Again into the Same Current” 21-22)

While such narrative may not be bad historiography, however, it is is bad critical inquiry to the degree that one hopes to improve one’s methods in the future. Self-reflexive narratives produce broader understanding precisely because they take themselves as the object of inquiry. In that spirit I spend these last pages working against the conforming influence of any master narrative that may have developed. No pragmatics can be pragmatic enough if it fails to change with circumstances. Moreover, and despite Pullman’s assertion, narratives--a truly valuable discursive strategy--are not the only means for producing a coherent picture of stylistic invention and arrangement. My
exploration of arrangement in particular indicates that other organizing principles can provide coherence. Every principle of this sort carries with it a particular logic—not always in the sense usually given to that word but a logic nonetheless.

Oftentimes, narratives are not even the best means for effectively communicating the complexity of an issue or phenomenon. I chose narrative to describe the processes behind the first two canons, just as I chose narrative to explore the authors appearing in chapters two and three. Those choices were dictated by various contextual demands, among them the familiarity of readers/writers with narrative and the ease with which everyone slips into narrative ‘mode,’ but these choices do not preclude further choices, even in instances where the initial choice is perfectly effective. In this chapter the narrative is most effective if it tells the story of its own demise, the weaknesses and faults which cannot be accounted for through the act of telling. What yet remains to be theorized? What might need further attention or revision and for what reasons? Why might retrofitting be better suited to describing style’s influence on discourse than some other metaphor? These and other questions occupy me at the present instant because chapter 5 critiques the entire concept of stylistics from a paralogic perspective. To ensure that the analysis occurring there is productive, I hope to set the stage for my self-reflexive work through a look at the writerly method behind this more pragmatically oriented chapter.

First, style is a habit of mind, not a rote application of principles. The examples and descriptions that I provide do not completely account for the phenomenology of style. They cannot be accurately phenomenological without entry into the minds of the rhetor and his audience. One might be fairly certain that one’s own response is much likely any other fluent reader’s or proficient writer’s, but that is not the same as understanding what was at work in Woolf’s or Rodriguez’s mind. Probability does not fully do justice to the mental gymnastics Beth and Jessica certainly performed as they generated the meanings expressed in their writing. One might further narrow the chance of misinterpretation or ‘error’ by looking at the traces words themselves carry
with them. Words are functional whether the rhetor directs that function or not. A discourse that does not accomplish work in the world is hardly discourse (motivated language) at all. That work, its effects on readers, tells one much about a text as both a form and a content but only because the three are intertwined. Function cannot alone tell the whole story.

The difficulty I mention may primarily find its roots in a humanism that is supposed to have lost its currency, but having read these first chapters, I trust readers understand the visceral and intuitive facets of this thing called effective communication. Agreement need not necessarily follow; I would be disappointed if it did. Self-consciously combining one's own intuitive sense of language with practices that expand one's access to *phronesis* is a sure way to remain true to pragmatism. Remaining true, whatever it might mean, need not be one's top priority to have some effect on what gets said and why. The mechanistic metaphor of retrofitting must be balanced against a belief that words matter a great deal. That belief in words' importance must be balanced against the many, many times that words seem to have little or no effect. And so on. Retrofitting is a metaphorical strategy for making sense of stylistic rhetoric, not an end unto itself.

Second, stylistics should remain idealistic about language without idealizing its inquiries into discourse. In many of the texts I review, and probably at moments in this project, style becomes an idealized process or discourse, a perfect communicative act. Burke's *transformandum* only works when a perfect narrative functions precisely as it should. One must accept that situation and use it as a possibility for further inquiry into the real (imperfect) narratives that actually exist in the world and into their own manifestations of the *transformandum*, whether it exactly matches Burke's or not. Encouraging a habit of mind about stylistic strategies does not eliminate the simplification produced by universalized thinking, rather it seeks to offer an alternative to the other attitudes about writing that currently dominate. My approach is no less fallible than the others, and it should be taken as a powerful tool that can and does occlude many things about discourse. In contrast to the retrofitting metaphor, treating style as a habit of mind makes style more organic
rather than more mechanistic. The so-called expressivists and neo-romantics reveal how much that
tack offers as well as how much it must ignore.

Regardless of the name I give it, stylistic intuition is not practiced but entered into. It is not
replicable, as when one ‘practices’ one’s writing--as if that activity were ever possible. It cannot be
gained except through the acts of reading, writing, listening, and speaking that all users of
language must engage in. No pedagogy can prepare students for every writing context they will
encounter. To make stylistic choices an intuitive response to situations, writers must attune
themselves to the fact that they have choices to make. Problem-solving underlies everything I
outline, and it is an effective way to describe what I advocate. But not every communicative
exchange needs to be considered as a problem. Misinterpretation and other so-called errors need
not be discouraged in all cases. The opportunity that multiple responses present necessarily brings
with it a probability for misreading or lack of understanding. Practicing style as a habit of mind
will not change the inherent instability of meaning(-making).

Third, stylistic rhetoric is not one set of practices but many. Because all effective discourse is
kairotic, no single rhetorical plan or series of actions can account for the best or most probable
outcomes of a given exchange. This multitude of practices cannot be circumscribed through other
practices, epistemic or pragmatic, because any circumscription would necessarily require the use of
these very same practices. There is no way to be outside of discursive practices as one engages
them. Stylistic rhetoric is neither more nor less than what all effective interlocutors always already
do when they match their view of the world against another’s through words. The matching
process--be it linear, recursive, or something else entirely--cannot be learned because it cannot be
taught. It can be understood to the degree that successful rhetors have a felt sense of what does and
does not work, what may or may not engage an audience. But because understanding is knowledge
put to some use, understanding is beyond the reach of any teacher or student except in the moment
of discursive exchange. The need for some test of use explains in part my own decision to analyze
the style of primary sources even as I theorize about stylistics more generally. If my project fulfills its purpose well, my own practices emphasize further that stylistic strategies mean little except at the moment they are in use.

Stylistic rhetoric is a symptomatic description of communication that establishes appropriate boundaries by being aware of itself as a discursive construction. It relies on the systemic features of language only to the degree that those features create/constrain the probable outcome of a given discursive exchange. Despite (or perhaps because) of that reliance, it grants interlocutors the ability to see the system within which any communication operates. All utterances have a shape resulting from their nature as linguistic constructs as well as their manifestation as rhetorical enactments. The 'rules' that an utterance establishes apply nowhere else, but that irreducibility does not mean stylistic principles do not exist or cannot be excavated for further consideration. As Turner suggests, one must be careful of theories, or any other practices, that take themselves too seriously:

\[\text{actual figures occur only in the dynamic, on-line construction of complete meanings. The study of figures typically does not focus on this condition. [...] In this style of analysis, the examples are adduced to refine the elements of the theory rather than as objects of case study. (80)}\]

While one's theories and other practices may be points of pride—the amount of time and effort expended on them can only heighten their value—those practices are not the goal of rhetoric-composition. Understanding theory's role does not guarantee its primacy as the end-all and be-all of rhetorical practices.

Four, style is not a purely literary concern. My methods are necessarily informed by my training as a romanticist and creative writer, but aesthetic pleasure in using words well extends beyond fiction and 'literary non-fiction.' A writer may take pleasure in saying something particularly well, or she may not. Not all writers write for pleasure, of course, and many dread the work that writing represents to them. The ability to do something well does increase one's chances for enjoyment—no one prefers to do those things she is worst at—but there are other sources of
enjoyment, even in discourse. Some find pleasure in the ability to express themselves, well or poorly; others appreciate the opportunity to share information and ideas with others. I cannot determine what any of my readers will find most rewarding, nor can I know what will appeal most to student-writers. But even lacking enjoyment as I might define it, the processes described here do exist and can be harnessed. My methods are shaped by my own pleasure in using words, but that circumstance does not make those methods the only avenue for investigation.

Technical writers, business writers, and others with more directly instrumental concerns might look at the apparatus I construct with unease. It will most likely seem overly complicated as compared with what they require from their writing. Technical writing is not easy by any means, but it demands very different things from writers. As a consequence, the value of my narrative is perhaps limited to the broader commentary on writerly choices that extends throughout. My examples may appear to be of little help since most rely on academic or writerly prose. Technical writing also relies more heavily on conventions than some other discourses, and that reliance may put into question the range of choices I suggest writers confront. The lesson here might be that technical writing requires one to minimize the weaknesses of the forms dictated by convention as much as anything else. This point does not mean stylistic strategies are of no use, and I have successfully used stylistic rhetoric in the business writing courses I teach. One must simply be careful to avoid the trap Pullman rightly indicates many compositionists have fallen into:

most of the people teaching composition started out writing essays about literature and got interested in that because they either wanted to write literature or were crazy about reading it. Thus the literary essay became the unexamined paradigm for all non-fiction prose. People teaching composition within technical writing, of course, have had suspicions about the paradigmatic value of the humanistic essay, but the people who read College English do not always read Technical Communication. (24)

Whatever else I may desire this project to be, my primary concern is its accessibility to writers of every stripe, regardless of their needs or circumstances. Scholarly and literary essays have been privileged here, but they need not be the only viable baseline for stylistic rhetoric.
One should not forget that Carolyn R. Miller's redefinition of genre makes technical and business writing, for example, more than the application of rote skills. Her argument makes no distinction between kinds of genres, indicating simply that

"[f]rom day to day, year to year, comparable situations occur, prompting comparable responses." The comparable responses, or recurring forms, become a tradition which then "tends to function as a constraint upon any new response in the form" [...]. Thus, inaugurals, eulogies, courtroom speeches, and the like have conventional forms because they arise in situations with similar structures and elements and because rhetors respond in similar ways, having learned from precedent what is appropriate and what effects their actions are likely to have on other people. (152)

Business and technical writers use recurring forms in almost every situation: e-mail messages, memoranda, letters of all kinds, executive summaries, reports. Viewing these forms as forms of action does not overly complicate the daily lives of such writers, rather it gives them some opportunity for thinking about what they are doing when they send their words into the world. Moreover, the forms under consideration depend on stylistic principles for (at the very least) their structure, organization, and tone. Consequently, there is no good reason to assume that writerly awareness will serve technical or business writers any worse than anyone else. Conventional forms are useful because of the work they accomplish, not because of the mindlessness with which they can supposedly be written. That is, memoranda or reports are not useful because one no longer needs to worry about form or organization or function; they are useful because they offer guidance in meeting the contexts in which they operate.

Chapter 5 presents the challenge that stylistic rhetoric must face in light of modern post-process theories of composition, particularly paralogic rhetoric. The post-process movement has the potential to create a center for the discipline, one sorely lacking since the slow demise of writing-process theories became obvious over the last decade or so. One thing post-process theories are not, however, is all alike, and my stylistic approach to the dilemma facing contemporary compositionists tends to be more conservative than many of the multicultural, cultural studies, and liberatory pedagogies currently en vogue. The work presented in chapters one
through four makes a compromise with paralogic rhetoric and other hermeneutically centered theories more likely, but that compromise will most certainly be a difficult one. Only by furthering the critique initiated here can I be certain that stylistic rhetoric meets the exigencies of its own theoretical moment. While any resulting synthesis may still lack the perfect system desired by some, the various concerns raised by paralogic rhetoric—the status of teaching if writing cannot be learned, the primacy of hermeneutics in understanding communication, among others—are pedagogically and theoretically compelling. And in many ways, paralogic rhetoric reflects what so many writers already feel about the work they do. While it takes a less idealistic attitude toward writing and discourse, that sobering influence can only help, even if sober is not always the best kind of critique.

Notes

1 I prefer to describe the relationship between my own teaching and scholarship in similar ways. This dissertation would not exist without the years I have spent in the classroom, learning from and responding to student-writers. Even as theorizing is a kind of practice and reading a kind of writing, teaching is a kind of scholarship, one built on the dialogue between human beings involved in a common inquiry.

2 Turner argues that “Quintilian’s first definition of figure—meaning expressed in form—turns grammar into a branch of figure” (“Figure” 49). If accurate, his treatment would make all linguistic structures inherently stylistic. While the argument for broadening style to the point of dissolution should raise concerns, the possibility that style can leverage grammatical and other facets of language should not be dismissed:
   although it may be arbitrary that a word such as “blend” means what it does in English
   and that the morpheme “-er” means what it does in English, once these form-meaning pairs exist in the language, it is not arbitrary that “blender” means what it does in English. Any particular sign is more or less motivated relative to other constructions in the language. (Turner, “Figure” 49)
   Turner’s example and others like it indicate rather convincingly that stylistic choices can and should be motivated by the (pre-)existing structures of a language or, more broadly, that style is always retrofitted to those baseline structures as well as the context of a given discourse.

3 Winterowd artfully uses the analogy of music to suggest the self-constitution that makes form, content, and function operationally inseparable: “it [music’s form] is ineluctably there in the mind of the ‘ beholder,’ but inexpressible, a configuration, a pattern, that constitutes its own content” (246).

4 A similar substitution of part for whole occurred in the nineteenth century when the elocutionary movement—the precursor of studies in public speaking and oral communication—relied solely on delivery. Although Victorian attitudes about decorum and public behavior were
prime motivators, the movement's need to overemphasize a single canon, and its corresponding aspect of discourse, parallels rhetoric-composition's infatuation with invention and arrangement.

5 Jarratt links the sophists to the narrative view I present here; their conflation of invention and arrangement "assert[ed] the validity of narrative as a vehicle for the serious tasks of knowledge creation, storage, and use on a more self-conscious level" (Rereading 28).

6 This treatment of the rhetorical topic mirrors Carolyn R. Miller's formulation of genre, which is "centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" ("Genre as Social Action" 151). This pragmatic redefinition will play a larger role in coming pages, but even here, it indicates that a renewal of pragmatic stylistics was possible as early as the 1980s.

7 The Theory Wars (along with several other quite public disagreements) within rhetoric-composition accurately reveal what happens when a common framework is mobilized in radically different ways. While theorizing and teaching are equally necessary disciplinary practices—among many others—each of the factions within the theory debate managed to see those self-same practices in wholly different ways. The framework was shared by all participants; no debate could have occurred if it had not been. The discursive structures that the framework produced, however, were most certainly not.

8 From these relationships, Fahnestock concludes that
   [i]n this view, the most ordinary act of predication becomes an extraordinary act of
   figuration, not essentially different from the deployment of the most consciously
   crafted gradatio. Furthermore, [...] it also becomes possible to judge whether the
   disposal of any sentence constituent seems to serve, or detract from, what the sentence
   should be expressing. (Rhetorical Figures 38)

9 Readers interested in writing assignments directed at stylistic awareness may consult the appendix.

10 I make no editorial changes to Beth's paper; the spelling, grammar, and punctuation are entirely her's. I would, however, caution readers against focusing on the numerous surface-level "errors" her work exhibits. The underlying processes are more significant than the errors, which I take to be a result of her intellectual difficulty with the topic more than an indication of some fault. Indeed, later paragraphs in the same paper exhibit few, if any, of the 'errors' seen in the first page or two. Effective writing is formally correct writing, to be sure, but effective writing requires more than good grammar to succeed in the world.

11 Beth's ultimate reliance on comparison should not disappoint since she has moved beyond choosing it automatically, or by default, but rather has come to a decision that comparison is a proper method for accomplishing her work. She does not begin with an unquestioning belief in the method for its own sake; she only comes to see it as viable by having weighed her options and explored her purpose in writing.

12 In arguing for "genre as social action," Carolyn R. Miller agitates for the primacy of function even in formulaic genres like the lab report or memorandum and goes on to suggest that [the concept of] genre serves as the substance of forms at higher levels; as recurrent patterns of language use, genres help constitute the substance of cultural life. [...] A genre is a rhetorical means for mediating private intentions and social exigence; it motivates by connecting the private with the public, the singular with the recurrent. (163; emphasis added)
In other words, "[t]he understanding of rhetorical genre [being advocated] is based in rhetorical practice, in the conventions of discourse that a society establishes as ways of 'acting together'" (163). Whether the genre is the cover letter or the novel, its function is to reflect socialized--one might say ritualized--ways of (inter)acting. And those interactions are as susceptible as any discourse to pragmatic stylistics and the choices it provides.
CHAPTER 5
THE PARALOGIC FUTURE OF RHETORIC-COMPOSITION

I think the thing to do after rejecting Cartesianism is not to go on through the wreckage of the temple but to go back into the town where the heretical temple was built and rediscover the life that was lived by people for many centuries before the rationalist dream seized hold of people’s minds. (Stephen Toulmin, “Literary Theory” 214)

I do not intend for, and I would not want, this remaining chapter to provide some final word of judgment about rhetoric-composition. Throughout this dissertation I argue that discourse works most effectively when it is adapted to specific exigencies, and as a consequence, my pragmatic stylistics purposely lacks any provision for universal closure of the sort that might be expected at a moment like the present one. There are many stylistic tools that might allow a writer to provide closure, but none of them is rightly used to enforce closure in this case. In keeping with the attitude that my epigraph describes so well, these final pages are undoubtedly better spent testing the limits of stylistic rhetoric and challenging whatever certainty may still remain about those received opinions my investigation revisits. Rather than dwell on the wreckage of the temple, I hope finally to help rediscover the beauty of the town in which it was built.

While stylistics’ active resistance to closure does not turn communication into a thing indecipherable, it does ensure that interlocutors interact with words in pragmatic ways, ways usually excluded by the idealization or abstraction of rhetoric. And the implications—pedagogical and otherwise—of this resistance extend well beyond the next writing task. Because discourse dominates most people’s everyday lives, an effective rhetoric must reflect rather than distort the choices and constraints facing writers and readers in the twenty-first century. Effective discourse results as much from a writer’s sensitivity to language as a complex and ongoing series of actions as from her (necessarily incomplete) awareness of an audience, a material situation, or any other
contextualizing factor. If words are effective by matters of degree, if they are never simply ‘right,’ then one can imagine creating closure only with great difficulty and much oversimplification. To impose a real or imagined ending is to argue that rhetorical engagement is a finite experience akin to taking a step or flipping a switch. Although these physical actions are repeatable, they are not continuous in the way that an interlocutor’s engagement with language must be. No language user can flip the switch on discourse: the necessity of communicative engagement involves not one rhetorical choice but a cascading series of choices that must be confronted by writers and scholars alike.

Given my desire to hold closure in abeyance, and rather than focus on the stylistic method in contemporary rhetoric-composition—which would implicitly argue for a single way of using stylistic rhetoric beyond these pages—this chapter analyzes three conceptual convergences between pragmatic stylistics and rhetoric-based post-process theories like Kent’s paralogy: an externalist epistemology, the paralogic principle of charity, and hermeneutics-based prior/passing theories. These overlapping ideas equally emphasize writerly choice—effective communication is not about whether but how one chooses to engage with others and the world—and that commonality encourages further consideration of my argument for understanding and making discursive choices. Pragmatic stylistics may then be more accurately taken as contributing to a larger intellectual endeavor—understanding who human beings are as language users—and not as a self-sufficient replacement for the work currently being done by Kent, Fahnestock, Bialostosky, and others who have offered powerful theories of rhetoricality. Since my own theory depends so heavily on bricolage, the retrofitting of disparate ideas and approaches within a single framework, the most natural first step in moving beyond stylistics per se is to attend to the positions that other rhetorical theories place writers in and the (lack of) choices that these positions offer. Of course, no one is likely to believe that theorizing occurs in a vacuum, but developing alternatives need not always mean razing everything that has come before.
In the present case, the overlapping of concepts invites a healthy skepticism about the idea of rhetoric as well as a forward momentum for stylistics. Again, as Stephen Toulmin argues in my epigraph, rationalism (and other idealizing imperatives) unnecessarily confine interlocutors’ sense of possibility and, as a direct consequence, their intellectual and material lives. For its part pragmatic stylistics attempts to leverage the basic patterns familiar to all language users by treating their familiarity as a necessary component of all effective discursive choices—which can depend as much on *phronesis* and intuition as any conscious effort. If one approaches stylistic strategies as opportunities for understanding as well as creating specific discursive effects, then one has a consequent opportunity to align those effects more effectively with one’s present context. In short, rhetoric *can* serve as a way of looking at words at work rather than a system for abstracting principles from those words, and as such, it invites an inquisitive attitude about one’s own discourse as well as others’. Indeed, when combined with the choices made by readers, writerly choices produce a complex web of causes and effects that directly shapes all future choices and that can only be understood within its native context. Any distortion of this complex relationship ultimately hinders an individual’s ability to enact change through language, and it is one overriding reason why the value of rhetorical theory and enactment is severely reduced when the two are narrowly defined as ends in themselves. Because paralogy and stylistics are similar without being identical, their points of convergence produce new questions and dilemmas regarding rhetoric’s role in communication as well as an increased appreciation for human interaction through language. Such discontinuities matter much more than whatever argumentative support either theory gains from the other, because it is precisely these sorts of problems in which the best rhetorics invest themselves, preventing as they do the normative violence against discourse that instrumentalism, rationalism, and other foundational theories actively encourage.

Both rhetorical theory and rhetorical enactment must derive from discourse itself appropriate avenues of investigation and understanding, and that obligation means employing rhetorical
strategies as the linguistic retrofitters they are—simultaneously makers of meaning and commentators on language-in-use. A significant example of this dual vision comes in pragmatism’s and paralogy’s dependence on an externalist epistemology—a belief in the social and material nature of discursive engagement. Few scholars today would dispute that every utterance presupposes an audience of some kind, and fewer still would suggest that this audience can be effectively defined through an algorithm. Stylistic rhetoric refines this assumption by positing that rhetorical strategies are the means by which one both comes to understand and communicates with a contextually defined audience. Whether taken individually or collectively, these strategies represent a writer’s choices when placing himself in relationship to an audience and situation. Since rhetorical stance-taking would be wholly unnecessary were context unimportant or audience awareness an impossibility, it (stance-taking) might be seen as the ultimate cause of whatever discursive retrofitting occurs during communication as well as an implicit commentary on what it means to achieve the authority to speak and be heard. More generally then, a writer’s ‘style’ refers to the rhetorical component of the larger textualities that a writer confronts, what theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (and Kent after him) termed “speech-genres.” According to Debra Journet, “[g]enres [. . .] represent the cluster of discursive commitments that, as Bakhtin argues, make communication possible” (“Writing Within” 97-98). From a paralogic view, genre “corresponds to an open-ended and uncodifiable strategy for hermeneutic guessing that comes into being through triangulation or what Bakhtin formulates as open-ended dialogue” (Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 128). In short, genres are a reflection of the rhetoric (and the stances driving it) enacted in a particular situation. Genres are not solely textual entities—an essay is more than the literal words on its pages—and while genres may be shared within or across communicative situations—the conventions of the essay are widely employed by writers of all kinds—they “also are employed by individuals within specific situations” (Journet 100; emphasis in original). The writer chooses to mobilize any number of
strategies in any number of ways, and it is the sum total of those choices, which are always already constrained by various discursive and sociocultural forces, to which "speech-genre" refers.

Paralogic rhetoric enlarges the relationship between writerly choice and a given context by claiming that communication is thoroughly interpretive and always collaborative. Because interlocutors normally work to enact meaning or to understand the meaning-making of others, they must necessarily interpret the utterances they encounter as well as the world implied by those utterances. The necessity of what Kent calls "hermeneutic guessing" leads to the additional dependence of interlocutors on collaboration. Following again from Bakhtin's dialogic theory of communication, Kent's paralogy posits that "every utterance, as M. M. Bakhtin points out with his notion of addressivity, is innately responsive to the utterances of others" (Paralogic Rhetoric 160).

To communicate effectively, authors and audiences require interpretive strategies that accurately reflect the contexts in which they find themselves, something that becomes nearly impossible without the fully collaborative engagement of all parties involved. As Kent's use of "collaboration" implicitly suggests--collaboratio is Latin for "a working together"--discursive exchange cannot exist without a mutual recognition that one's own utterances are not the only words at work in the world. That writers and readers rarely face insurmountable difficulty in making sense of one another indicates the accuracy of paralogy's reliance on collaboration. Meaning-making would be much more difficult, if not impossible, were interlocutors always willfully or completely "talking past" one another. Even miscommunication cannot occur without some point(s) of overlapping context and/or investments, and that common ground gives interlocutors access to meaning(-making) and, through it, to both one's own and others' language use:

[a]lthough collaboration is paralogic in nature and therefore cannot be taught as a systemic process, it nonetheless may be described. From the point of view of a paralogic rhetoric, collaboration becomes an open-ended dialogic activity where
communicators work together to create passing theories [hermeneutic guesses] or, in Peircean terms, cominterpretants. (Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 166)

By defining effective rhetoric as more than a reductively formal consideration, both stylistics and paralogy open the way for three additional arguments about meaning-making and its functions: (1) meaning must be external to any individual subjectivity because it depends on the discursive interchange of writer, audience and world; (2) meaning exists only to the degree that writer and audience perceive one another as reasonable beings with specific intentions; and (3) meaning is always provisional because it is produced by the dynamic triangulation of writer, audience, and material reality. Since the coming pages address each of these assumptions in detail, let me conclude this section by again emphasizing the tangible value of this comparative approach to stylistics and post-process rhetorics like paralogy. To the degree that externalism, the principle of charity, prior/passing theories, and other paralogic concepts make a belief in rhetoric possible, stylistics can only benefit from the convergence of like ideas and from any attendant opportunity for self-critique. Through convergence and/or critique, one also discovers methods for addressing the concerns of those compositionists interested in cultural studies, power relations, difference, and other largely extra-rhetorical forces. These concerns can be addressed without marginalizing rhetoric or writing as a subject of inquiry in its own right because externalism by its very name argues for the importance of those things outside human consciousness and/or control. Thus, even if Kent and others are correct to argue that reading and writing cannot be systematically taught, one need not assume that an investigation of discursive literacies, or of discourse itself, must automatically become peripheral to a concentration on the sociocultural/political aspects of human communication. Moreover, if communication is always already collaborative, then teachers of writing have some obligation to work with students rather than on them. Agitating for liberatory pedagogies or an acute awareness of power relations, for example, means less than nothing when teachers thereby impose various extra-pedagogical agenda on students, directing them largely
away from the role language plays in most human beings’ lives. Language is not all there is, but language is always there. Those who practice rhetoric-composition would do well to adopt the principle of truth in advertising by focusing their work on composition and/or rhetoric. And paralogy, stylistics, and other rhetoric-based theories allow writers and scholars to maintain this focus without idealizing words or the extent of their influence. Playing straight with their students and themselves will guarantee compositionists the most valuable dividend of all: the possibility that what they do and say actually matters, that the world responds to their words (and vice versa).

Externalism and Triangulation

Paralogy restores rhetoric’s primacy within rhetoric-composition by requiring scholars and writers to reassess what role words play in the world and how a wholly collaborative formulation of discourse might increase understanding of hermeneutics, power relations and other extra-linguistic dynamics—and rhetoric’s relationship to them all. The first step in this corrective assessment is the development of an externalist epistemology, one that argues language users must necessarily create meaning through triangulation—the discursive interaction of writer, audience, and material world—and interpretive guesswork. By taking advantage of both the instability (meaning has multiple sources) and the potentiality (meaning-making has multiple outcomes) of language use, an externalist epistemology is essential to the development of a pragmatic rhetoric like mine. Davidson’s deployment of triangulation as a framework for exploring meaning-making ensures that any subject position may be seen as rhetorically significant—as offering significant discursive choices to the interlocutor—and that the context surrounding interlocutors is taken as an equal partner in effective communication. Or put another way, Davidsonian externalism posits that without triangulation no subject position would exist for the individual communicant to assume: “[i]n order to hold propositional attitudes, we must communicate, for without other language users and without a shared world, no propositional attitudes could occur at all” (Kent, Paralogic
Meaning-making requires the presence of an audience and a material context as well as a rhetor. The interaction of these three nodes of experience makes possible the construction of a pragmatic rhetorical theory, one that posits interpretation as external to any single interlocutor and argues for discourse as a means of assuming subject positions in relationship to others/the world:

"[i]n order to surmise if our marks and noises create any effect in the world, we require at least another language user and objects in the world that we know we share. In order to communicate, we need to triangulate" (Kent, *Paralogic Rhetoric* 90).

The externalist version of the traditional communicative triangle—which casts the world rather than the utterance as the third apex of meaning-making—gives pragmatic stylistics an explicit means for describing the underlying task to which writers put their rhetorical strategies. This revised triangle casts a net wide enough to accommodate the rhetoric I support by relying on concepts of writerly choice and agency much like those bound up in the present project. Because externalism supplies an argument for interlocutors’ having to negotiate among themselves and the world, stylistic choice-making/stance-taking, triangulation, and hermeneutic guesswork might be more accurately viewed as three alternatives for narrating the same set of discursive phenomena. If triangulation describes the basic relationships adhering to all communication, and hermeneutic guesswork names the processes that sustain those relationships, then my stylistics could easily be taken to account for both the source of the relationships and the outcomes they produce. That is, stylistics might rightfully go beyond the abstract formulation of an externalist triangle by also determining what triangulation might look like from *within the discourse* interlocutors actually use and what triangulation ultimately does in/to the world those interlocutors share.

Given that stylistic strategies provide the writer an opportunity to situate herself in relation to the Other and the world and given that Davidsonian externalism relies on a collaborative view of communicative exchange, the model paralogic rhetoric provides is considerably strengthened by stylistics. If collaboration stands as a necessary precursor to any communicative act, then
understanding the strategies that allow collaboration to occur is essential—particularly since neither Davidson nor Kent does much to specify what their generalized theories might entail in any particular context. Moreover, a paralogic approach to collaboration encourages writers to see themselves at work on a common endeavor with readers, something reinforced by Burke’s argument for rhetorical consubstantiation and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s reliance on audience adherence. Regardless of the label it is given, this sort of collaboration implies that writers and readers necessarily work toward mutually accessible meaning and a shared awareness of what their meaning-making might accomplish outside themselves. From a stylistic vantage point, rhetorical study and rhetorical enactment would then have to function simultaneously within any communication. Studying the rhetorical maneuverings of another entails the mobilization of various rhetorical strategies of one’s own; to make choices about one’s own maneuverings, one must actively move through an understanding of another’s discourse—its form, meaning, and effects.

Davidsonian triangulation comes to serve as a catch-all for describing the complex set of processes by which writer and reader assume anticipatory stances. The assumption of these stances is primarily phenomenological—though there are material elements that can matter equally as much or more. And since, despite the advances of cognitive science and linguistics, very little is known about what actually occurs during language creation/reception, triangulation’s vagueness seems understandable. Even so, it behooves scholars and teachers to consider that the concept’s abstractness in Davidson and Kent does not counsel against further inquiry into what it means to assume a rhetorical stance. A writer’s use of rhetorical strategies is of particular importance in this effort because writerly choices are the most tangible ways an author interacts with his audience. In addition, and more broadly speaking, ‘bombastic’ styles tend to suggest very different things about
their authors than 'well-reasoned' or 'humorous' ones do, and as a consequence, what a style indicates about the writer's rhetorical stance greatly affects judgments one makes about his position in the world. A writer can assume a style very different from his 'real' position, of course, but that possibility too is part of the interpretive process. Because of these various difficulties, or perhaps despite them, triangulation further depends on gauging intentions and producing multiple and simultaneous interpretations derived from that estimation. This complex of events and phenomena cannot be fully understood in the abstract, however, and stylistic rhetoric offers ample opportunities for determining how words create or reflect interlocutors' places in the world, precisely what Davidsonian triangulation alone cannot.

The (re)creation of meaning from another's words implies an anticipation of the utterer's stance—which includes whatever motivations might be in play—and it would be difficult to imagine a meaningful utterance that did not say as much about the writer's place in the world as the writer's meaning. For instance, what I mean by 'anticipation' in the previous sentence is both like and unlike any definition a dictionary might provide because the reader will already have retrofitted the word's semantic baseline according to what I am and have been saying—cum-doing throughout this project. The engaged reader will work to understand not only how I use this word in this particular context but also why I might have chosen it over other words that could be taken as synonymous but work in materially different ways. To make meaning, or to interpret it, is to impute some motivation to an utterance's originator. A hermeneutic approach to communication implicitly makes this argument by accepting *a priori* that interlocutors must interpret—or continuously situate themselves and others—for communication to occur. Such discursive (de)codings are not merely rhetorical, however, and are only further complicated by the conventions and expectations that work outside rhetoric but that nonetheless influence how those strategies are received. In this respect, and despite its inclusion of the world in the triangulative process, paralogic rhetoric lacks an effective means for dealing with power relations and particularly power differentials between or
among interlocutors. Dobrin rightly comments that “triangulation, as it has been defined, denies that culture, race, class, or gender affect at all one’s prior theories which determine one’s passing theories, which affect the movement of triangulation and communication” (“Paralogic Hermeneutic Theories” 142). He goes on to suggest that because of this oversight, Kent’s paralogy cannot account for the fact that “in all communicative moments of triangulation, advantage and disadvantage [in discursive authority] perpetuate moments of power that when compounded with other instances of power take on the semblance of power structures” (143). The level of abstraction at which Davidsonian triangulation and Kent’s paralogic hermeneutics resides makes it difficult for adherents to work through these relational processes and the power that they generate. This difficulty is not a result of abstraction per se but rather a direct consequence of the idealization that creeps into the two theories as they strive for abstraction. Because paralogy posits context as an abstract presence in communication--an equal that is not equally explored--supra-material forces like power differentials are operationally abandoned. Though their claims might appear to argue otherwise, Davidson and Kent move one’s thinking away from the larger forces with which language-in-use must always co-exist and through which rhetorical enactment ultimately becomes possible.

As a theoretical concept, triangulation breaks down at the moment when its insights are most required, for interpretation does not occur on its own or in uniform ways; it results from the choices offered to and the constraints imposed on interlocutors, something triangulation initially seems well suited to address. As a pragmatic rhetorical tool, it fails to answer the most fundamental of questions: how/why is it that words work at all when expressed in the world? In describing hermeneutic guessing, for example, Kent mentions the “paralogical elements of language use, elements like skill, intuition, taste, and sympathy” (Paralogic Rhetoric 41). These elements seem strangely suited to subjectivist theories of rhetoric rather than the externalism on which he bases his observations. If paralogy seeks to describe those elements of communication
beyond logical codification, then its blindness regarding biases, power relations, and difference—those forces least amenable to formulaic definition or control—seriously undercuts its analytic value. For these reasons Dobrin’s argument that power structures are the result of compounding multiple instances of (dis)advantage should not be necessarily seen as an argument for further increasing paralogy’s abstractness—as when scientific methods abstract a theorem from numerous instances of some physical phenomenon—rather it ought to motivate all scholars and writers who hope to promote a better understanding of rhetorical patterns and their relationship to kairos and the material forces at work on language. Stylistic rhetoric is specifically designed to investigate patterns of language and of language use, and when combined with Dobrin’s revised paralogy, many of the elements of communication that concern cultural critics and others are brought into play without ignoring rhetoric’s role in their manifestation.

Though all theories ought to welcome critiques of the sort described here, what ultimately comes from Dobrin’s argument and my subsequent observations is an awareness that everyone comes to a discursive moment from some stylistically generated position or another, a position reflected and/or enlarged through the ways in which words are used. No writer is without a discursive relationship to her audience, and that relationship or relationships like it—usually when (re)assumed over time—create the various power differentials that continue to exist inside and outside writing classrooms:

we cannot overlook the factors that affect relationships between participants in a particular communicative act. Nor can we overlook how the manipulation of triangulative moments allows for particular theories to dominate multiple moments of communicative interaction and, in turn, influence long-term discursive interactions that form structures of power and give substance to issues of culture, race, class, gender, and so on. (Dobrin, “Paralogic Hermeneutic” 144)

The possibility for manipulating triangulation suggests not only that interlocutors can have some control over discursive exchange but also that this control is itself an integral part of the communicative process. Power structures motivate particular manipulations, and those
manipulations reinforce and/or make these structures possible. But beyond even this play of extra-rhetorical forces lies the notion that rhetoric does or can allow one to control what occurs if deployed in particular ways. Manipulations are used against all interlocutors, but writers and readers also have equal opportunities for access to them, if not equal opportunities for making those manipulations manifest. Stylistic rhetoric makes such manipulations accessible by encouraging interlocutors to consider how particular discursive patterns are generated and played out without assuming that actual stylistic choices are infinite in every instance. The initial choice in any response is constrained by the very manipulations acting against the interlocutor; that is, the first choice is shaped by the choices made by other interlocutors. A writer’s stance thus becomes a reflection of a person’s ability to assume agency in the face of particular contextual modifiers. To the degree that one effectively communicates with some Other, one has necessarily assumed a stance of some kind. And the most effective rhetorical enactments might then be conceived as those in which a writer or reader can express her meanings despite the constraints placed on that expression.

Externalism and triangulation do not fail because they suggest an equality among writer, reader, and world that could never exist. Their inability to account for power relations derives from what they argue equality would entail. Rather than framing relationships as equal in potential rhetorical effect, the two concepts focus on them as equal in some absolute sense. That said, triangulative negotiation and the anticipation of another’s stance are rightly formulated by Kent as the necessary cost of doing rhetorical business with another human being, something that my own pragmatic stylistics supports. This discursive cost is not to be stamped out or rectified, rather it reflects the maneuvering and retrofitting required to make ideas meaningful in the first place. In Burkean terms, meaning-making is only possible when interlocutors come, through language, to occupy the same conceptual space—that is, become consubstantiated. Consubstantiation cannot occur unless negotiation and anticipation influence discourse. (Inter)locutionary negotiation
determines the space to be occupied as writer and reader come to a shared set of meanings about a shared world. Mutual anticipation of the Other’s stance in this shared world provides an understanding of the demands that, although existing outside one’s own experience or desires, affect what rhetorical choices are available.

The ready-built acceptance of communication as a messy and less than codifiable business also allows Kent’s paralogic version of triangulation to move well beyond subjectivist or other anti-foundational theories in explaining rhetorical activity. For example, because Davidsonian externalism assumes triangulation to be the hub from which all meaning-making radiates, paralogic rhetoric supports my argument for stylistic rhetoric’s having as large a role in discourse consumption as it has traditionally had in discourse production. I spend much of my project arguing for the use of style as a repertoire of generative and organizational strategies—a means for creating, not simply dressing up, discourse—but I also try to model in my own readings the ways in which a reader’s triangulation relies just as heavily on stylistic principles. Neither I nor anyone else can read Gorgias’, Woolf’s, or my students’ minds, but to the degree that each reader has a stylistic awareness of discourse and communication, he can construct a reasonable or likely reading of an author’s position and purpose within a given text. These readings are not taken to be definitive, because under the present terms, no reading can be. It is quite possible, however, to gauge the limits of a reading’s reasonability since effective communication depends on a writer’s enactment of rhetorical eulogia and a reader’s acceptance of those eulogia as reasonable—here defined within the limits of the rhetorical situation. The writer does not give these reasons explicitly; he enacts them through his language choices. The reader does not normally perceive these reasons consciously; he comes to them only as they do (or do not) make meaning possible.

By accepting that the discursive situation always defines how communication occurs—or conversely, by not depending on some universalized rationale for communication—both stylistics and externalist triangulation encourage interlocutors to rely on rhetoric’s relationship to and
interaction with the material world, not its replacement of that world. Consider for a moment Woolf and her stylistic choices in *A Room of One’s Own*. If a reader were to judge her use of rhetorical questions as inconsequential to the essay’s meaning and/or effects, then there are two basic rationales that likely explain the judgment: (1) Woolf somehow lacked the fluent English speaker’s awareness of interrogatives and their uses/effects in situations like hers; or (2) the hypothetical reader sees discourse too broadly to find any specific strategy useful in making her judgment. In short, either Woolf or the reader is ineffectively triangulating through rhetorical questions. The first option might be ignored safely—except through severe argumentative gymnastics—since, because Woolf’s work seems neither incoherent nor unreasonable, she clearly possesses some facility with language. And since my hypothetical reader has judged her use of questions unimportant, not meaningless, there is no reason to question further Woolf’s ability to communicate. Turning to the second option, then, one learns quite a bit about the reader and her relationship to Woolf—that is, the stance she has assumed in relationship to Woolf’s utterances. If my sketch of that reader seems reasonable, though certainly simplified, then it should also seem reasonable that she has limited the range of possible choices writers supposedly possess or require. Many first-year student-writers come to Woolf from this position because rhetorical questions seem simply to happen for them instead of reflecting Woolf’s attempts to communicate something in particular. In other words, for most student-writers, Woolf’s use of rhetorical questions has no noticeable effect on meaning.

It is only as class discussion and writing assignments unfold the richness of Woolf’s stylistic choices, and their many consequences for shaping further writerly and readerly choices, that student-writers begin to reassess their assumptions and, in so doing, their belief in their own ability to write effectively. Student-writers learn to triangulate with Woolf by coming to her from a specific direction, not because that direction is the only one available to readers but because it is the position that Woolf and my classroom happen to place them in. They may refuse that position
for various reasons, but they cannot circumvent the necessity of facing that position should they wish to triangulate. What many of them discover is that Woolf’s positioning offers a rich environment in which to think about discourse and the choices it brings with it. Student-writers might come to this understanding in other ways, of course, and engaging Woolf is not necessarily the best way in any particular case. Exposure to moments when writers explicitly push readers is key, however, since such moments reveal the constraints and opportunities that communication involves. Thus, Woolf challenges student-writers to reconsider what they already know about how words work; through her rhetoric she forces them to make conscious whatever knowledge they have gained elsewhere and to apply that knowledge in a new situation for new reasons.

Triangulation matters to paralogy and to stylistic rhetoric precisely because it encourages interlocutors to focus on a contextual network of relationships while not preventing those same interlocutors from encountering the choices triangulation requires. As a consequence, when considered through the lens of a pragmatic and paralogical stylistics, collaboration also works to the advantage of writing teachers and represents an alternative means of envisioning a pedagogy that accounts for the originary moment of all utterances--the moment when agency is accepted or created through rhetorical enactment. In nearly all ways, stylistics provides this account more effectively and more accurately than most so-called collaborative pedagogies do because it does not assume or try to enact a rhetorical power differential that privileges teacher over student-writers. Effective engagement with student-writers, whether in writing classrooms or elsewhere, can only come with a pedagogical relationship that accepts them as fully capable of recognizing their own situatedness and of leveraging the discursive choices their position provides. Traditional pedagogies that reinforce an instrumental attitude toward education, one in which students are assumed to lack a particular set of skills or abilities, cannot sustain a belief in student-writers’ potential as language users. The best education will always involve a fundamentally transformative encounter between students and various knowledge-making institutions, but this encounter should
never be motivated by students’ supposed lack. For these reasons a pragmatic stylistics might re-envision pedagogy as a dialogic encounter between teachers and student-writers as they investigate writerly authority—etymologically ‘authorhood,’ the right of the author. Since it assumes all communication to be dialogical, externalist collaboration provides a strong justification for pursuing this same course. Externalism positions interlocutors and the world in a multivalent relationship, one that casts all parties as reader-writers trying to construct and interpret meanings. In this respect the teacher-student relationship is no different than the relations among any set of interlocutors. Teachers express various meanings through their curriculum, lectures/discussions and writing/reading assignments, and students in their turn work to make sense of those choices and their rhetorical expressions. The exciting difference, however, comes in externalism’s refusal to allow these pedagogical expressions to manifest themselves in linear or unilateral ways. Students must also have an opportunity to work toward meaning through their reading/writing as well as the right to think about language long and deeply, even if they do not always accept the teacher’s or others’ utterances in a conventional (read: normative) way.

Few teachers would dispute that students are more than empty vessels into which knowledge is poured. If discourse is always collaborative, if student-writers bring prior knowledge of discourse with them, and if teachers provide pedagogical opportunities for understanding how rhetoric shapes discourse, then the only means for effectively managing a writing course is to rewrite older narratives of what teachers (and student-writers) do. One cannot place student-writers in every possible context, nor will most student-writers come into the classroom with as much language experience as their instructors, but the only means for student-writers to become more comfortable with and more believing in discourse is to use their rhetorical understanding in any and all situations that will fit into a semester-long course. Understanding is doing; phronesis must overtake techne. Many so-called liberatory pedagogies attempt to finesse this pedagogical dilemma by directing student-writers’ attention beyond discourse to sociocultural institutions and power
structures. Teachers' attempts to step outside discourse to provide their student-writers with absolute knowledge of the material constraints operating on language will only produce another version of Paulo Freire's "'banking' concept of education" (Pedagogy of the Oppressed 53).^6

Rather than objectifying and dispensing rhetoric or grammar, for example, liberatory pedagogies often objectify and dispense knowledge of power relations, difference, and contact zones. But while the object is different, the process and ultimate pay off (or lack thereof) are identical. Students are victimized by the very experiences that are supposed to empower them.

Regardless of whether oppression occurs--few contemporary scholars would argue it does not--student-writers are users of language and must effectively equip themselves with an understanding of discourse if they hope to make (or take advantage of opportunities) for acting in the world. The very means by which oppression might be combatted lies outside those pedagogies that construct students as incapable of acting without a teacher's intervention--whether because they are viewed as pawns in some larger power struggle or because they are seen as incapable of understanding the sociocultural ramifications of their own discursive interaction. All concerned would be better served if teachers accepted students as writers like any others, real human beings who wish to make sense of their situation in the world, and developed their curricula accordingly. As Dobrin rightly concludes in his essay on paralogic hermeneutics, "[b]y giving students the opportunity to identify the moment in which power occurs and to possibly resist the triangulative power move, students attain agency in a more direct manner than many liberatory and radical pedagogies profess" ("Paralogic Hermeneutic" 146).

The Principle of Charity

If an externalist epistemology and a paralogic theory of triangulation help to explain why interpretation necessarily underlies interlocutors' rhetorical practices, then Davidson's principle of charity--which has nothing to do with kindness per se--attempts to describe how meaning becomes
available in the first place. That is, as Davidson himself describes it,

[The principle of charity says that in interpreting others you’ve got to make their thoughts hold together to a certain extent if you’re going to see them as thoughts at all, because that’s what thoughts are like. They have logical relations to one another. Although people can certainly be irrational—they can have thoughts that don’t go together—we can only recognize them as irrational because their thoughts lack rational coherence. (“Language Philosophy” 15)

Following Davidson then, imputing a logic to the utterances of others derives as much from one’s own need to understand as it does from those others’ need to express meaning. The writer’s obligation to formulate effective rhetorical enactments moves in tandem with the reader’s obligation to make sense of those enactments in reasonable ways—though, in either case, those obligations are not always enacted or interpreted in the fashion individual interlocutors might expect. Neither of these obligations could be fulfilled if not for a shared world (of both discourse and physical phenomena) in which writer and reader may situate themselves in relationship to one another. Or seen stylistically, interlocutors’ making of meaning depends on effectively determining what rhetorical stance the Other has assumed and what stance the Self might assume in response. Further describing hermeneutics’ relationship to charity, Davidson turns back toward externalism:

[Externalism says there’s a connection between the contents of people’s thoughts and their causal relations with the world itself. In fact, I would say if it weren’t for that, we wouldn’t be able to interpret anyone else. It’s only because we share a world with others that we can get the hang of what they’re talking about. (“Language Philosophy” 15)

Davidson’s reformulation reveals the charity principle’s underlying suppositions, since it implies that the shared world is most noticeable in its effects on discursive exchange only when communication threatens to break down. In providing a common context for interaction, that world—along with interlocutors themselves—works against total incomprehensibility; that is, it provides a framework according to which utterances might be judged and an interpretive screen through which those utterances can be parsed. Rhetorical choices may impinge on these judgments
and parsings, but those choices (and any consequent constraints) must still operate within a given material context.

My stylistics has taken an approach much like Davidson’s, though more implicitly, through its emphasis on *phronesis* and *kairos*, but the principle of charity does much to clarify how and why context must necessarily include the world of discourse and phenomena in which interlocutors actually reside. According to that view, varying perceptions of the world produce, or rather require, additional negotiation on the part of interlocutors, but such variances do not result in any necessary state of incomprehensibility—statements and phenomena already in the world do not disappear. For example, in order for me to tell a student that I do not understand what he means by a given utterance, I have to know something about the student, the world, and my own relationship to them both, or I would never be able to say that I had some difficulty in understanding X or Y. That is, if everything were ‘nonsense’ to me, nothing would provide the point of comparison necessary for my judgment and resulting inquiry. More importantly, and while it may take more or less time depending on the situation, the student and I can reach some consensus—Latin for ‘shared sense’ or ‘shared understanding’—about the utterance in question but only if we are willing to engage in questioning, amplification, analogy, and other discursive strategies that convert the point(s) of confusion into terms we already share. The incommensurability of discourses that some social constructivist theories posit for interpretive communities is thus exploded. The principle of charity argues for neither a complete overlapping of nor a complete disjunction between interlocutors, rather it suggests that all interlocutors share a world, if not a perfectly efficient means of communication, and that despite such misunderstandings as necessarily will occur, the means for effectively communicating are always available, though perhaps not always obvious.

Davidson’s argument here and elsewhere appears to draw primarily on spoken discourse, particularly scenarios in which ineffective speech is or could be revised through more speech.\(^7\) In
such instances, rephrasing or otherwise transforming an utterance does not erase what came before; more (revisionary) speech simply places prior speech under operational erasure. Interlocutors continue as if the ‘misstatement’ had not occurred, but all earlier statements still exist as part of the context for whatever communication occurs. As writing is normally defined, it allows no similar opportunity for real-time revisioning. With the exception of some online discussion forums and electronic bulletin boards, current technology does not allow the words on a page or a screen to be revised so that all versions of an utterance, and all prior attempts at communication, coexist for readers. I return to this bias later in the chapter, but I would note that Davidson’s preoccupation does indicate the difficulty of designing a rhetoric that builds on the common points of articulation, literally and figuratively, between speech and writing. Stylistics provides some opportunity for managing this traditional gap, and a principle of charity built on stylistic foundations works toward that goal by overcoming another difficulty with Davidson’s charity principle: its reliance on ‘rationality’ to describe the logic—or rather organizing principle—of a particular set of utterances.

I have previously made rather broad use of the concept of a (shared) world as it appears in Davidson and Kent. This laxity springs from my own need to lay appropriate foundations before engaging in too incisive a critique as well as the necessity of starting somewhere—in this case, from a point that did not immediately provide an opportunity for comment. Externalism and paralogic rhetoric rely on “meaning holism,” essentially a coherence theory of meaning and truth, to describe the role that interlocutors’ shared world plays in discursive exchange (Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 105). In short, both theories assume “that something we call the world, or objective fact, or essential being does not make an utterance true; only other utterances make an utterance true” (105). On the one hand, defining the shared world as a purely discursive phenomenon allows externalism to avoid the dangers of a phallogocentric worldview, which implicitly favors a correspondence theory of meaning and truth; that is, which argues that all discourse might be evaluated against empirical data of one kind or another. Few contemporary theorists would dispute
that “[a]n assertion that we take to be true about the world makes sense only in relation to its ability to cohere to beliefs we already hold” (105). Making sense, or meaning-making, requires some mechanism for determining how utterances are interpreted if externalism’s reliance on triangulation is to matter. For if meaning-making did not rely on prior utterances as well as other contextual factors, it would be difficult to maintain an argument for interpretation as the foundation for communication. On the other hand, in avoiding the trap of a narrow foundationalism, Davidson and Kent appear to throw the physically shared world out with the correspondence theories that have been constructed around it: “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief. Its [a coherence theory’s] partisan rejects as unintelligible the request for a ground or source of justification of another ilk” (Davidson as quoted in Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 105). The existence of a material world is not disputed, rather it is rendered insignificant for lack of attention. At no point does the material reality of the physical world appear to affect what occurs as meanings are made and exchanged. This difficulty results from both the theory’s abstractness, about which further comment is unnecessary, and the intense desire of both Kent and Davidson to avoid foundationalist assumptions about discourse. In their rush to pre-empt any objective foundation for meaning, the two theorists talk past the tangible effects physical reality has on discourse.

Pragmatic stylistics can and should overcome this externalist oversight by arguing that the materiality of the world, not simply one’s beliefs about it, does influence meaning-making. Material objects and phenomena do exist prior to any utterances about them; what does not exist prior to those utterances is a means for understanding such objects and phenomena. That is, as long as one does not assume ‘rationality’ in Davidson or Kent refers either to a traditional Western conception of reason or to a postmodernist morass of utterances and utterances alone, it is possible to account for a material world without privileging it as some autonomous arbiter of meaning or discourse. I may choose to ignore material reality in my rhetorical enactments, and operationally
speaking, an object that I do not understand might be as insignificant as if it did not exist, but neither of these factors prevents materiality from playing a rhetorical role. (Note 5's comments regarding actio indicate how the materials of textual creation and reception might play some part in rhetoricality.) This difference between paralogy and pragmatic stylistics makes itself felt most tangibly when kairos is applied to a particular communicative situation. As formulated by the Greeks, kairos must necessarily include the physical world as such, for one's physical circumstances determine which utterances, if any, are (in)effective as well as which choices regarding those utterances are available at all. In other words, I continue to use the phrase 'the (shared) world' to refer to the physical circumstances in which discourse operates as well as the worldview represented by that discourse. The two formulations are not mutually exclusive, and to avoid future confusion, I refer to 'reasonableness' when describing what Davidson would call 'rationality,' the internal coherence or consistency of a discursive world view. This construction is far from perfect, but it does indicate that the worldview instantiated by an utterance or series of utterances may vary and yet not be rendered immune from the physical circumstances and phenomena that exist in the material world.

Reframing externalism's reliance on rationality in this way provides several opportunities for paralogy and other rhetorics developed from Davidson's theories. Scholars, teachers, and writers are thereby directed to reposition rhetorical analysis in terms of whether a communicant has kairotically good reasons (eulogia) for employing discourse as she does. That reframing accounts for the disparity in interpretations that might occur between/among interlocutors without purporting that when two interlocutors discuss an image they see, for example, the materiality of the image is insignificant to the discursive outcome; or that when these same people communicate in a classroom, their words are not significantly different from (even the exact same) words uttered in a church or a nightclub. In short, without disputing a coherence theory of meaning, eulogia effectively emphasize the physical as well as the discursive aspects of communication. This
resolution is not simply a matter of finding some way to shore up a paralogic theory of rhetoric against foundationalist attacks, rather my retrofitting of charity's conceptual orientation grows out of the need to change communicative narratives as well as their application to discrete moments of communication. Because no theory can ever quite do such moments justice, the stances assumed by interlocutors are assessed according to their own specific logics of reasonableness, thereby providing a pragmatic means for determining whether a given exchange is contextually effective. A single (phal)logic is not expected or forced to explain all possible discursive encounters, and regardless of the governing principles actually at work in an utterance or set of utterances, any judgment of coherence (and therefore, efficacy) is shaped by the rhetorical strategies and material situation uniquely involved.

My reformulated charity principle consequently accepts that (1) situational coherence drives interpretation and, as a result, the efficacy of discourse; (2) while the material world is not the source of meaning, physical reality does place constraints on discursive (in)coherence; and (3) rhetorical strategies provide the means by which both writer and reader create or determine the discursive and material logics necessary for coherence to exist. More than a sliding scale of values, then, this revision of Davidson's principle argues that all effective communicants engage in discourse for reasons that may or may not be known but that could be understood--that is, accounted for--if pursued contextually. The revelation of some underlying rationale need not occur for communication to be successful, but pragmatic stylistics and other similar theories do suggest that because rhetorical enactment always reflects some stance or another, analysis of any enactment can reveal something about an interlocutor. Unreasonable utterances would, therefore, be any discursive enactments that violate the meta-rhetorical principles of kairos. For example, unless circumstances or additional utterances suggest otherwise, a fluent user of English will normally assume that repetition implies emphasis, thereby serving as a signpost for some situationally important concept or stance. In other words, the probability that someone repeats
himself for a definable reason, one that most communicants are familiar with or can relate to, is quite high. This possibility for achieving audience identification does not mean repetition cannot be misused, used for purposes other than emphasis, or actively used to set up false expectations. The particular situation indicates whether any or all of these alternatives apply, but it is precisely because one can discover and work to understand such differences between use and expectation that the principle of charity (and the idea of reasonableness) has analytical validity. Were there no means of explaining various rhetorical uses of repetition, I would be unable to talk about them here, and communicants would be unable to engage in meaningful interchange through them. For repetition to allow discourse to cohere—to become meaningful—it must operate on and through language in uniquely contextual ways.

Moreover, my own inability as a reader to determine a text’s principle of coherence does not automatically indicate what Davidson calls “irrationality.” Far from it, such indeterminacy can be both purposeful and completely consistent with the logic applied by the writer. Communication has not necessarily failed in such instances; the difficulty might as easily lie in the writer’s ability or desire to express the applicable logic. Kent’s paralogic rhetoric insinuates the charity principle into such situations through the use of Heideggerian “forestructures” and Davidsonian “prior/passing theories.” Forestructures are taken to be the sum total of expectations, beliefs, and motivations each human being brings to a given discursive exchange: “[b]y ‘forestructure,’ Heidegger means roughly the assemblage of interpretive equipment that each of us brings to a particular communicative situation” (Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 13). These structures vary across individuals but are always assumed to exist and to affect what occurs when one individual communicates with another. In addition, forestructures may or may not match well or at all, but paralogic rhetoric works to account for them in all cases. The principle of charity and prior/passing theories—I address the latter in the next section—focus on interpretation in/through a context: “[w]hen we communicate, we do not simply share our thoughts or convey information from my mind to yours
through the medium of language; instead, we continually attempt to match forestructures, and where forestructures match closely enough, we say that communication takes place" (14). Thus, forestructures represent the totality of individuals' discursive repertoires and life experiences, the phenomenological storehouse from which hermeneutic guesses are generated and through which meaning-making must operate. More specifically, these structures stand as the collection of assumptions and possible logics through which a reader or listener must work if she is to make sense of a writer's or speaker's utterances. Forestructures represent the means by which interpretation is accomplished and reasonableness is in large part determined. If a reader's forestructure is so radically different from a writer's that the latter's utterances seem unreasonable, the difficulty lies in the stances assumed by each interlocutor a priori—that is, because of her forestructure—not in the utterances themselves.

Forestructures also help explain the way(s) in which pre-existing knowledge of how words work has particular currency in writing classrooms. Pedagogies which assume that student-writers enter writing courses with prior discursive knowledge are either implicitly or explicitly relying on forestructures (or some concept like it). That is, students are thereby taken as interlocutors like any others, whose forestructures will individually vary but are there nonetheless. To understand the rhetorical uses of enumeratio as an inventive strategy, an organizing principle and a stylistic maneuver, for instance, student-writers and teachers might begin by recalling and investigating lists they have encountered in the past. What do these various deployments of enumeratio have in common? Where do they diverge? Why or how might those similarities or divergences be explained by context—audience, subject matter, express or implied purpose, and so on? And most importantly, what does a writer in each situation gain or lose by using a list rather than some other strategy? These and other questions can be most tangibly applied by considering a specific text during class discussion—any text making use of enumeratio might do—but the questions' real value comes in the attention they bring to student-writers' prior knowledge. Student-writers could not
answer these questions as they apply to Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* or the *Declaration of Independence* if they did not have access to more than the texts in front of them. At some point(s) in their lives as language users, they must encounter strategies for the first time, of course, but even in those instances, they have the forestructures of other language users—the users of newly encountered strategies—and their own awareness of other rhetorical strategies to fall back on.

What Kent’s mobilization of forestructures omits, as with the principle of charity in general, is the relationship those strategies have to the physical reality students inhabit. Discourse is not merely the means by which the world becomes meaningful; the world in its turn directs one’s rhetorical awareness in particular ways. And this give-and-take can be used to advantage if applied properly within the classroom or other writing situations. I often encourage student-writers to visualize or analogically to ‘translate’ rhetorical strategies as more tangible objects or phenomena. For example, *enumeratio* might be alternatively envisioned, not as a linear or top-to-bottom list of words but rather as a line of students arranged by height—as in most high school commencement marching orders—or a pile of baseball cards organized by team or batting average. When students begin to engage with strategies in material ways, the strategies’ discursive reality is reinforced and/or made more accessible to them (students). Their ability to draw connections between discourse and the physical world does not dilute externalist principles or the coherence theory of truth. Like all language users, student-writers quickly come to incorporate into their forestructures whatever approaches work best for them and their coming-to-understanding. If Heidegger, and Kent after him, is right, then there is no one right method for applying forestructures: “[w]hat is important for us in Heidegger’s formulation of forestructure is the claim that every forestructure is unique” (Kent, *Paralogic Rhetoric* 14). Even so, this unique awareness does not prevent students, teachers, and other writers from having equal access to material and textual models.

Like triangulation, the principle of charity does have its limits, most especially in the level of abstraction at which it functions. Determining, much less understanding, what constitutes
communicative eulogia is neither purely rhetorical nor purely material, but it most certainly cannot be abstracted to any great degree. Those reasons adjudged acceptable in one situation are not portable—at least in the way Davidson’s ‘rationality,’ for example, would imply—and charity only goes so far in accounting for their rootedness. Stylistic rhetoric can remedy this dilemma to a certain degree because of its emphasis on pragmatism and stance-taking. The challenge in this instance is not, as it is with triangulation, to consider the role of power and power relations per se. Rather one must take the additional step of determining what power-created deformations in the externalist triangle actually do. That is, knowing that power relations affect discursive outcomes cannot alone produce an understanding of what constitutes the authority to speak and to be heard. Writerly authority is the rhetorical manifestation of power, but the process by which writerly authority is (not) granted demands more than paralogic rhetoric seems to provide in the charity principle.

The means by which authority comes into communicative play might be narrated in various ways, and it has traditionally been framed in the broad terms of ‘structures’ designed to encourage or impede particular kinds of communication. My retrofitting metaphor suits this model well, so while the architectural vision of power relations may not be completely accurate, it can be refurbished in ways that make up for some, or even many, of its supposed oversights. If stylistic rhetoric is essentially the means by which language is retrofitted to a particular context, then it takes little work to posit what might occur to the power structures that, according to Dobrin, are derived from “recurring trends, recurring strategies” of language use (“Paralogic Hermeneutic” 143). Dobrin’s contention that these patterns—again what Kent calls “speech-genres” after Bakhtin—produce power structures and maintain power relations stylistically links writerly authority to language use. In addition, it indicates the less tangible effects that language use has on both human beings and the world. Under Dobrin’s view, it is not the strategies themselves that produce a particular relationship but their repeated use through time. Strategies are selected, perhaps even
self-selected, based on their ability to meet one’s expectations and assumptions about discourse, and those implicit forces are almost entirely generated through one’s forestructure.

The pattern by which teachers ask questions of students (and answer them for students) provides a clear illustration of the process at work. The traditional Socratic method, wherein a student’s answer to question X is in its turn used to create question Y, has been privileged for centuries in Western cultures, and at least part of its longevity springs from the effects it creates during the course of weeks and months. Students in a course that relies heavily on this method come to the ‘dialogue’ under two disadvantages. First, students rarely choose the initial question, the utterance which shapes the course and range of choices available for future questions. If an instructor chooses to ask students about Thomas Jefferson’s use of anaphora (repetition of a line- or sentence-initial word/phrase) in the Declaration of Independence, future questions are likely to tend toward rhetorical strategies, choices, and effects. They are very unlikely to move toward (apparently) unrelated matters such as where Jefferson was born or what his profession had been. The disadvantage clearly lies in students’ inability to understand how Jefferson’s place of birth or professional training might have affected his exposure to and consequent use of anaphora, or indeed how these factors might have influenced other significant rhetorical features of the document in question. If a teacher focuses students’ attention in similar directions during future class periods, then it is quite likely that after eight or ten weeks, students will stop addressing these other issues entirely. Understanding is limited and controlled through the repeated limitation and control of discursive choices.8

Second, the instructor may choose to focus on any aspect of an answer in formulating the next question. Tradition has even provided interlocutors with a means for maintaining particular choices along these lines. One is typically accused of ‘begging the question’ when conventional criteria for intellectual or argumentative credibility are violated. The repeated use of ‘why’ and
‘how’ as methods for uncovering buried assumptions or *a priori* beliefs stems almost entirely from the West’s obsessive belief in causal analysis as the fundamental tool for understanding. That this drive itself represents an assumption about what counts as knowledge and what does not clearly limits students’ opportunity for any kind of inquiry that moves beyond the power relations existing within traditional classrooms. If students are forced continually to work toward first causes, they will tend to avoid or even not recognize at all other areas of inquiry. This overdetermined control of avenues to gaining authority, combined with the limitations created by who chooses the first question posed, does not completely discredit the Socratic method, but it does put into question what ‘liberating’ effects dialogic inquiry might automatically have on students and teachers alike. Repeated rhetorical mobilizations, when taken as a reflection of particular postures or stances, need not be either beneficial or detrimental in a zero-sum way. Every rhetorical choice must be weighed for how effective it is, not whether it is liberating or oppressive—that is, automatically (un)sympathetic to writerly authority. Dobrin’s argument does allow stylistic rhetoric to better account for extra-rhetorical forces, however, by providing further evidence of rhetorical strategies and patterns of language as the true motors of meaning-making. More importantly, it allows forestructures and other conceptual schema their due—they *are* useful—without overlooking their weaknesses or damaging outcomes—they *must be* sensibly used.

**Prior/Passing Theories**

Triangulation and charity excavate the network of relationships among interlocutors and the world. The discursive structures that these concepts define must be put to some use, however, and that application cannot be determined or understood statically. Because words’ effects are not necessarily evident outside of their contexts, rhetorical understanding requires some access to language-in-use. Even if one accepts that the principle of charity makes triangulation possible, one does not automatically discover the particular means by which triangulation occurs. That is, two questions, or rather two version of the same question, remain unanswered: what are the processes
by which people’s words interact during communication? And how is it that forestructures, which individually vary, generate compatible hermeneutic guesses often enough that communication routinely succeeds? In response paralogy posits a series of interpretive moves that may be labeled as either prior to the act of communication (prior theories) or concurrent with that act (passing theories). These formulations are not theories in the strict sense of the word, of course, but they do represent the sum total of one’s expectations of and/or reactions to an utterance.

Prior/passing theories are essentially the interpretive choices that writers and readers must make—the actual choices composing Kent’s “hermeneutic guesswork”—but it might be helpful to conceive of them more broadly as the anticipatory stances assumed by all users of language. The writer anticipates the reaction of her audience as well as its expectations. The audience anticipates the writer’s meaning by judging her possible intentions, supposed reputation, and apparent purpose. After words have been exchanged, the process continues, though it now depends on anticipating the next move in a process that interlocutors’ first choices have already begun to shape. As with individual utterances, the communicative relationship between writer and reader is embodied by the choices that the individuals involved make. As a writer, my relationship to an audience changes precisely because as my words work toward meaning, audience members’ needs, desires, and expectations shift in response. Once I have defined a specialized term, for example, I typically assume that I can then use the term freely as long as I do not disregard or ‘abuse’ the definition—and attendant usage implied by that definition. Should I desire to extend or rework the rhetorical choices that the term gives me, I ought rightly indicate as much to my audience. The principle of charity signifies the horizon of possibility by which I determine which stances or complex of choices is (not) effective and appropriate. But because this horizon is uncodified—one never knows how far or in which directions it extends—it continuously demands reassessment. If I find an interlocutor to be unreasonable, how should or will I respond? Will I continue to treat her as reasonable, even though I do not believe she is, thereby allowing the principle of charity to
remain intact but only acontextually? Or will I assume a very different stance than the principle might seem to allow--modify my own fostructure and/or guesses--in order to ensure my words directly and effectively engage that person?

As a writer or reader, I can only address questions that implicitly arise during communication by formulating rhetorical responses. It is never enough simply to recognize that my context is constantly changing or that choices must be made. My recognition must be converted into action; that is, into an utterance or set of utterances. Because Davidson's prior theory is formulated as the anticipatory stance interlocutors assume immediately prior to communication, it might serve as an index for the recognition I describe. Kent defines the concept succinctly as "the guess a speaker makes about how her utterance may be interpreted and the guess a listener makes about how to interpret an utterance"; however, "[b]ecause the prior theory constitutes only a starting place for interpretation, it is necessary but not sufficient for effective communicative interaction" (Paralogic Rhetoric 86). Stylistically, the recognition that one is in a context and must assume an anticipatory stance translates into the deployment of either a specific strategy or a decision that the choices initially available will not materially affect future choices and, therefore, need not be manipulated. In most instances, one might greet an acquaintance in a variety of ways without affecting the outcome. Or in writing an academic essay, the decision to introduce a citation with 'According to Expert X' rather than 'Expert X claims that' may be equally unimportant. The primary rhetorical need is met by either option--or one of the many others not mentioned--but this rhetorical leeway is not equivalent to an argument that a choice does not have to be made. In other words, it is rhetorically significant that I introduce testimony--or more broadly, appeal to some authority--but the means may have only a marginal effect. The limits on an initial choice are complex--more complex than my illustrations could indicate--and cannot be simplified through a single algorithm. Pragmatic stylistics does, however, agitate for more than
Davidson’s emphasis on the recognition of choice, especially since prior theories (like all lines of thought) are only meaningful to the degree that they shape the utterances thereby produced.

Once the initial stance has been assumed/enacted, the choices available radically shift. The interaction between writer and reader assures that future options will be less predictable because the variables one must weigh now include both another rhetorical being and the discursive and material forces at work on all utterances. Passing theories are Davidson’s means for describing the change that occurs once prior theories have been manifested—once interlocutors’ forestructures have been initially engaged: “[m]ore important than the prior theory, the passing theory constitutes the hermeneutic strategy that we actually employ when we communicate” (Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 86). For Davidson and Kent, the prior theory is a guess made abstractly as it were, before communicative engagement has actually proceeded, whereas the passing theory is a guess made during such engagement. This distinction may be significant as far as it points to the difference most language users would perceive between expectation/assumption and ‘reality.’ At the same time, passing theories are no different stylistically from prior theories in their having to be enacted through strategies of one kind or another. Both theories rely on discursive enactment to take some definable shape. I could not identify a prior or passing theory as such if that enactment were not an integral part of the theory’s presence. No theory of discourse exists in separation from its various textual manifestations, and these paralogic theories are no exception despite the prestige or special importance one might attribute to them. The abstractness of the theories’ formulation in Davidson, and Kent after him, again works against the very real value these writers’ ideas have for language users. When reformulated according to stylistic principles, however, they assume a form true to their originary framework while also accomplishing the pragmatic work writers/readers need to manage when communicating.

Externalism and paralogy are no less significant than my pragmatic stylistics because of the abstractness to which I continually point. The challenge facing those theories and my own is to
move through language in order to describe language use. This conundrum is not created by the human drive to theorize or generalize in a given field of inquiry. The desire to define or create truth, what philosopher José Ortega y Gasset called human beings’ “ontological privilege,” need not be diametrically opposed to pragmatic application or any other practice, rather it should be taken for what it actually is (as quoted in Palmer, *Hermeneutics* 116): one of many possible narratives or ‘themes’ through which meaning, understanding, and human consciousness come into being and enter the world. My pragmatic inquiry in this dissertation is necessarily influenced by my own forestructure, the prior theory under which I began my endeavor, and the passing theories I construct as my committee and others respond to my words in their distinctive ways. The same discursive forces are at play in Kent’s and Davidson’s texts, and the agendas involved should not be taken as a sign of weakness. The final goal of any rhetorical inquiry should be some understanding of rhetoric’s role in human beings’ discursive lives. Understanding is not a discrete object that one suddenly comes to possess or to have available when communicating. My understanding of discourse, as it is influenced by forestructures and prior/passing theories for example, is necessarily different from my readers’ or colleagues’, and the effectiveness of this project depends on engaging others’ understandings, not somehow making those others understand rhetoric exactly as I do. Robustly framed prior and passing theories help me and all other writers to gain audience adherence by providing the opportunity to act in a world that is not solely dependent on what I do or do not believe. Such theories, particularly when expressed as rhetorical strategies, are the very means by which understanding meets understanding and consciousness, consciousness.

Because prior and passing theories are extensions of an individual’s forestructure, they are both reflective of the Self’s situatedness and responsive to the situatedness of the Other(s) with whom every interlocutor works. The theories are neither static nor ‘single-minded’ as a result of this dual function, and it is precisely their formulation as multifunctional, multivalent schema that
makes them useful to pragmatic stylistics and to writers who have some desire to broaden their rhetorical awareness. I could no more formulate for you my own forestructure or the prior theory I held before beginning this project than I could describe or quantify anything else that passes through my mind at a given moment. What I can do as I write, indeed what I am obligated to do, is to provide readers some access to the way(s) in which I use words. It is through my words, and whatever identification those words produce, that readers (re)make the meaning I express here. Meaning-making is not akin to taking a snapshot of an individual writer’s or reader’s mind, but it does provide the opportunity for all communicants to enact some thing in the world they share. That thing may be an action—in the strictest sense of that word—or it may be some means for accessing the world in different ways, ways that may (not) lead to physical action but that affect the actions utterances themselves embody and through which human beings most often and most effectively assume authority. Writing students and others who are first exposed to my pragmatic stylistics do not magically become ‘stylistic thinkers’ during a semester’s study; they tend to think of writing in ways that compete with the vision I share here, and they tend to want less messy, more discrete means for effecting their will in the world. The rhetorical awareness for which I agitate and in which I believe does not (thankfully) work this way, but it is entirely understandable that as human beings, writers and readers should want it to. The possibility for introducing prior/passing theories or other paralogic principles will not change the human desire for compartmentalization or reification, but paralogy does represent the first step in increasing student-writers’ and others’ awareness and acceptance that discourse is not controlled or ruled by reason or human will alone.

Which point brings me to the remaining aspect of prior/passing theories requiring some stylistic consideration: their hermeneutic character and what Nietzsche as a rhetorician and stylist reveals about the rhetorical significance of hermeneutics. Kent only cursorily investigates Nietzsche’s theories of knowledge, truth, and meaning, but the basic principles he carries over are
surprisingly instrumental to the success of paralogy and other externalist theories. Nietzsche assumes that the correspondence theory of truth and other foundationalist treatments of discourse are the primary challenge to understanding human communication. For him foundationalism always overlooks or marginalizes the importance of discourse in making knowledge meaningful, and consequently, “people have trusted their concepts generally, as if they had a wonderful dowry from some kind of wonderland” (The Will to Power 328; emphasis in original). This reservoir of ideas is taken by foundationalists to exist outside discourse, and not surprisingly, the utterances expressing those ideas are seen as distortions of what would otherwise be perfect and perfectly sufficient. In particular, he attacks philosophers for “allow[ing] themselves to be presented with concepts already conceived” and concludes they cannot “merely purify and polish up those concepts” (328). The notion that rhetoric and thinking itself work at their very best only to “polish up” human ideas resonates especially well in the context of a pragmatic stylistics since stereotypes of rhetoric, and most often style, usually reduce rhetorical practices to their most superficial character. What Davidson and Kent would frame as the prior/passing theories that make meaning possible are taken by Nietzsche’s “philosophers” as a nicety that one could quite easily do without.

The effectiveness of Nietzsche’s argument comes not in his merely attacking the foundationalism he took to be so destructive. Like any good rhetorician, Nietzsche works against the argument from within, creating a narrative that empowers rhetoric and its practitioners by leveraging foundationalism’s own terms and assumptions. Rather than truth’s being an object that might be polished but never created or reworked through rhetoric, he argues that discourse makes truth, knowledge, and meaning possible through its “mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation” (Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying” 250). Nietzsche works toward a constructivist theory of
discourse by relying on stylistics. His theory is a “mobile army” of stylistic strategies that produces what is eventually taken as “a sum of human relations.” That is, the stylistic strategies that create knowledge/meaning are not simply words but rather human relations embodied in language and directed toward a particular end. With one poetic phrase, Nietzsche develops an equivalence between rhetorical strategies, human relations, and knowledge that echoes the best of Isocrates, Burke, and other pragmatists. If mobilized strategies are a sum of human relations, then it takes little effort to see how those strategies might be a source as well as a reflection of human interactions; that is, a means for generating relations through adherence or consubstantiation.

Moreover, the relations being created/reflected through rhetoric are not only (or merely) “adorned” as traditional approaches to style would have it. Nietzsche significantly suggests that concepts are simultaneously or equally “heightened, transferred, and adorned” (emphasis mine). Heightening might take on an aesthetic or poetic character here, and it certainly should, but it should also be assumed to emphasize or draw out the meaning that all effective discourse makes. Beyond the actual sharing of information or ideas, transference, of course, is the literal equivalent of metaphor, suggesting that more than conceptual commerce occurs when humans interact discursively. And adornment need not be minimized or taken as a reason for denigration since form-content-function are inseparable; that is, Nietzsche rightly suggests that heightening and transference cannot occur separately from adornment. The three functions work together to make concepts appear “solid” and/or “binding.” I do not wish to push Nietzsche too far beyond the context in which he operated, but the challenges he confronts through his own work, and the challenges he presents to contemporary writers, are stylistically and theoretically compatible with pragmatic stylistics. In addition, the idea that rhetorical strategies—as a reflection of human relations or the stances assumed by humans in relation to one another—supports Kent’s paralogic application of prior/passing theories in ways that Kent himself seemingly takes little notice of.
While *Paralogic Rhetoric* presents Nietzsche's ideas as a justification for paralogy's assumption that knowledge is made, not found, prior/passing theories are more specifically implicated by the German philosopher's reference to mobile armies and rhetorical/poetic heightening. If prior and passing theories represent the interpretive guesses that interlocutors make before and during a communicative exchange, then surely the processes that Nietzsche describes represent particular, and quite common, illustrations of hermeneutic guesswork. How is it that guesswork actually plays itself out in communication? What does discourse that exhibits guesswork look like from a rhetorical perspective? These questions are redirected if not fully answered by Nietzsche's references to metaphor, metonymy, and anthropomorphism, all of which occur frequently within everyday discourse. More tellingly, such strategies especially apply to the foundationalist treatment of language and truth. It is not uncommon, for example, for truth to be (1) taken as an object that one finds (metaphor); (2) granted personal agency or other human characteristics (anthropomorphism), as in the statement 'The truth will set you free'; or (3) conflated with either its sources or outcomes (metonymy), as when one says, 'I know X,' as a substitute for 'I know the truth about X.' These strategies represent exactly the sort of discursive work that creates/reflects an interlocutor's stance in the world. In Nietzsche's hands, every one of these strategies becomes an example of the prior/passing theories that a foundationalist worldview (forestructure) might generate.

None of this commentary matters to a discussion of Nietzsche the man or the thinker, at least as far as it might reveal something about what he 'really thought' or 'really meant.' But it is precisely because his words work so effectively that they represent the best kind of rhetoric: discourse that embodies the constructivist worldview he privileged even when their primary or explicit purpose might push a reader in another (though compatible) direction. I interpret Nietzsche's words in particular ways, apply particular passing theories to them, but in doing so, I do more than reflect my own worldview. Through those words I engage Nietzsche and discover
our mutual coming toward meaning. Certainly, I talk past Nietzsche, and he past me, but Kent's paralogic prior/passing theories depend on such cross-talk. Words are never quite what they seem; interlocutors are "always already reconciled" with the imperfect outcomes of communication (Kent, Paralogic Rhetoric 170). Finally, then, it also is in this meeting of Nietzsche, Kent, and myself that the split rhetorical theories that privilege speech and those that privilege writing might come into focus. Paralogy's foundations appear to be built on the Davidsonian assumption that speech is anterior to writing. Nietzsche's formulation of rhetoric, and my own emphasis on discursive patterns and patterning, work through the speech-writing gap by using paralogic assumptions to emphasize other aspects of discourse. That is, rather than focus on the in-the-moment guesswork that only applies poorly to writing, especially for writers, one might as easily work toward hermeneutic guesswork by investigating its tangible manifestations--the patterns of language that reflect writers' guesses. Not only is one thereby prevented from overly generalizing about rhetorical enactments that do not lend themselves to codification, but one also accounts for the concerns that Dobrin and others raise about the power structures that result from patterns of language and of language use.

Whether one takes power relations to be extra-rhetorical--that is, working on language contextually--or entirely rhetorical, the methods here described apply as equally to speech as to writing because the patterns themselves are not distinctively spoken or written. The kinds of repetition used in speech might differ from the kinds used in writing, but those differences are a question of context, of what a given exchange requires, including the medium (speech or writing) being utilized. The conventional uses that, according to Nietzsche, produce "truths" are really the same conventions that Dobrin posits as producing power structures, and that confluence, more than any distinction between speech and writing, makes sound rhetorical and pedagogical sense. Because student-writers typically have more experience with the spoken word--all native language users are speakers before they are writers--formulating power relations and prior/passing theories
in terms of patterns that recur in both speech and writing gives student-writers and writing teachers an advantage. Pedagogies that emphasize patterns to create a dialogue about writerly agency need make no apologies or generate rules that can only produce countless exceptions. The materials (student-)writers have at their disposal are not distinctly the province of speech or writing, rather those materials are generated and applied in particular ways over time to create the illusion (the truth) of some gap, some privileging of one medium over the other. That such privileging is a function of kairos and/or convention should encourage everyone who writes or speaks to reassess his rhetorical options. I do not write as I do here because I speak this way--no reasonable reader would ever assume so. I write as I do because the effectiveness of my utterances depends as much on expectations--how does or should a dissertation read?--as anything else. Beyond awareness, however, I have every opportunity to exploit the advantages and minimize the disadvantages inherent in those expectations/conventions. My own passing theories manifest themselves through my choice-making/stance-taking, and where I can, I may even break the 'rules.' Long sentences are not inherently weightier than short sentences, for instance, and I may not need to use them in every instance to prove that I have followed the conventions under which dissertations should operate. Even so, given the material before me and the audience to whom I speak, it would be foolish and ineffective to believe that five-word sentences are sufficient to full and effective communication. Whether prior or passing, theories are only as good as the words that embody them.

Some Additional Words on Why Style Matters

With the rhetorical foundation laid and the stylistic column erected, the remaining pages of this chapter move beyond the particularities of paralogic rhetoric and externalism. These theories, and those explored in previous chapters, are significant in their encouragement of skepticism about and further inquiry into rhetoric and discourse, but one should not overlook the concomitant opportunities those ideas provide for considering stylistics' effects on real writers and actual
writing, particularly within contemporary writing pedagogies. The currents I trace in this investigation are not the only currents to which one might point. There are more than enough approaches to rhetoric and style, argumentation, and composition to satisfy anyone who might care about those endeavors. The most telling benefits for me come in the dynamism these particular authors and ideas lend to my arguments. This book is for writers and readers as much as for scholars and teachers, and in that respect at least, one need not look far for inspiration or relevant material. The writers explored herein, for example, are themselves master rhetors. From the classical period, perhaps only Plato is missing to complete the pentad of classical rhetorical virtuosos. The moderns explored in chapter 3 are not read specifically for their style or writerly finesse. But I believe each of them has in her own way done much to establish a positive attitude toward the kind of writing that can and should be done. Burke may not always be especially clear in developing his arguments, but he certainly achieves the writer-reader identification that he valued so highly. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are scholastics in the best sense of that word. The very weight of *The New Rhetoric* (both physically and substantively) brings a certain reassurance, a certain admiration. And Fahnestock, with her conversational tone, pragmatic goals and commonsensical approach to rhetoric and science, leaves little doubt about what readerly writing (or writerly reading) should be.

I raise these broader writerly issues here because they argue as eloquently as I ever could that pragmatic stylistics is a *living* theory. It is open to revision, reassessment, and further recuperation. My retrofitting metaphor ensures this openness and makes such revisions possible. I operate under the (perhaps unfashionable) assumption that the thinking, feeling human beings who are my readers find the intellectual pleasure of watching ideas develop every bit as important as the ideas themselves. Mine is also a *working* theory in that it not only informs this project's goals but also accomplishes tangible work in the classroom and the world. Beyond everything else that might result from pragmatic stylistics, having an operational impact on how writing gets theorized
and taught is perhaps the most dear to me. Saying, in this case, is indeed doing. My overtly humanist attitude on this front is intimately related to two points raised by Sol Saporta in “The Application of Linguistics to the Study of Poetic Language.” The first is too easily forgotten in a world of professional forward movement and general busyness. Speaking of the outcomes of the intellectual work in which scholars and teachers engage, Saporta reminds the reader of his felt sense of things and its importance to even the most objective of intellectual endeavors. In testing hypotheses or ideas against the world, he suggests that

[t]he results must in some way coincide with our intuitions about the nature of the phenomena, or we are obliged to doubt their validity. When our analysis does not coincide with our intuitions, usually we find it necessary to modify our analysis; only rarely do we find it necessary to modify our intuitions. (82)

One’s felt sense about the unfolding of discourse over time is crucial to better understanding motivated language. Certainly, successful theorizing within rhetoric-composition or any other discipline requires some intellectual distance and commitment. An informed intuition about style and discourse--what Richard Lanham has often called the “trained intuition,” what Aristotle might have called phronesis--cannot be substituted for these requirements, but neither are those requirements a substitute for intellectuals’ humanity. Much of the pleasure that human beings take in telling stories or sharing ideas springs from the telling or sharing itself.

Moreover, as most people can attest, one tends to enjoy more what one does well. With discourse in particular, the pleasure of communication is intimately tied to performance, to the sense of readerly or writerly satisfaction that cannot be duplicated. This aesthetic imperative drives my explorations because, as Saporta continues, “[t]he fact that language can be ‘manipulated’ to serve an aesthetic purpose depends on the communicative function of language which is part of its definition” (82). The communicative and aesthetic aspects of language do not operate independently, and I further argue that Saporta’s unilateral dependency be expanded: the communicative aspect of discourse depends as much on the aesthetic as the other way around.
Effective communication is not always ‘artfully’ pleasurable, but communicative efficiency does depend on a felt sense of accomplishment and discovery. In other words, the practices enacted in these pages, and those enacted by other language users everywhere, may be messy, tentative and even disagreeable at moments, but those practices cannot simply dispense with rhetoric’s human(e) facets because some theorists would prefer it that way.

For this reason in particular, I do not mean for my argument to play a zero-sum game with rhetoric. This dissertation is not about ‘winning’ the theoretical or pedagogical debates within rhetoric-composition. My work is instead motivated by the fundamental recognition that even winning such debates is a losing proposition. Gaining dominance in the classroom, or gaining dominance in the theoretical arena, carries a human price. Dominance blinds teachers, scholars, and students to the loss of wonder, integrity, and imaginative freedom that writing will inevitably suffer if the field continues to get caught up in tangential debates. It is true that humanists must walk a finely balanced line between theoretical soundness and pedagogical effectiveness that those in the hard sciences, for example, rarely need to confront. The sciences are supposed by most people to be--by their very nature, though perhaps paradoxically--simultaneously theoretical and practical. For the humanities, however, theoretical integrity often leads to charges of impracticality, and more specifically, rhetoric-composition’s practical work often serves to reinforce negative stereotypes. Rhetoric-composition has traditionally been the discipline that oversees so-called ‘service courses’ in writing and that finds itself disparaged for being largely composed of adjuncts and teaching assistants. (How important can such work be?) To believe in a rhetoric that is powerful enough to silence critics is to take the most crucial step facing the discipline in the coming century. What I consequently offer is my own belief in, and an opportunity for, a reconsideration of fundamentals and the consequent chance for coming to terms with the discipline’s dynamic object of study and legitimate identity.
Although writing teachers and scholars of rhetoric often overlook it, rhetoric's power to shape ideas and people implies that it is every bit as much a formative activity as a generative one. That is, rhetoric may be more about tailoring discourse to the contingent needs of here and now than has been argued recently. If rhetoric is formative, it would certainly behoove one to consider its relationship to its materials (people and ideas) as well as to the disciplines that are generally considered responsible for generating knowledge about them—and here one would have to include everything from the hard sciences to anthropology and art history. Redefining and clarifying rhetoric's role need not condemn it to second-tier status as an applied discipline, not theoretical enough or equipped with insufficient gravitas to cut it in a postmodern, post-structuralist world. There is nothing simple, let alone simplistic, in the work rhetoric-composition does, something a quick look at Joe on the street or Jane in the convenience store can tangibly testify to and something any philosophical analysis of 'truth' or 'reality' reinforces. No, rhetoric is not a Platonic "knack," and the complexity of its materials--never mind the complex process it must undertake with them--is surely its greatest strength. The art is successful in various situations, often under competing demands, precisely because it is such a rich and complex subject. More than a highly refined set of skills is at work in writing classrooms or symposia and conferences on rhetoric-composition. There is every community of voices one might imagine in every situation likely to be seen or understood. There is the tradition of academia and culture and society. There is a corresponding potential in every student-writer from whatever town or city, whatever family or country. Through and with rhetoric, this mass of often competing forces is made to work together in the assumption of unique voices and the voicing of real concerns. Without rhetoric, the right to speak and to be heard would not exist, for when well deployed, rhetoric has the potential to bring people together more tangibly and in more life-changing ways than anything else thinkers and writers have ever done or ever will do.
While I admit to a desire to reconsider--to recuperate in its etymological sense of 'covering again'--rhetoric for human(e) as well as intellectual reasons, it should be obvious that this project has not been motivated by expressivism, what some might call the 'touchy-feely' approach to writing. My dissertation derives whatever usefulness and success it has from a conscientious balance between a sense of wonder about writing and a confrontation with ideas in the most direct and intellectually rigorous manner possible. Whatever my specific subject matter, I argue primarily for the ways in which scholars, teachers and writers, including student-writers, can more easily remake stylistic rhetoric for the world in which they currently live. It is an ambitious project to be sure, but the energy for accomplishing it comes from the opportunities such a remaking necessarily uncovers. Even so, I recognize that to say one is remaking rhetoric is itself rhetorical. Rhetoric has always relied on the rhetor's ability to adapt to whatever contexts she may inhabit. Whether approached as an art or a discipline, the best incarnations of rhetoric have emphasized contingencies, the ability rhetoric confers on writers to take on the shape and attitude of the situation in which they currently reside. This belief, not revolution for its own sake or some necessary need for change, is why the most influential rhetoricians have been those who did more than catalog figures or summarize the work of predecessors. When one considers Isocrates or Cicero or Quintilian, one finds each man bringing his own times and concerns to bear on his rhetorical project. Isocrates was deeply troubled by his contemporaries and what he saw as their profoundly flawed formulation of rhetoric and pedagogy. Cicero was most concerned with rhetoric as it enhances and encourages the good and the noble in education and in life. And Quintilian sought to recapture what he believed to be the Golden Age of classical liberal arts education, all the while painfully aware of his own time's upheaval and decline. This is not to say that these three authors (and the others I examine) depended on their predecessors to point the way. Quintilian's *Training* rests squarely on top of Cicero's vast body of work, and Cicero in his turn drew heavily on Isocrates. Indeed, I am painfully aware of the tradition that precedes me: from the pre-Socratics
to Burke, the sophists to Hugh Blair, legions of thinkers and rhetoricians serve as a constant reminder of what rhetoric can and should be.

The constant reminders that these other writers represent makes my explorations here as humbling as they are rewarding. Like most rhetoricians, I want to encourage a continuing interest in rhetoric, and stylistics in particular, by contributing my own experiences of and thoughts on what can be done to prevent the loss of 2,500 years of tradition while still maintaining that which makes rhetoric so vibrant and alive; that is, while still managing to examine the present and its many possibilities and concerns. The difficulty is heightened today, however, by rhetoric’s being pulled in so many competing directions. It would not be hyperbole to say it has been brought to bear on or has penetrated everything from the sciences and the Internet to the arts and television. But the competing demands it is expected to meet are precisely why—now more than ever perhaps—rhetorical studies must be made strong. It is a plastic art, this thing called rhetoric, and with most of my colleagues, I fully believe it is capable of meeting the challenges of the coming century. But rhetoric itself is not the challenge. What worries me more than anything else is that the scholars and teachers and critics who practice rhetorical criticisms and pedagogies are flagging. That the field of rhetoric-composition should be entering the twenty-first century with no distinct disciplinary purpose should frighten everyone, and I pursue this work as a means of determining exactly what I can do to spur debate about what really matters—most especially those many real people facing very real challenges with their words and actions. For Milton, blindly facing his Puritan God, it may have been true that “they also serve who only stand and wait,” but writers, scholars and teachers of composition have no such luxury. The times will pass them by, and with those times will go everything that might have been done today. Everyone owes it to the traditions and beliefs he claims to ‘represent,’ to himself and countless colleagues, and to students in writing classrooms across the United States—indeed, students most of all—to pursue rhetoric as far as possible in all its various directions, for whatever compelling reasons one might find or formulate.
The widespread argument, or rather hope, that cultural criticism or some other field of inquiry will save rhetoric-composition from itself cannot hold. Rhetoric of this sort--notwithstanding the pun--forestalls the historical trajectory that has always led rhetoricians back to rhetoric itself.

 Scholars and teachers of writing, and through them writers of all sorts, must accept that rhetoric is not like other methodologies and, therefore, cannot rely on an outside arbiter to determine its fate. Rhetorical practice does not center on knowledge-making, rather its strength lies in meaning-making, in new ways of looking at knowledge created and/or managed elsewhere. One might imagine the situation analogically, as the philosopher John Searle and others have:

There is no fact of the matter except relative to a conceptual scheme, and therefore there is no real world except relative to a conceptual scheme. [. . .]

There are many such examples in daily life. I weigh 160 in pounds and 72 in kilograms. So what do I weigh really? The answer is, both 160 and 72 are true depending on which system of measurement we are using. There is really no problem or inconsistency whatever. (23)

The object (Searle's physical body) does not changed according to the system used to describe it, but the method for applying one's past knowledge and experience most certainly does. The underlying knowledge persists. The object does not disappear. It has a specific mass, density, volume, and so on. Regardless of which system of measurement one chooses, those qualities do not change relative to the object itself. More significantly, whatever knowledge is generated about Searle's weight and however it is consequently managed do not affect the rhetoricality of the illustration Searle provides. In this case, rhetorical analysis reveals that even the commonest acts of information exchange rely on a person's ability to make meaning from knowledge and, more importantly, to make meaning from knowledge in situ. The privileging of pounds or kilograms has as much to do with who one thinks the audience will be and what one is trying to communicate as it does with cultural, social, or other expectations. American scientists, for example, use the metric system in their research and their writing but still typically rely on the standard system when buying milk or bread. The principles on which the third canon rests make this sort of negotiation
possible. Knowledge per se is inactive without some means of conceptualizing and, consequently, applying it to ideas, people and the world. Rhetoric makes meaning possible, and because it does so, it must be taken as a situational art. That is, it must not be argued to create or manage knowledge but rather seen as allowing for whatever specific and particular contingency a language user might face--the what's, where's, when's, how's, and most importantly, the why's.

Assuming that Searle's point and my resulting observations are accurate, one question remains: can stylistic rhetoric be as generative and ubiquitous as I claim without creating new knowledge? Can it be considered (and theorized as if it were) a generative process when its goals are other than the making or management of knowledge? And more broadly, can rhetoric-composition really sustain itself in this process, even if rhetoric has the functions I attach to it in this dissertation? It is here one must make a fine but necessary distinction between rhetoric as study and rhetoric as enactment. One large obstacle facing modern rhetorical study is the filtering influence of Biblical hermeneutics and medieval exegesis. That is, between Gorgias and Kenneth Burke stands a conceptual wall separating the one's concern for writerly practices from the other's concern for readerly formulations. This separation represents in part the influence that literary criticism has had on English studies from the late nineteenth century onward, but it also comes from farther afield than literature. There is a postmodern obsession with the reader, the interpreter, the critic herself that tends to dominate investigations of rhetoric and discourse. (The flood of confessional literature and criticism that has appeared in the last decade is part and parcel of this phenomenon.) One finds Burke focusing on audience participation, the interlocutor's investment in a discourse, whereas as late as the mutualist tradition of the middle ages, the focus is on the power rhetors have over their audiences. At its most basic, this difference lies in asking, 'what?' rather than 'how?' or 'why?'. As a consequence of this shift in rhetorical worldview, overcoming the displacement of rhetor by audience is much more important than one might think, especially in an
era when cultural criticism and liberatory pedagogies continue to concern themselves with how interlocutors are acted upon as often as with how they might act.

If writers, especially student-writers, are taken to be victims who must somehow overcome oppression rather than actors who face rhetorical and material instantiations of power, then the balance between study and enactment has been destroyed. Nowhere is that situation more painfully obvious than in the writing classroom. Students typically come into their first-year writing courses, for example, with a wide variety of experiences in both generating and interpreting discourse. However, their world is (whether by a small or large margin) dominated by discourse reception, the taking in of language rather than its creation. The modern school system is responsible for much of this: students are asked for thirteen, seventeen or more years to passively receive, to puzzle through and to make sense of the various discourses that they encounter. The sources of these discourses range from television and film to textbook and magazine, but reception is squarely at the forefront of their textual experience. Another strong influence on contemporary orientations toward reception derives from language itself, which requires the infant/child to learn through exposure to the language use of others; as active consumers of language, children learn to become producers of discourse. Their ability to communicate meaningfully is mediated by their ability to consume discourse first. While a focus on discourse reception might then seem natural, such facts do not obviate the need to empower writers through rhetoric, not in spite of it. Anyone who cares about writing and about student-writers ought to consider how one might bridge this gap and to suggest ways interlocutors' prior knowledge can be leveraged into current practices that are generative and organizational. Rather than assuming students know nothing about academic discourse, for example, one might instead focus on what they already know about other categories of discourse and how what they know is, stylistically speaking, enough to empower them as public voices and presences. The currents and ideas I trace in these pages still require other writers'
commitments to apply them in the world. Having finessed the outlines and functions of elocutio, it yet remains to see them enacted, both individually and collectively, in each human life.

Notes

1 It would be misguided to suggest that interlocutors never talk past one another, both intentionally and unknowingly. Even so, if that miscommunication is intentional, then it must involve some awareness—and, therefore, some ‘sharing’—of attitudes and motivations. If it occurs unbeknownst to interlocutors, discourse has not broken down as much as been maladapted to its context. Because that maladaptation does not occur acontextually, the context at least must be shared, and as a consequence, the possibility for effective communication deriving from that common situation still exists.

2 In his JAC interview with Kent, Davidson indicates that triangulation is partly metaphorical, but not wholly. The basic idea is that our concept of objectivity—our idea that our thoughts may or may not correspond to the truth—is an idea that we would not have if it weren’t for interpersonal relations. In other words, the source of objectivity is intersubjectivity: the triangle consists of two people and the world. (15-16)

In this regard, it is of some interest that Davidson received formal training in physics before taking up philosophy. The more technical use of triangulation to mean the determination of a radio or other signal’s source relies on an empirical teleology that does not translate well into the rhetorical moment—at least if kairos and other factors are to matter at all. That said, the term works well enough when used to describe the negotiations that occur as interlocutors assume stances vis-a-vis one another and the material and conceptual work they share. Communicative triangulation thereby becomes a means for indexing how meaning gets made (phronesis) rather than where knowledge resides (episteme). In other words, the interlocutors’ application of knowledge in the moment of interaction may be described without resorting to first principles.

3 The greatest difficulty facing scholars and writers who wish to make use of paralogic rhetoric, or of Davidson’s underlying theories, is its abstractness. The concepts addressed in this chapter are so abstract that it is only through pragmatic stylistics or some other phonoetic theory that they have any application to actual writers/readers. While there is, of course, nothing wrong with theorizing for its own sake, theories that purport to account for the means by which interlocutors communicate have some obligation to recognize the danger of bleeding their conclusions contextually dry.

Paralogic rhetoric argues, for example, that communication cannot be codified, though it can be described. The description Kent provides, however, is nearly as abstract and ‘unrealistic’ as any codification. I do not accuse him or Davidson of term-switching or otherwise pretending to do something they are not, but I am deeply concerned that the value of their theories not be lost for want of relevance to the work of actual writers facing very real dilemmas.

4 Rhetoric’s two-fold function applies not only to the sort of communication that occurs between interlocutors but also to less ‘equal’ interactions. Children learn to speak by being exposed to others’ words; that is, they themselves could not learn to speak without first abstracting patterns and contextual cues from the words they encounter. Likewise, writers in large part come to a writerly voice or style by being exposed to other writers’ work. That is, it is writers’ roles as readers that partially determine the character of their own writing.

5 Beyond sociocultural expectations and political relationships, the classical canon actio comes to mind here. Because written literacy has so long dominated human communicative interaction, one easily forgets that typographical, grammatical, and other conventions as well as the
physical materials on which texts are inscribed are every bit as important to the delivery of writing as gesture, posture, and tone of voice are in the delivery of speech. The advent of the Internet has ensured that the fifth canon will again play a large role since that electronic network and related technologies depend so heavily on the visual character of textual enactment.

6 Freire took a surprisingly stylistic view of educational practices, arguing in his introduction to the banking concept that traditional educational methods are more accurately taken as thoroughly damaging rhetorical constructions:

[a] careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified. Education is suffering from narration sickness. (52; emphasis in original)

He concludes that this narrative violence wrongly emphasizes “the sonority of words, not their transforming power” (52). The reader will note that Freire’s own narrative reveals the role of storytelling in education, whereby the teacher-narrator controls the disclosure of knowledge. Students are left to play the role of a passive audience, institutionally incapable of affecting the plot or outcome of their own experiences. In this light, my own pedagogical suggestions in chapter 4 as well as Dobrin’s argument for a robust triangulation serve as counter-narratives of the sort Freire supported. Furthermore, this countering is easily accomplished without marginalizing stylistic rhetoric or discourse for the sake of power relations or other more tenuously controlled forces/institutions. Rhetoric itself can and should be transformative.

7 In explaining whether, or to what degree, passing theories must match for interlocutors to effectively communicate, Davidson relies on two instances of oral communication:

I sometimes carry on conversations with people who are speaking French while I speak English. When I read [that is, present] papers in Europe, I’m constantly asked questions in German, French, and Spanish, and I answer them in English. They understand me, and I understand them. (“Language Philosophy” 18)

At another point, in providing examples of when prior/passing theories might break down, he refers to slips of the tongue (16). While these instances are far from definitive, they do suggest that Davidson tends to think in terms of speech and the spoken word.

8 I do not mean to suggest that Jefferson’s biographical particulars should control rhetorical analysis, but the speculation this information might engender about why he or any writer might do X rather than Y is healthy and promotes rhetorical awareness. Of course, I would still distinguish between asking why a writer might do X in a particular situation and asking why she did do X in that situation. This distinction avoids assuming authorial intentionality while encouraging reflection on the range of choices writers constantly face.

9 I direct the interested reader to Kent’s discussion of Nietzsche (Paralogic Rhetoric 7-10) as a point of comparison with my own treatment here. While I attempt to remain true to the spirit of Kent’s paralogic treatment, I believe the possible divergences are as telling as the similarities.
APPENDIX:
TOWARD A STYLISTIC CURRICULUM

Included here are writing assignments that should both clarify my project and provide tangible assistance to those who wish to pursue stylistics into their own classrooms. I encourage readers to make of these texts what they will--ruminate over, build on, model them as necessary. I have rewritten each prompt multiple times throughout my career as my own thoughts on stylistics and writing pedagogy have changed, and because no two classrooms are identical, I have modified more than a few according to the needs of particular (groups of) students. Moreover, while each teacher might choose different readings and numbers of writing assignments, the materials here are not necessarily bound to the particular texts or authors they interrogate. Similar questions may be asked about any text one wishes to investigate, and there is no particular number of assignments that makes or breaks the stylistic contract I establish with student-writers. As I tell them frequently during our term together, it is not time spent but time well spent and not words read or written but words understood that determine success in a stylistic classroom.

Each section provides details about the kinds of assignments included, how I use them and to what purpose. More broadly, I would only add that many of the prompts contain more than one question, or line of questioning, because the most useful assignments provide student-writers with opportunities to speculate about how words work. Properly framed, groups of questions can more effectively engage students in the daily work of the writing classroom. As a writing teacher, my job is not to proselytize but rather to convince, which means allowing student-writers some opportunity to take control of a writing assignment. Collaboration cannot occur in a classroom where only the instructor determines what questions are worth pursuing. And a pedagogy built on a dialogue that explores writerly authority, how rhetorical choices themselves produce the right to
engage with others in the public forum, requires substantial give-and-take between the instructor and student-writers. Indeed, I actively encourage students to generate their own questions on those occasions when mine are either troubling or (what they consider) too difficult. As long as they are speculating on rhetoric and the choices it provides writers and readers, they are doing precisely what they should be.

**In-class Journals**

I use journal assignments two or three times per week as time permits and need requires. Because I make these and all other prompts available on the World Wide Web, students have them before the appropriate day, though they are asked only to read through them in preparation for the ten or fifteen minutes they will spend writing at the beginning of class. While I emphasize quality over quantity, students typically manage one half to three quarters of a handwritten page. I collect their entries in sets of four or five and generally assign twenty over the course of a sixteen-week term. Although I comment and question in the margins of each entry, the sets are graded as a set, credit/no-credit.

The motivation for ‘sacrificing’ substantial class time in this way is two-fold. First, the prompts allow students to warm up in preparation for the discussion and debate that follows. I find they are usually more willing to speak up if they have an opportunity for formulating their thoughts on paper beforehand. As is sometimes the case for any reader, they do not always know exactly what they would say about a text until they begin writing. Second, the complex of questions I ask provides a focus for our work on a given day and, in the longer term, encourages students in the habit of thinking about texts stylistically. Modeling a rhetorical analysis during class discussion is not the only means for getting students to speculate about writerly choices, and these entries often provide a complementary, hands-on means for achieving that goal.
Entry One

On the first page of his book *Writing the Australian Crawl*, the poet William Stafford describes writing in the following way:

A writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them. That is, he does not draw on a reservoir; instead, he engages in an activity that brings to him a whole succession of unforeseen stories, poems, essays, plays, laws, philosophies, [and] religions [. . .]. (17)

For Stafford, writing seems to be about new perspectives, about coming to an understanding of something that he had not considered before sitting down to write. That is, Stafford apparently sees writing as a means of exploration and discovery rather than as a ‘simple’ act of recording thoughts or experiences.

Our main concern here, however, is what you think about writing. Do you agree with Stafford? What do you think writing does? How does it work? Is it the same for everyone, or does it do different things to and for different people? What about reading? How is it related to the statements Stafford makes? How is it related to what you yourself have said about writing?

*N.B.:* Be sure to provide a reason(s) for your answers whenever possible so both you and I can understand why you said what you did.

Entry Two

As you now know, having done the reading for today, Plato uses his “Allegory of the Cave” to comment on the ways in which people perceive themselves, the world, and one another.

Why might he have wanted to comment *in this way*? What does he gain by addressing this particular issue through allegory? How might exploring human (self-)perception in narrative form make it easier to talk about, easier to involve readers in? Why not just come
right out and say, ‘People often misperceive or fail to perceive what is right in front of their noses’?

And finally, having considered the advantages of allegory, what problems do you see in it? Are there particular things it is difficult for Plato to accomplish precisely because he has chosen to work this way? things he could have accomplished more effectively if he had not chosen to write an allegory?

N.B.: One might briefly define allegory as a narrative in which the characters and situations serve as symbols for various ideas/issues that concern the author.


Entry Three

In his “Questions for Critical Reading,” Jacobus asks, “Who is the audience for Wollstonecraft’s writing? Is she writing more for men than for women? Is it clear from what she says that she addresses an explicit audience with specific qualities?” (A World of Ideas 792).

Going beyond Jacobus’ concern for the gender of Wollstonecraft’s audience, I would like you to consider why such questions matter in the first place. Why does it matter whether Wollstonecraft has men or women more fully in mind? Why might her subject matter and purpose dictate the audience to whom she writes, effectively leaving her little choice in the matter? What is it about her text that readers in the year 2001 can point to when thinking about how a writer matches her text with an audience? That is, in what ways is Wollstonecraft a model for strategies that effectively (or in some instances, ineffectively) match words to the world?

[Wollstonecraft, Mary. “Pernicious Effects Which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Establish in Society.” Jacobus 779-94.]
Entry Four

Now that the process of preparing Paper One is over, I would like you to comment on two areas of that endeavor:

• What things caused you trouble during your work on this paper? Were there things you struggled with? Why do you think they were problematic for you? Did you find ways to get around them? If so, how? If not, explain.

• What things went well for you during your work? Why do you think they were so easy to manage? Did you change the way you approached this paper as you progressed? If so, how did that change help? If not, explain.

Entry Five

What surprises you about Simone Weil's essay? Is there anything she does with her words that you did not expect when picking up something called an autobiography? And what is a "spiritual autobiography," anyway? Does Weil's rhetoric reveal anything about what genre her text belongs to? That is, just as certain strategies and patterns tell us whether a text is a letter or a recipe, is there anything about Weil's strategies or patterns that tell us what a "spiritual autobiography" might be?

Regardless of the focus you assume, keep in mind that the term genre usually refers to the global features of a text, including context, apparent purpose, overall tone, distinctive structural features and dominant organizational patterns (or governing principles). In other words, to determine the text's genre, you should investigate these broader terms rather than focus on individual instances in the text.


Take-home Responses

I typically assign response papers weekly and ask students to submit them at the beginning of class on Mondays. The prompts are available on the Web prior to that time, but I actively
address and solicit questions about the assignments on Fridays, just before leaving for the week. I ask students to word process or type their responses, with the goal of writing 250 to 500 words. Most are surprised at how much they have to say, and a good number end up writing more than the 'maximum.' The first few responses (three or four) are graded credit/no-credit, though I provide copious marginalia. The remainder are then graded on a letter scale according to how effectively each writer addresses the issue(s) at hand and whether he is pushing for more than the most obvious comments. I try to evaluate these assignments less rigorously than a formal essay, but my expectations are certainly higher than for an in-class journal.

Take-home responses provide one distinct advantage: time. Students are able to ponder a reading and their response to it over the weekend. While they become better equipped to respond extemporaneously as the semester progresses, like any writer, they tend to respond more effectively when they have time to worry over their analysis and own rhetorical choices. The extra space these assignments provide also allows students to develop an argument more fully than a journal would allow and to practice their own rhetorical stance-taking as they work to assume an authority that they do not always feel.

Response One

Since this is your first response, I would like you simply to continue what we have been doing in class over the past two weeks. That is, I would like you to reconsider Tocqueville's text with an eye toward any two rhetorical strategies we have yet to mention. (This rules out any we discussed in class on Friday as well as those Jacobus summarizes in his headnote.) You can choose any two patterns or uses of language as long as you answer the following questions for each:

• What exactly is the strategy you want to discuss? Is there a good example, a sentence or two, that illustrates this particular strategy? (If so, please cite it in your paper.)
• How does the strategy work? What is it accomplishing within the text? What might it help Tocqueville do and why?

• How does it affect us as readers? In what way(s) does it change the way we read and respond to the text? And again, why?

• What advantages and disadvantages might we associate with this strategy? What does it do better than other strategies might? What does it fail to do or simply ignore that another strategy might not?


Response Two

As I said in class, you should see this assignment as your opportunity to respond to any or all of the marginal comments I have made on your first essay. As always, I encourage you to question, explore, or otherwise engage with those comments as thoroughly as possible.

None of my responses were intended to be confrontational or attacks on you as a person, and I hope you will take the same attitude in responding to my comments. That is, I hope you will view your paper, my comments on that paper, and now, your response to those comments as a dialogue in which we share our thoughts on the process of writing Paper One. I am here to facilitate your progress, not to belittle you or ‘keep you down.’

N.B.: Be as specific as possible when citing marginal comments or portions of your paper. A short citation of one or two lines can do wonders for jogging my memory and ensure that I completely understand—and as a consequence, am able to take under consideration—your comments and concerns.
Response Three

Since this is the last formal response of the term, let us open things up to your individual interests and concerns.

Write an open letter to students enrolling in this course next semester. They will be much like you the first time you attended class. They will have many of the same ideas and/or opinions about language, and reading and writing. Because time and space are limited, however, you should focus on explaining the primary (read: largest single) benefit of this class as you see it.

Anything and everything that we have accomplished are open game. Other than your focus, the sole stipulation is this: you must use what Rodriguez says about or does with language in *Hunger of Memory* to illustrate your point. That is, no matter what you decide to share, you must use Rodriguez to show your audience what you mean and to indicate why that idea is worth understanding.

The goal of this project is two-fold, of course. One the one hand, it gives you an opportunity to sum up what has been gained and to use Rodriguez in illustrating its importance. On the other, it presents you with the challenge of explaining yourself to someone who has little or no conscious experience with rhetoric. Ideally, of course, you will be able to combine the two goals, to teach someone else by detailing what you yourself have learned.

Formal Essays

Essay assignments are posted on the Web one full week before the first rough draft is due. The drafts themselves—which are normally two or three in number—take up one week’s worth of class time, Monday through Friday, though I encourage everyone to e-mail additional drafts if they so desire. I do not require drafts to be ‘complete,’ since it is impossible to produce a miniature version of the final essay before one has written it—made choices, revised, rewritten, and spoken
with others. Consequently, the first drafts are typically 250 to 500 words in length; the second, 750 to 1,000; and the third (if any) 1,000 to 1,500. The final copy submitted for grading must be accompanied by copies of all previous drafts as well as the two or three peer reviews completed by others students in class or at home. I provide both marginalia and an endnote when evaluating these papers, and I actively work--here and elsewhere--to point out student-writers’ effective moments as well as their ineffective ones. They tend to respond much more positively when they see my attempts at encouragement as well as critique, and they often tell me that I am the only writing teacher who has ever pointed out what they do well in any detailed way. I find it hard to imagine that student-writers could improve their work if they are unaware of what they already do effectively.

Because these assignments are more detailed and because I provide a fair amount of time to draft and revise, I envision the formal essays as opportunities for student-writers to apply their rhetorical skills to particular scenarios. That is, I want them to have the opportunity to work through the very real choices all writers have to make when placed in a context that may be unlike anything they have encountered before. Rather than treat these essays as tests, I emphasize that everyone should see them as opportunities to hone rhetorical awareness and to show me and others what has been learned or accomplished since the last essay. Student-writers also have an opportunity to reflect on the process through the cover letter they must include with the final copy. This immediate self-generated feedback allows them to weigh what the experience of writing a paper has meant to them, at least in the short term, and to understand more fully what it means to be a thoughtful writer. Additionally, throughout the drafting and peer reviewing process, I spend some few minutes in class addressing areas of interest or concern that I have encountered in the drafts I have read as well as any questions or concerns individuals might have. This ongoing dialogue provides another form of feedback, and opportunity for reflection, that student-writers can
then model for one another and for themselves in their cover letters and (when appropriate) journal entries or response papers.

**Paper One**

An acquaintance of yours is organizing a writers’ workshop and has recently contacted you for help. She is assembling a booklet of supplemental readings to be given to workshop participants and would like you to contribute an essay on effective writing.

Because the attendees will include essayists, speechwriters, editorialists, and others who have a specific interest in writing and language use, she has asked you to focus on those rhetorical strategies you find most useful, analyzing their strengths and/or weaknesses and providing examples from Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” to illustrate your insights.

Since the booklet is intended to provide participants with specific ways of developing and improving their own work, your main goal (regardless of how many or which strategies you choose) is to ensure that your commentary is both accessible and practical, that it provides advice the audience can apply to their own writing.

In addition to your essay, you should submit a one- or two-page cover letter addressed to me and outlining four things:

- the strongest (read: most effective) facet of your project—whether that be its ideas, organization, strategies, or something else—and the reason(s) it is a strength;
- any (apparent) weaknesses your essay might possess as well as the reason(s) why they are not as detrimental as they might at first seem;
- one thing that you would do differently or that you would work on further if you had the time and desire to do so; and
- the grade you’d assign the paper if you were honestly evaluating it.

I have listed below the five things I would like you to do or consider in completing this project. The exact ways you work those things out is entirely up to you. Be as formal or informal as you like. Be as experimental as you like. However, do not do anything without knowing why you are doing it, what it will help you accomplish. And remember, creativity is more than just saying whatever you want however you want. It is your choosing to say what needs to be said in just the right way and for just the right reasons.

**Research:** Find three texts that you think best illustrate the kind of writing done in your major or, if you do not yet have a major, in a field in which you are interested. The texts can be of any genre—essays, books, pamphlets, and so on—as long as they are long enough to provide you with a strong sense of the conventions under which writers in the discipline operate.

**Invention:** Take detailed notes on each of the three texts you found during your research. Pay particular attention to the way(s) in which they are written: rhetorical strategies, organizational patterns, structure, tone, style, and so on. Also, be on the look out for passages you can use in your paper as illustrations of a particular technique or convention.

• Content should be similar among all three, though the way(s) in which that content is viewed or treated may vary considerably. For now, however, assume that content should only be of concern to you if/when it influences choices about the other aspects of writing I have mentioned. You should not get caught up in summarizing content or writing what amounts to a book report.

• Possible Questions to Ask: What do the writers do in their work? How do they approach their writing? What audience and goal(s) do they seem to be addressing? What strategies and principles seem to be informing their writing? Why might any of these things make sense given the area in which they work? Is their any ‘disagreement’ among the three approaches
you have considered? Does that make sense given the field you have chosen? If so, why? If not, what might the writers have done differently to communicate their views more consistently and/or effectively?

Organization: Organize the material you have gathered and generated through research and invention around the idea that the discursive conventions operating in your area of interest are unique and, furthermore, that those conventions tell us something about how professionals in that area view their material, their audience, and their goal(s) in writing—which is something you can then tie into larger issues of language and communication as you see fit.

•Possible Questions to Ask: Consider what you are discussing, how you will be approaching it, and why it might be of some use to do so in that particular way. Also, consider the pattern you want your essay to follow. Do you wish to look at each text individually then conclude with an overview of what you have learned from them as a group? Do you wish to use all three texts to illustrate various aspects of your field’s writing then conclude by suggesting why these texts work well because they do or do not follow similar approaches? (Other possibilities exist here. Just be sure you have some pattern in mind by Draft Two or Three.)

(Re)writing: Begin wherever in your paper you would like--introduction, body, conclusion--just remember that your main goal is to investigate the writing done in your field so that you can speculate on the reason(s) why that writing turns out as it does. This is the stage at which you begin analyzing the material you have gathered: questioning, looking for patterns of similarity or difference, pursuing why and how things appear in the texts as they do.

•Spur yourself into viewing writing in your field on a larger scale. That is, give yourself a chance to formulate a conclusion that captures the essence of (and argues for or against) what makes writing in biology different from that in political science or art history.
Goal: Finally, be sure to stay focused on the ultimate goal of any writing experience: the connection between yourself and others.

• Possible Questions to Ask: Is this the kind of writing you want to do? Will it be something you enjoy? What reasons might the writing done in this field be an attraction or detraction for those considering it? Why might writing be so important or unimportant in this or that field? Why is it important to see these things now rather than later? How might what you learn in your essay help both you and others interested in this profession?

In addition to your essay, you should submit a one- or two-page cover letter addressed to me and outlining four things:

• the strongest (read: most effective) facet of your project—whether that be its ideas, organization, strategies, or something else—and the reason(s) it is a strength;

• any (apparent) weaknesses your essay might possess as well as the reason(s) why they are not as detrimental as they might at first seem;

• one thing that you would do differently or that you would work on further if you had the time and desire to do so; and

• the grade you’d assign the paper if you were honestly evaluating it.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dion Claude Cautrell was born in Nebraska, raised in that state and in Missouri, and graduated from O’Neill (Nebraska) Public High School in 1991. In 1995 he received his bachelor’s degree in English, graduating summa cum laude from the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). His master’s thesis investigated the prose stylistics of Percy Bysshe Shelley and was written under the direction of Samuel J. Umland. Dion graduated with a master’s degree in English from UNK in 1997. He entered the University of Florida in 1998, where he studied stylistics and rhetoric-composition under the mentorship of Sidney I. Dobrin. Dion has accepted the position of Assistant Professor of English at The Ohio State University, Mansfield campus.
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Sidney I. Dobrin, Chair
Associate Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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