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The Progymnasmata: New/Old Ways to Teach Reading, Writing, and Thinking in Secondary Schools

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THE PROGYMNASMATA: NEW/ OLD WAYS TO TEACH
READING, WRITING, AND THINKING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

Natalie Sue Baxter

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

Brigham Young University

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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ABSTRACT

THE PROGYMNASMATA: NEW/ OLD WAYS TO TEACH READING, WRITING, AND THINKING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Master of Art

Within the past two decades, theorists have begun to look back to the classical rhetorical past for answers to modern dilemmas in composition teaching. Several textbooks have been published that focus their teaching of college composition on the classical tradition. While the movement to revitalize classical rhetoric is gaining strength in universities, however, the benefits of this movement have not yet reached, in any real way, the levels of elementary, middle school, or high school education.

This thesis shows how the classical rhetorical curriculum generally, and a specific part of that curriculum, the progymnasmata, accomplish important aims of modern composition approaches, while at the same time providing answers to modern deficiencies in composition instruction, especially at the secondary level. The thesis compares the progymnasmata and their accompanying pedagogy with the most prevalent and up-and-coming approaches in composition teaching, including current-traditional, expressivist, and social epistemic—including genre theory—approaches, and process-

based, or cognitive, composition pedagogy.

Modern theorists are finding value in the classical rhetorical curriculum because, since the 1800s, advances in composition instruction are now recognized as reinventions of the classical past, recovering vital elements once present in rhetorical instruction and then lost. The classical curriculum also provides solutions to problems in modern composition approaches. Because modern theoretical approaches are partial reiterations of the classical rhetorical tradition, and because the classical tradition can enable students in ways modern approaches cannot, exploring the possibilities of teaching the progymnasmata in secondary schools is worthwhile.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROGYMNASMATA AND THEIR RHETORICAL CONTEXTS

In 1649, John Milton published *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, a defense for the right to execute a tyrant as well as for the people's right to change their government as they see fit. Forty six years prior, William Shakespeare had published his *Hamlet*, a play well known today. On another continent, Benjamin Franklin presented a speech titled, "An Argument Against Payment of Salaries to Executive Officers of the Federal Government," at the Constitutional Convention of June 2, 1787. These examples of writing all have two things in common: first, they are all significant written works that had powerful effects on persons and societies who read or saw them performed, and, second, they are examples of progymnasmata (classical rhetorical exercises) including a legislation exercise, a tale, and a thesis exercise. All of the authors were explicitly instructed in the classical rhetorical curriculum and the progymnasmata, training that provided a sound basis for writing in life situations where the authors change others' perceptions and actions.

The progymnasmata—preliminary exercises in the classical rhetorical curriculum—teach students to perform well in recurring life situations. The focus of the exercises is action—speech acts, writing acts, and other acts. The exercises instruct students in specific types of action such as praise and blame, deliberation, accusation and defense, impersonation, elaboration, description, and narration. Students in this curriculum also learn to read text as behavior, as an author treating an audience in a certain manner. The progymnasmata teach students to make the best and most informed decisions in performing acts and reading/ interpreting the acts of others. The exercises

also prepare students for active participation in society and for ethical and useful participation in their chosen fields of study and occupation. Additionally, the progymnasmata introduce students to a great deal of the comprehensive classical rhetorical curriculum. Outcomes of teaching the progymnasmata include development of judgment, mental dexterity, and the ability to perform well in speaking or writing on demand.

In this thesis I argue that the progymnasmata be considered (to a greater extent than they have thus far been considered) for teaching in modern secondary school classrooms, because the exercises accomplish the same valuable aims as prevailing modern theoretical and methodological approaches in composition while solving problems and limitations seen in those approaches in recent decades. The progymnasmata do all of this while providing full rhetorical training for students in accomplishable, incremental steps. In this thesis, I compare the progymnasmata and what they teach with current-traditional, expressivist, and social epistemic composition approaches, as well as process-based classroom pedagogy. I find that the progymnasmata satisfy important goals of modern composition approaches, including aims of dividing rhetorical theory in ways that are clear and teachable, teaching writing as enjoyable and empowering, enabling students to critique text and context, teaching writing process, and giving students experience writing in a variety of genres for a variety of aims. Teaching the progymnasmata accomplishes these aims while solving problems of modern composition approaches, specifically problems of formulaic teaching, restricted scope, and inadaptability of theory for classroom practice. The progymnasmata offer a unified theoretical and pedagogical schema for teaching principles of reading, writing, and

thinking to students, a schema that can be adapted to suit the needs of secondary classrooms today.

Teachers of composition have to look back to a past of writing, reading, and thinking instruction that has all but been abandoned in modern practice in order to discover the progymnasmata. Composition scholar D. C. Stewart argues that composition instructors should study the history of writing instruction, saying, “It is wise [...] to have the historical perspective. It gives theoretical depth and philosophical breadth to our perceptions of this most important and intriguing enterprise we call the teaching of composition” (143). However, a common perception among composition theorists is that “the past” of composition is a past we now call current-traditional rhetoric. Deborah Dean, teacher and composition scholar, describes that past this way:

Some of us probably still remember the really old days: days when teachers gave a writing assignment during Monday’s class—the weekly theme—and we wrote it at home, alone, and turned it in on Friday. We wrote it by hand and recopied when we recognized mistakes. The papers were returned, generally on Monday, with our grade indicated by a red letter on the top. [...] We looked at the grade and then put the paper away as we listened to the teacher make a few comments and give us the current week’s topic. We were on a treadmill. What happened between Monday and Friday was up to us, as long as a clean, error-free paper was turned in at the end of the week. It seems now like an old black-and-white movie.

(Strategic 2)

I appreciate Dean's story and have read similar descriptions of times past from expressivist theorists Donald Murray and Peter Elbow and process theorists Janet Emig and Donald Graves. Their stories help me appreciate where we no longer are. On closer look, however, current traditional rhetoric began in the late 1800s. What about before that? How were students taught before the late nineteenth century? What about authors like Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Jane Austen? What about Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Pope? What kind of training did they receive? We have manuscripts from learned civilizations dating back thousands of years. How did they learn to write? What were their writing schools like? Composition theorists generally ignore a past before current traditional rhetoric, and students now training in composition teaching inherit the same restricted view of composition's history.

Many reading and writing teachers in today's schools are not familiar with a curriculum developed over 2000 years ago by ancient Greeks and spread by the Romans throughout the Roman Empire. This classical teaching of language and reason, called the art of *rhetoric*, was employed throughout the Middle Ages (Murphy, "Rhetorical History" 5) and revitalized in its entirety during the Renaissance, following the rediscovery of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and Cicero's *De Oratore* and *Orator*. Writers during the early period of English literature with whom we are familiar—Chaucer, Jonson, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, and others—were explicitly trained in the classical rhetorical tradition (Corbett and Connors 26). Many colonial and 19th century American authors also studied rhetoric. Classical rhetoric was the center of university and preparatory curricula for hundreds of years up until the late 1800s when, because of the Cartesian paradigm shift, the classical curriculum began to be changed to

fit modern education ideals (Murphy, "Rhetorical History" 4-8; Connors 354-361; Christiansen 71-72). In many cases, the curriculum was reduced to make it simpler to be taught. More recently, classical rhetoric has been replaced with modern theories of literacy and composition.

Educators and others have thought it best, given changes in education and school populations, to change language curricula to reflect those changes. In recent decades, however, scholars, teachers, and community members lament literary crises that seem only to be growing. Composition researchers Steve Graham and Dolores Perin, in 2007, reported sharp declines in literacy. They write,

Along with reading comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy. Yet every year in the United States large numbers of adolescents graduate from high school unable to write at the basic levels required by colleges or employers. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006, cited in *Writing Next* 3)

Graham and Perin also summarize findings from other research which concludes that "Seventy percent of students in grades 4-12 are low-achieving writers (Persky et al., 2003)," "Nearly one third of high school graduates are not ready for college-level English composition courses (ACT, 2005)," and "College instructors estimate that 50% of high school graduates are not prepared for college-level writing (Achieve, Inc., 2005)" (7-8). Clearly, adolescent literacy seems to be in decline and often public schools are blamed for these declines and for what seems to be a failing English curriculum.

Given our modern crisis in reading and writing instruction, a classical rhetorical curriculum that stood in place and effectively trained students in rhetorical practices for hundreds of years seems worthy of consideration for use in today's instruction. Aims of the progymnasmata, including the aims to speak and act well in all situations, are clear and have meaning for students today. Pedagogical methods accompanying the progymnasmata instruct in writing processes that are likewise meaningful for today's students. Teaching writing along with reading and thinking by means of the progymnasmata trains students to perform well in speaking and writing situations in ways perhaps more effective than methods of predominant current composition approaches. To see how this may be so, it is first necessary to understand what the progymnasmata are and what they teach.

The Progymnasmata

The *progymnasmata*, or preliminary exercises, are a series of fourteen exercises that build on each other, each exercise requiring students to use and apply things they have learned in previous exercises. These exercises were designed for schoolboys as young as age seven and were taught in different variations until students (individually) moved on to the two advanced exercises *suasoria* and *controversia*, usually around sixteen years of age. Students eventually passed final examinations and were ready to participate as adults in society usually between eighteen and twenty five years of age (Bonner 14, Quintilian XII.6).

Each of the progymnasmata contains its own *places*, or areas of inquiry. The Greek rhetoric instructor Aphthonius calls these places "considerations," "parts," or "topics" through which the exercise may be accomplished. Like many parts of the

classical curriculum, ancient rhetoricians determined places of the progymnasmata by studying what people naturally do. For example, in order to determine the places of the legislation exercise, rhetoricians studied and came up with a list of things a person naturally considers when proposing a law. These considerations then became the places for the legislation exercise. The process is referred to as art imitating nature, because precepts and exercises (art) are built on typical or natural responses or considerations (nature).

In essence, places are where thinking and composing begin. “Places” (from the Greek *topoi*, Latin *loci*) signifies “places to find something.” Classical places are places we go to find what to say and discover what arguments we might create. For example, in the refutation exercise described by Aphthonius the places of the exercise are the obscure and unconvincing, the impossible, the inconsistent, the improper, and the irrational. By discussing each of these in turn regarding the idea or false assertion a student wishes to refute—for example, how the assertion is obscure, how it is inconsistent, irrational, and so on—the student will compose an essay that counters an inconsistent idea. Likewise, the places of the tale exercise are the personal agent, the thing done, at what time, in what place, in what manner, and for what cause (Aphthonius 265). By gathering matter concerning each of these places, the student will construct a tale or narrative. “Place” is an interesting metaphor, as places exist in a person’s own mind, as well as in outside sources. A student will visit both to find the most suitable material for the cause.

The progymnasmata and their places are these:

Fable. The fable is a short story in which human attributes are depicted, usually through animal characters. The fable is instructive and ends with

an explicit moral. Places of the fable from Rainolde are retell the tale, praise the author, place the moral, declare the nature of things contained in the fable, have the characters reason with one another, make a similitude, include an example to prove the matter, make the epilogue (B.j.).

Narrative (tale). The tale is a short story in which characters interact. The places from Aphthonius are the personal agent, the thing done, at what time, in what place, in what manner, and for what cause (265).

Chreia. The chreia is an elaboration on a saying made by (usually) a wise or famous person. The student is asked to enlarge on the saying, exemplify it, and so on. The places from Rainolde are praise the author, expound meaning, cause, contrary, similitude, example, testimony, and epilogue (D.iiij.-E.j.).

Proverb (sententia). The proverb is much like the chreia, only the saying expounded on is a generally well-known saying, not attributed to any specific person. Places are the same as the chreia.

Refutation and Confirmation. These exercises ask students to confirm or refute the truth or possibility of a story or statement. The places from Aphthonius are state the false assertion of the opposition, exposition of that assertion, obscure and unconvincing, impossible, inconsistent, improper, and irrational (268). Places for the confirmation are the opposite of those for refutation.

Commonplace. The student creates a speech praising/ extolling a virtue or blaming/ deploring a vice had among mankind. The places from

Aphthonius are the exordium, from the incompatible, exposition of the matter, comparison, contrast, intention, digression, rejection of mercy, lawful, just, rational, possible (271-272).

Encomium and Vituperation. The student praises (encomium) or blames (vituperation) a person, place or thing, following the places of the exercise, which are the exordium, genus (race, fatherland, forbears, fathers), education (study, talent, rules), achievements (spirit, body, fortune), comparison and epilogue (Aphthonius 273).

Comparison. Students decide which of two good things is better or which of two bad things is worse and defend their position. This is a double vituperation or encomium. Places are the same as for the encomium and vituperation (Aphthonius 276).

Characterization (prosopopoeia). The student composes a speech that he or she imagines a person (real, usually historical) would have given in a certain situation. The places from Aphthonius are past, present, and future (278).

Description. With this exercise, the student describes a person, place, thing, event, or scene in vivid detail, following the places of chronological or spatial order.

Thesis. The student creates an argument concerning a finite question, meaning a question that has no definite answer, but has a definite scope, i.e. pertaining to a specific person or entity. The places from Rainolde are exordium, narration of the thing to be done, show it lawful, just,

profitable, possible, include throughout objections of the opposition, and conclusion (O.j.-O.iiij.).

Proposal of/ Opposition to Laws. Following the places of the exercise, the student proposes a new law or argues for or against an existing, ancient, or fictitious law. Places from Rainolde are exordium; the contrary; show it lawful, just, profitable, possible; answer objections, and conclusion (P.iiij.).¹

The progymnasmata are central to the classical rhetorical curriculum. The idea that the progymnasmata were central and always present in rhetorical training—from the beginning and throughout that training—is so commonly accepted in classical rhetorical texts it is a notion for which there is rarely made an argument. It was considered self-evident, it seems. Quintilian, the great Roman schoolmaster, describes in twelve books the rhetorical education of a student from birth to adulthood. After discussing considerations in a child’s beginning education, such as whether it is best to school at home or at a public school, Quintilian describes the first exercises the child will complete while studying under the *grammaticus*, or elementary teacher. The exercises he describes are the fable, proverb, chreia, and simple narrative or tale—the first four progymnasmata (I.8-9). In his second book, after discussing at what age or stage a boy should be sent to the *rhetor* (advanced teacher), Quintilian describes the work a student will do in the class of the rhetor, namely, writing the more advanced progymnasmata - the narrative,

¹ For other helpful synopses of the progymnasmata, see Christiansen, “The Master Double Frame” 75-76, 81-85; D’Angelo, *Composition in the Classical Tradition* 16-18; Murphy, *A Short History of Writing Instruction* 62-69; Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*; Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics* 384-427; and Corbett and Connors, *Classical Rhetoric* 484-488.

refutation, confirmation, encomium, vituperation, commonplaces, thesis, and criticism of laws (II.4). Rhetoric scholar James J. Murphy points out that Quintilian's discussions do not focus on "a question of whether the progymnasmata should be taught, but rather a question of who should teach them" (*A Short History* 63). Throughout the remainder of his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian describes principles taught by the progymnasmata—fundamental principles of argument.

The Progymnasmata and Precepts of Rhetoric

The progymnasmata teach key precepts of classical rhetoric, including the three genres of oratory, the five canons of rhetoric, and the classical standards of judgment or decorum. First, the progymnasmata teach genres of oratory. Classical rhetoricians divided all of oratory into three main genres: epideictic (also called demonstrative), deliberative, and judicial (also called forensic). Quintilian calls these genres "types of causes," and claims that all oratory will fall under one of these three. The genres are divided according to types of action, including praise and blame, persuasion and dissuasion, and accusation and defense. Each of the genres of oratory contains its own places or considerations, which places indicate ways a person reasons within the genre. The places of deliberative oratory are given later in this chapter and the places of forensic oratory are given in chapter four. The places of epideictic oratory (oratory for praising and blaming) from the Renaissance scholar and rhetoric teacher Thomas Wilson are these: "before his life," including "1. the realm, 2. the shire, 3. the town, 4. the parents, 5. the ancestors"; "in his life," including "whether the person be a man or a woman, the bringing-up, the nurturing, and the behavior of his life, to what study he taketh himself unto, what company he useth, how he liveth, prowesses done either abroad or at home,

his policies and witty devices in hoof of the public weal”; and “after his death,” including “things that have happened about his death” (54-55). Wilson notes that many things may be praised or dispraised: “men, countries, cities, places, beasts, hills, rivers, houses, castles, deeds done by worthy men, and policies invented by great warriors” (54). However, he notes that “most commonly men are praised for diverse respects” (54) and that is why the places of epideictic refer most specifically to persons. The places show that in the situation of praising or blaming a person, one considers specific characteristics, situations, and qualities of the person.

The three classical genres of oratory are very old divisions of discourse, but ones that still have application today. Quintilian argued that legal oratory is the master frame, so to speak, for all oratory. To match Shakespeare’s axiom that “All the world’s a stage,” Quintilian would perhaps have said that all the world is also a courtroom where every day we put ideas and assertions on trial just as we do people. The confirmation and refutation exercises grouped under judicial oratory make real this claim, and confirming and refuting ideas is something people continue to do every day. The genre of deliberative oratory also remains applicable in modern experience. Classical rhetoricians believed all texts may be read in terms of the arguments they make, and if this is true, deliberative oratory could likewise be considered the master genre. Today, as much as in ancient times, people consider ways they should act in terms of what is expedient, safe, possible, easy or difficult, and profitable—the places of deliberative oratory. And finally, praise and blame, the main actions of epideictic oratory, have to do with determining the quality of things and people, which we do in order to determine a course of action or to determine whom or what to believe or follow.

The “places” of the progymnasmata teach the “places” or considerations of the three genres of oratory. For example, the places of the encomium and vituperation, including genus (race, fatherland, forbears, fathers), education (study, talent, rules), and achievements (spirit, body, fortune) coincide directly with the places of epideictic oratory. All of the progymnasmata teach considerations of at least one of the genres of oratory. Renaissance progymnasmata workbooks show that one of the first things schoolchildren were taught was how progymnasmata fit with the three genres of oratory. Many of these workbooks contain in the first pages a list of the progymnasmata with brackets drawn to show that the fable, narrative, chreia, proverb, and thesis teach deliberative oratory, the confirmation, refutation, and commonplace teach judicial oratory, and the encomium, vituperation, impersonation and comparison teach demonstrative oratory (Agricola, “Athonii Progymnasmata” 5). In most cases, in treating the places of the progymnasmata, students will draw evidence from the places of the genres of oratory, and thus learn the places for these genres.

Second, the progymnasmata teach the five canons of rhetoric. Quintilian lists the five canons of rhetoric as Invention, Disposition, Elocution, Memory, and Delivery. Wilson describes these five briefly. He writes that when we invent, we search out things that are true or likely concerning a matter (49). The progymnasmata teach invention in a simple way, giving places for each exercise. The progymnasmata familiarize students with places of logic as well. After invention comes disposition, or arrangement. Wilson writes that it would be of little use to invent matter if we could not then organize that matter and structure it in a way to fulfill a purpose. Students writing the progymnasmata have to make decisions regarding structure and arrangement in each of the exercises. The

places of the exercises also help students to gain an idea of logical and effective arrangement of discourse. In addition, Quintilian explains throughout his work ways in which progymnasmata fit into the arrangement of larger discourse. For example, fables and proverbs serve as examples and proofs, a narrative describing the specific circumstances of a matter follows the prooemium (first introduction) in most essays or speeches, and confirmation and refutation are included in almost any argument.

Wilson continues his discussion of canons by asking what help it would be to “find good reasons and know how to place them, if we have not apt words and picked sentences to commend the whole matter?” (50). Such is the reason for the third canon, elocution, or style, which Wilson summarizes as being able to beautify the cause. The progymnasmata teach style through analysis of figures of speech and thought, and imitation and practice of the same. Memory, the fourth canon, is important because it teaches the ability to retain in one’s mind the things we have learned and want to share. The progymnasmata teach memory as students memorize passages of works for presentation. Students also develop memory when the instructor performs a work orally and students record what they remember from the instructor’s performance. The last canon, utterance (now commonly called delivery), is explained by Wilson as the power to speak what is in our mind and show others what we have to say. “Utterance,” explains Wilson, includes all parts of presentation, including “a framing of the voice, countenance, and gesture, after a comely manner” (50). With the progymnasmata, exercises are delivered orally to the class as well as in written form to the instructor and perhaps to peers as well.

Third, the progymnasmata teach principles of *decorum*—standards of appropriateness against which any spoken, written, or performed action may be measured. The principles of decorum include plainness (using words the audience understands), aptness (choosing material, form, style and delivery appropriate for the occasion), composition (using a well-chosen form of organization and creating a flow of ideas), and exornation (creating a beautiful and delightful work using high, medium, or low style) (Wilson 188-189). Students writing the progymnasmata consider principles of decorum both in reading the works of others and in creating their own texts. Students consider audience, self, subject, and situation in relation to all four principles of decorum. The idea of these standards is that students practice discernment and judgment and choose appropriate words and the best combination of matter, form, style, and delivery for the occasion. In the end, these standards lead students to cultivate “the ability to hit upon the right solution when making decisions in the complexity of human affairs” (Christiansen 72). The standards cultivate judgment.

Although times and cultures change, the standards of decorum have been part of the classical curriculum since its beginning and have remained central. These same principles (or precepts) regarding writing are found in grading criteria in modern writing classes at all levels; even though the names and descriptions of the standards may be different, the precepts are the same. The principles of decorum are grounded in the belief that the rules by which we reason and speak are unchanging over time. In all times and cultures, these basic principles apply.

The progymnasmata are the primary means by which students learn key rhetorical precepts and governing principles of the language arts. Students learn the precepts

directly through writing the exercises, or, naturally, in conjunction with them. Murphy observes,

Quintilian suggests that the precepts operate throughout the program; this could mean either that the master introduced the precepts at each stage or that separate times were set aside for them. The *Institutio oratoria* does not describe any separate segment for teaching precepts, though it would seem logical that the older students preparing for Declamation would have to know the principles of at least deliberative and forensic rhetoric [. . .].”

(*A Short History* 51)

Principles of epideictic, deliberative, and forensic rhetoric would naturally have been taught in conjunction with the thesis and legislation exercises, as well as in preceding exercises. Murphy’s observation that precepts operate throughout the program is correct, because the progymnasmata, along with the steps of imitation, make up the program Murphy describes, and both teach fundamental principles of classical rhetoric.

Murphy writes of the progymnasmata that the exercises turned precept into exercise and the exercises turned students into men ready to participate in society (*A Short History* 51). Quintilian declares his own confidence in the exercises when he writes

I would venture to say that this kind of effort will contribute more to learners than all the textbooks of all the writers on rhetoric; these are no doubt a great help, but how can they possibly so extend their range as to go through all the specific cases that arise almost every day? [. . .] Precept is less important than experience in almost every field. [. . .] The practical value of this method escapes no one. (II.5.14-17)

The progymnasmata provide students with both precepts and practice necessary to engage well in societal, occupational, and personal interactions throughout life. The goal of instruction in the classical rhetorical curriculum is that of bringing students to make wise decisions and perform well in life situations, specifically situations that call for students to read, write, think, and speak. The progymnasmata are central to the classical rhetorical curriculum because the exercises succeed in getting pupils to this end goal.

Aims of the Progymnasmata

Outcomes of the progymnasmata coincide with goals of Hellenistic education in which the progymnasmata have their origin. These goals are performance-based. The chief goal is to prepare students for civilized action and interaction in societies.

Christiansen explains,

“Classical education” is “Hellenistic education,” H.I. Marrou reminds us in his renowned *Education in Antiquity* (95). In the generation after Aristotle and Alexander the Great, when education became standardized throughout the Greek world, rhetoric held center place in the curriculum. Founded not on Plato’s, but Isocrates’s educational program, primary and secondary schools prepared scholars in civilized practices through literary and language-arts-based instruction. (“The Master Double Frame” 71)

In ancient Greece, the curriculum and its results were both called *paideia*. The term *paideia* signified the curriculum studied in order to become educated, as well as the end result. Richard Leo Enos describes the second meaning of *paideia* as “the virtue of intellectual excellence,” and also “what it meant to be educated” (Murphy, *A Short History* 15). If a person studied the *paideia*, he or she would become educated, achieving

not only intellectual excellence, but moral maturity as well. Romans, who adopted the Greek curriculum, translated the Greek term *paideia* into Latin *humanitas*, from which we derive our term “humanities” today. *Humanitas* was understood as being that which will develop the human.

The progymnasmata train students to develop the human qualities of eloquence and wisdom. Eloquence encompasses the arts of thinking, speaking, writing and reading, all taught together. Wisdom includes right reason and moral judgment. Quintilian writes that the ideal orator (or person who has mastered the rhetorical curriculum) will be “A good man, skilled in speaking” (XII.1.1). Quintilian believes the curriculum he describes will produce such a man who possesses “not only exceptional powers of speech, but all the virtues of character as well” (I.1.9). Isocrates, like Quintilian, believes the good rhetor will possess “the power to speak well [which is] 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” (*Antidosis*, in Bizzell, *The Rhetorical Tradition* 75).

In the classical tradition, the term for speaking well and applying the art well is *facilitas*, or eloquence (Quintilian VII.1.34). True eloquence is measured by a student’s ability to speak appropriately on any subject to any audience at any time, extemporaneously (Christiansen 72). Christiansen describes *facilitas* as “ability in both fluency and judgment”; such was considered “the mark of the genuinely cultivated human” (72). Eloquence is developed as students complete exercises in listening, thinking, reading, writing, and speaking—the progymnasmata and gymnasmatata.

Quintilian declares that reading, writing, and speaking must be taught together if we are to not waste our efforts in becoming half-prepared. He says,

[Writing, reading, and speaking] are all so inseparably linked with one another that if one is lacking, the labour spent on the others has been wasted. Eloquence will never be mature and robust unless it develops strength by much practice in writing. Without the models supplied by reading, the whole effort will be adrift, and there will be no one at the helm. Again, the man who knows what to say and how to say it, but does not have his eloquence ready to hand and prepared for any contingency, will simply be brooding over hoarded treasure. (X.1.1-2)

Isocrates explains, in addition, how speaking and thinking also go together. He writes,

With this faculty [of speech] we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are unknown; for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts; and, while we call eloquent those who are able to speak before a crowd, we regard as sage those who most skillfully debate their problems in their own minds. [... I]n all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom. (*Antidosis*, Bizzell *The Rhetorical Tradition* 75)

For both Isocrates and Quintilian, eloquence is only present where skills in reading, writing, and speaking have all been practiced and developed fully. The progymnasmata, accordingly, teach skills in reading, writing, and speaking all together.

The progymnasmata also teach moral action. Quintilian's claim regarding rhetorical training is that the good orator will be the "good man." The progymnasmata

train and develop the good and cultured human through explicit and implicit moral instruction. According to modern composition scholar Frank D'Angelo, the progymnasmata provide moral instruction “by encouraging speakers and writers to discuss political, social, and domestic ethical issues and to debate them in speech in writing” (*Composition 2*). In addition, he writes,

Some of the exercises inculcate moral lessons through the medium of narrative based on the actions and words of the characters. Other exercises such as the proverb or the anecdote offer moral instruction in statement form, urging the audience to do good and avoid evil. Still others do so by amplifying virtues or vices and by praising virtues and denouncing vices. The chief aim of rhetoric in late antiquity, then, was ethical and moral. (*Composition 2*)

The progymnasmata encourage students to consider issues and actions in terms of their moral basis, and encourage students to develop their own moral standpoints.

Other parts of the progymnasmata and classical curriculum teach attention to morals as well. The places of deliberative, epideictic, and legal oratory (the three overarching genres of oratory) all teach students to consider aspects of human nature and morality. Deliberative oratory is based on ethical considerations including whether a thing is honest, profitable, pleasant, safe, easy or hard, lawful and meet, praiseworthy, and necessary. Each of these is then divided according to attendant considerations. For example, under honesty we consider prudence or wisdom, justice, manhood, and temperance. These are again divided. Under prudence or wisdom are contained memory, understanding, and foresight. Under justice is considered common profit of the country,

laws of nature, and custom. Under laws of nature, religion and acknowledging of God, natural love to our children and others, thankfulness to all men, stoutness both to withstand and revenge, reverence to the superior, and assured and constant truth in things are all considered. Under custom is included bargaining, commons or equality, and judgment given. Fortitude or manhood includes considerations of honorableness, stoutness, sufferance, and continuance. Under temperance we include sobriety, gentleness, and modesty. Under profitability is considered who will profit, when, where, and wherefore. As for lawful, the considerations given are whether the law is godly, just, necessary, and pleasant (Wilson 70-79).

Common logical topics learned through the progymnasmata also lead students to consider aspects of human nature and morality. The place of conjecture leads students to consider the will to do evil and the power to do evil. Definition calls for students to examine contrary laws, laws made, ends of the law (intent), ambiguity, precedent, and challenge. Under questions of quality are considered Nature, God's law and man's law, custom, equity, true dealing, ancient examples, covenants and deeds antique. Wilson explains all of these in detail. Places of epideictic oratory focus on the moral as well since beings are praised for their virtuous deeds and honorable qualities of character.

As students learn places of deliberative, epideictic, and legal oratory and common logical topics through writing the progymnasmata, they learn considerations for selecting amid a myriad of alternatives. Such a method teaches discernment and judgment when choosing the bases for action. Students learn to examine others' motives and their own motives, examine how they define things and how others define things, and examine the types of law upon which morals are based and upon which decisions are based (this

presents a more complex system of reasoning than asking “is this good or bad, right or wrong?”). The curriculum encourages a deep look into the “laws” (societal, eternal, natural, etc.) and definitions that govern assumptions. Quintilian argues that the argument based on honorability will always be the best argument. Wilson discusses all of the genres of oratory in terms of prudence, discretion, and using reason. Because the progymnasmata teach bases for making decisions, lessons in discernment, judgment, wisdom and reason are essential to the curriculum.

Refining moral sensibilities and cultivating the ability to make good judgments are real goals of the classical curriculum and of the progymnasmata. It is evident in the very early training of students and in preliminary exercises that the classical ideal of creating cultured and moral individuals is thought essential, not additional, to speaking well.

The goals of the progymnasmata—to teach students to think, act, and speak well—are practical goals for individuals and societies, following Isocrates’ practical approach to education. While some modern critics see the progymnasmata and classical rhetorical curriculum as training for a limited elite in Greek and Roman societies, the exercises within their rhetorical contexts present a general education that all students in these ages went through. Training in the rhetorical schools educated students preparing for many careers, not just for careers in law or government as is now commonly believed. Murphy describes the Roman school system, inherited from the Greeks as “a system [that] could be—and was—replicated over time and space” (*A Short History* 49). The curriculum was the same for all students, with the only significant difference between

students within the educational system being the time students would stay in school.

Murphy explains,

Obviously not every student went all the way through the course, just as today there are many “dropouts” in even the best of schools. The poor sent their children for only the most elementary education with the *ludi magister* for grammar or the *calculator* for basic numbers. No doubt many students had to content themselves with the instruction in grammar without ever proceeding to more advanced studies with a rhetorician. (50)

What Quintilian describes in his *Institutio oratoria* is the complete educational system that efficiently “provided literacy for many, competence for some, excellence for a few. The dividing line separating these three levels of accomplishment was based simply on the length of time the student could spend in the program” (Murphy, *A Short History* 51).

Students and teachers dating back to Hellenistic Greece valued rhetorical education for what it helped students learn to do. Isocrates (now known as the Father of Humanism) believed his training in language and judgment would produce the genuinely cultivated man who would be able to hit upon the right solution in the complexity of human affairs. For Isocrates, rhetoric includes study of discourse, reason, and wise decision-making, which study leads a man to be an influence for good in the state, brings social cohesion and improves both public and private life. Isocrates proposed the art would help its students in their personal affairs, homes, families, and cities. He describes the study of oratory as “those studies which enable us to govern wisely both our own households and the commonwealth—which should be the objects of our toil, of our study, and of our every act” (*Antidosis*, in Bizzell *The Rhetorical Tradition* 78).

Historical evidence shows that Isocrates' curriculum was successful in training students to be an influence in the state. Enos writes that Isocrates' school "produced not only leading politicians but also historians and educators" (Murphy *A Short History* 33).

Romans also valued the practicality of the Hellenistic curriculum. George Clark, in his *The Education of Children at Rome*, writes, "It has been often remarked that the Romans were eminently practical, and we find this national trait no less conspicuous in their educational system than in other departments" (3). Clark outlines how the curriculum prepared students for many professions, including occupations in medicine, architecture, mercantile and financial business, agriculture, instruction in higher branches of learning, and occupations in government and law. The curriculum was understood to be broad enough to encompass all of the needs each person would have in participating in society, that participation taking whatever form it would.

Renaissance scholars also valued practical outcomes of the classical curriculum, as do scholars today. Wilson describes the practical value of the art of eloquence and reason as being a means by which men are brought "to live together in fellowship of life, to maintain cities, to deal truly, and willingly to obey one another..." (42). This type of peaceful living and maintenance of cities is brought about as students learn to participate in societies and interact as citizens of societies. The principles of rhetorical training—principles that teach individuals to read, write, think, and speak well—are applied to daily situations throughout life, irrespective of formal occupations or social positions students may later occupy.

D'Angelo points out that the progymnasmata "help speakers and writers develop the rhetorical skills needed for participation in a civil society" (*Composition* 2). He

writes, “The goal of a literary and rhetorical education is the cultivation of rhetorical skills to enable speakers and writers to speak and write about public issues and to develop an ethical framework for acting as responsible citizens (2). D’Angelo’s explanation echoes that of James J. Murphy who writes that Roman rhetorical education “aimed at practical ability rather than mere knowledge. This ability was to be ‘in’ the person, not in his books” (*A Short History* 41). The outcomes of classical rhetorical education, according to D’Angelo, include effective thinking, discrimination among values, making of relevant judgments, effective communication, and performance of virtuous actions. D’Angelo describes the literary- humanistic ideals of classical education as “general or liberal culture combined with eloquence and civic virtue, for the common good.” D’Angelo believes this common good may be had, not only in ancient nation-states, but also in the emerging global community (*Composition* 21).

The goals and learning outcomes of the progymnasmata meet needs of students today who are also in need of training in effective thinking, discrimination among values, making of relevant judgments, effective communication, and performance of virtuous actions. Students today need to be able to make wise decisions and take wise actions both for their own good and for the good of the societies in which they live. The progymnasmata can teach today’s students to be wise men and women skilled in speaking, and can have as much of an impact for good on today’s students as the exercises have in times past.

The Progymnasmata and Pedagogy

The progymnasmata are taught with repetition, and with increasing difficulty as students progress. The progymnasmata are also taught in conjunction with steps of

imitation, a process through which students learn to read and analyze texts, transform those texts, and then correct and present their new texts before the class. Both of these processes enable students to eventually function as their own teachers.

The progymnasmata are taught over and over again throughout a student's elementary and secondary training, each time with increased difficulty or with a change of focus. For example, Quintilian describes how a pupil begins study at the very earliest age by writing fables, narratives, and proverbs with the elementary teacher, or grammaticus (I.8-9). Later on, the student again practices fables and more advanced narratives with the rhetor (II.4). Even further along in study, the student practices narrative as a part of larger speeches (IV.2) and learns ways in which proverbs and fables function as proofs of arguments within larger works (V. 11). Confirmation, refutation, encomium, vituperation, commonplace, thesis, and legislation exercises are all repeated in similar fashion.

Christiansen gives evidence for repetition of exercises with variation and increased complexity in the works of Theon, a schoolmaster of Alexandria, and Nicolaus, a fifth-century schoolmaster. According to Christiansen, Theon says the chreia may be transformed by paraphrase, recitation, inflexion, comment, and objection. The chreia may also be expanded or condensed, refuted or confirmed (97). In addition, Theon says a chreia may be paraphrased in the manner of a maxim, in the manner of an explanation, with wit, with a syllogism, with an enthymeme, with an example, with a wish, in a symbolic manner, in a figurative manner, with double entendre, with a change of subject, or in a combination of the forms mentioned above (Christiansen 97). According to Christiansen, Nicolaus also indicates that young students use chreia mainly for inflexion

while older students analyze and commend the chreia (97). Each exercise, then, may be repeated in a number of ways throughout a student's training.

It makes sense also that as students progress, the kinds of texts used as models increase in complexity as well. Murphy notes, after explaining the process of classical imitation, "The young lad who begins with a simple fable of Aesop ends up years later as a young adult doing the same thing with a complex speech of Demosthenes or Cicero" (*A Short History* 61). Students repeat the same processes and exercises many times, but learn new things and develop increased skill each time.

The progymnasmata are taught in conjunction with what are now called steps of imitation, which steps include the instructor's choice of example texts, performance of texts before students, and walking students through a close reading of each text, and the students' memorization of texts, transformation of original text or texts, correction of their own work, and presentation of their new texts to the class. The steps of imitation are detailed below.

Choice of Example Texts

In the grammar school, the grammaticus chose examples of good expression to present to students. Quintilian argues that texts used as examples should be chosen from the very best authors. He writes, "For a long time, the only authors to be read should be the best and the least likely to betray our trust, and they should be read thoroughly, with almost as much care as we devote to writing" (X.1.20). Quintilian takes the time to create a lengthy list of proposed readings from various authors. He lists the merits, strengths, and weaknesses of each author. With young students, model texts are to be

examples of good expression. In advanced levels, the rhetor may use both good and poor examples to instruct the class.

Performance of the Text

Progymnasmata are begun with the teacher performing or dictating an example text, which the students write down. Quintilian writes that the grammaticus, who teaches young students, reads texts aloud “to ensure that the boys follow the written word easily and clearly” (I.8.9). Quintilian argues that reading and performing texts should be done often, saying of the rhetor,

He should himself deliver at least one speech, preferably several, a day, for his class to take away with them. For even if he provides them with plenty of examples for imitation from their reading, better nourishment comes, as they say, from the “living voice,” and especially from a teacher whom, if they are properly taught, the pupils love and respect. (II.2.8)

This practice links text with performance, as the teacher’s performance is an interpretation of a text. The teacher also becomes the character of that text. Students, in this process, are also interpreting, because what the students write is their own interpretation of their teacher’s performance.

Close Reading of the Text

The grammaticus explains in a close reading words and figures that to the students are unfamiliar (Quintilian II.5.4). Later on, the rhetor also performs with the older students a close reading of texts, pointing out merits and faults of the texts. In close reading of texts, a teacher will not only give instruction himself, but also “ask frequent questions and test his pupil’s judgment” so that students “will be led to form their own

ideas and to understand, which is the object of the exercise” (II.5.13). Quintilian writes that reading and closely examining texts will “contribute more to learners than all the textbooks of all the writers on rhetoric,”(II.5.14) because in performing these analyses teachers may go through specific cases that books containing general precepts may miss. Also, it is more effective and more pleasant for the student to correct an existing text than to be corrected in public.

Quintilian, in books one and two, discusses considerations in close reading of texts. The primary consideration is what virtues (or excellences) of character does the author possess? (I.1.10). Quintilian’s statement reveals that when reading text in the classical tradition, we are reading for virtues of character. Those virtues are discovered by looking at the text in all of the ways discussed in this section.

According to James J. Murphy,

This is the beginning of the application of judgment. The master literally dissects the text. The immediate intent is to show the students how the author made good or bad choices in wording, in organization, in the use of figures, and the like; the long-range objective is to accustom the student to what today we could call a ‘close reading’ of texts. (*A Short History* 56)

Students dissect texts in order to recognize good and bad choices of an author to either replicate or avoid making again those same kinds of choices.

Quintilian’s students read text for attributes of correctness, clarity, ornament, and appropriateness (I.5.1). Language is analyzed on the bases of reason, antiquity, authority, and usage (I.6). Since the perfect orator is to be of sound understanding in many areas, texts are also read for their soundness of judgment and knowledge in all subjects (I.10).

Texts are expected to develop moral character, richness in vocabulary, and expose students to both dignity and elegance (I.8.4-12). In addition, older students read texts for parts of speech, metrical rhythms, and rhetorical composition, as well as improper and proper usages, figures of speech and figures of thought (tropes), and historical allusions (I. 8.13-21).

Quintilian describes the reading process thus:

Nothing must pass unnoticed: every noteworthy point of Invention or Elocution is to be observed—the way in which the judge is conciliated in the Prooemium; the clarity, brevity, and credibility of the Narrative; the speaker’s plan and hidden artifice...; the wisdom shown in dividing the materials; the delicate and dense argument; the vigour that stirs and the charm that delights; the sharpness of the invective, the wit of the jokes; and how finally the orator reigns over the jury’s emotions, forces his way into their hearts, and makes their feelings reflect his words. As for Elocution, he will point out the exact use, elegance, or sublimity of each word; where Amplification is to be praised, and where the opposite quality is to be seen; the brilliance of the metaphors, the Figures of Speech, and how the Composition is smooth and well-formed [...]. (II.5.8-9)

Again, what the grammaticus and rhetor teach students to see are authorial decisions. Murphy observes that, in this analytic process, the reader “needs to reach back through the wholeness of paragraph or argument to identify the microcosmic decisions made by the composer” (*A Short History* 57). On a microcosmic level, and later on a macrocosmic level, students are reading choices and authorial judgment.

For more advanced students, Quintilian writes that it may sometimes be appropriate to “read aloud bad or faulty speeches...and to point out what a lot of expressions in these are inexact, obscure, turgid, low, mean, extravagant...” (II.5.10). In all of this, the instructor must “ask frequent questions and test his pupil’s judgment” so that the students “will be led to form their own ideas and to understand, which is the object of the exercise” (II.5.13).

When analyzing an author’s stylistic decisions, students ask the following kinds of questions:

- Does the author show selection and restraint? (Quintilian II. 12.6).
- Does the author know how to lower the tension? Does he constantly vary his style, arrange his material, suit his action to the tone of each part of the work, and, especially, keep within the bound of decency? (II. 12.10-11).
- Has the speaker planned prudently? (II. 13. 3)
- What decisions has the author made based on cause, time, opportunity, and necessity? (II. 13.2). What are the causes, times, opportunities, and necessities that have required these decisions?
- Does the author choose what is becoming and what is expedient? (II. 13.8)
- Does the author follow rules [or a theory] slavishly, or does he or she practice discernment? (II. 13. 14)
- Is the speech prudent, consistent, virtuous? (II. 20)
- What can we tell about the character of the author? (II. 15.35)
- Is the speaker a good person? How can we tell? (II. 16)

Quintilian’s consideration of the “causes, times, opportunities, and necessities that have required [the author’s] decisions” shows how considering the context of a piece was part of reading texts in the classical tradition. Students would reflect on the author’s

causes, times, opportunities, and necessities, as well as their own, and consider how and to what extent these elements of situation dictate authorial decisions.

Quintilian and Wilson's approach to style argues that patterns in text reveal things about an author's judgment and assumptions (since an author must assume certain things about herself, her audience, subject, and situation, in order to make the decisions she does). Authorial decisions may point to cultural and social values. The author must also have reasons for making the decisions she does, and so choices also point to motive. Students judge whether motives and assumptions revealed in the text are consistent with the author's message, and that is how students determine the character of the author.

Students Memorize the Text

As students memorize texts, their memory is strengthened. Memorization of model texts provides students a repertoire of word, phrases, and figures for later use. Quintilian preferred that students memorize the best authors rather than their own writing, which might contain errors. Quintilian recommends memorizing selected passages of speeches or histories from the best authors. The reasons for memorizing parts of these texts are fourfold:

For (1) it is a better exercise for the memory to take in other people's words than one's own; (2) those who are trained in this more difficult task will easily fix their own compositions in their mind, because these are already familiar; (3) they will get used to the best models and always have objects of imitation in their minds; (4) they will now unconsciously reproduce the style of the speech which they have so thoroughly absorbed.

They will also acquire a plentiful and choice vocabulary, and a command of Composition and Figures...” (Quintilian II.7.3-4)

Memorizing a text causes students to create a close acquaintance with the text, helping students see how parts of the text work together. As phrases that are rhythmical, balanced, or striking are the ones most easily remembered, it makes sense that the students would favor these structures and imitate them in their own writing.

Students Transform the Object

In the process of transforming a text, students have a variety of options, including translation (students translate a text from one language to another), paraphrase (students either shorten or expand a text, trying to capture the same meaning), metaphrase (students change the genre of the text—for example, prose to poetry or vice versa) and imitation proper (students produce their own texts by adding to the original text. The student may keep the form of the original text and change the subject matter, or keep the subject matter and change the form) (Christiansen 75-78, Murphy *A Short History* 59-60). In all of these exercises the student is a new speaker speaking on a new occasion to a new audience. In all of these exercises as well, the student is encouraged to vie with the original. Quintilian writes that none of these activities should result in “mere passive reproduction, but to rival and vie with the original in expressing the same thoughts” (X.5.5). The goal is always to speak and write more eloquently, and with better expression than the original. As the student advances, the extent to which he is able to vie with the original should also progress.

Student Self-Correction

As part of the process, the student reads her own work analytically, edits and revises, and prepares to read her composition aloud to the class. This casts the student as her own critic. According to Quintilian, a student may add to, take away from, or alter what he or she has written (X.5.1). Quintilian notes that if a student has produced “something more polished than ordinary” he may be permitted to memorize and recite his own work as a sort of reward for hard work (II.7.5).

Student Performance of the Text

Murphy describes Roman classrooms as interactive, with teacher and peer response a common practice. Quintilian argues for public education over private home-schooling for this very reason. To him, students will learn more when they are together because the comments made to one student will serve as admonition to all. The idea of performing in front of peers also serves as motivation for the students to do well.

Quintilian does say that young students should not memorize and recite from memory their own texts, unless, as mentioned, the student has composed something extraordinarily polished. Students, for the most part, it seems, read aloud their compositions to the class. For teachers and peers who respond to student texts, Quintilian gives the advice that all should be heard attentively and quietly. Also, much consideration should be given regarding quality of written works and oral presentations. Quintilian warns that, in a classroom setting, “mutual praise without any regard to quality...is a very dangerous enemy of study” (II.2.11). Classroom interaction where students listen to each other and hear the response of their teacher essentially leads students to “acquire judgment by listening as well as facility by writing” (II.2.12).

The idea behind the oral component of instruction is that students have to be able to use what they learn in daily life. Richard Leo Enos describes oral elements in Isocratean education. He writes,

Study by imitation was important, but Isocrates also sharpened critical thinking by debate exercises... There is also evidence that Isocrates encouraged his students to discuss and evaluate in groups, so that they would have comments coming not only from him but from peers as well. He taught excellence in writing through exercises that bonded oral with literary composition. (Murphy, *A Short History* 32)

Students who write progymnasmata exercises are affected by knowing that the exercises will be performed in front of the class. The requirement for oral presentation builds in motivation, according to Quintilian. It also encourages quality in writing, and causes students to envision their written work as a performance as they are writing it. Students are more prone to hear their own words, and even practice reading them aloud before turning them in.

Quintilian suggests that students should be given the chance to demonstrate in public settings what they have learned in class, and argues that this practice will also add to the student's education. Quintilian writes,

Indeed, however much private study has contributed, there is still a proficiency which only the forum can give; the light is different, the aspect of real danger is different. [... I]n court the judge sits silent, the opponent bellows at them, no rash word escapes notice, all assumptions have to be proved, and the speech that has been laboriously put together in long days

and nights of study is cut short by the water clock. In some Causes, indeed, you have to drop the swelling style and its continual mighty blasts, and simply talk; and those well-trained persons just do not know how.

This is why one finds people who think themselves too eloquent to plead a Cause! (XII.6.5-6)

Quintilian emphasizes here that performance in public settings of knowledge gained in school will cause the student to practice discernment and good judgment, or fail to perform well. The final test of the students is how well they perform in the drama of life and how ably they act/ speak/ write in real social situations. Such a test is both examination and continued education at the same time, and Quintilian recommends that students have experiences writing for and speaking in public settings throughout their years of study, not only at the end. A student “taken to the forum” as a youth, gains “new knowledge of what the battle really is and what the object of his studies is” (XII.6.7). In summary, Quintilian writes, “It is only when precept and experience come together that a fitting return results from our efforts” (XII.6.7). Precept and experience come together when students are able to practice in public or “real life” settings what they learn in school.

The progymnasmata and the process of imitation teach students everything they will need to know to do well in the final exercises, the *suasoria* and *controversia*. The real drama of the classroom prepares students for oral declamations. Classrooms that use classical methods are dynamic, conversational, and controversial, not silent. When student exercises are presented, student group feedback is given every day, after every presentation. Students and teachers talk about their interpretations of words and actions.

They give reasons, no doubt, for the comments they make. Students writing the progymnasmata are actively engaged in discussing and reviewing their own and others' works, and verbal presentations and performances of works by the teacher and by students create dynamic classrooms.

The idea of repeating the exercises with increased complexity and of repeating the process of imitation is to teach students to eventually become their own teachers. Quintilian asks, regarding students, "After all, what else do we aim at by teaching them except to ensure that they do not always need to be taught?" (II.5.13). Students who write the progymnasmata a number of times learn the precepts the exercises teach to an extent that the precepts become second nature. Likewise, students who repeat the process of imitation again and again learn eventually to take themselves through the process, without the help of an instructor. Students learn to critically read texts and to incorporate what they learn from their reading into what they write. Thus, the process of imitation ultimately teaches students to develop and practice discernment of good and bad choices in writing, both in the writing of others and in their own writing. This teaching brings students closer to the larger classical curricular goal of being able to act well and to judge wisely in any situation, at any time.

Classical Revivalists

Within the past twenty years, scholars have begun to see a need to gain back some of what has been lost from the classical rhetorical tradition. Robert J. Connors calls the revitalization of rhetoric in our day "exciting" as it "has given us many novel pedagogical techniques [...]" ("Static Abstractions" 353). James J. Murphy claims, "[A] knowledge of the rhetorical past can help us solve the problems of writing in modern America"

(“Rhetorical History” 5). Several scholars have created new textbooks for college classes, based on ancient rhetorics, including Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee’s *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* (2004), Richard Lanham’s *Analyzing Prose* (2003), Frank D’Angelo’s *Composition in the Classical Tradition* (2000), and Edward P.J. Corbett and Robert Connors’s *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (1999). While the movement to revitalize classical rhetoric is gaining strength in universities, however, the benefits of this movement have not yet reached, in any real way, the levels of elementary, middle school, or high school education.

Christiansen discusses the need for educators and teachers to look to the classical rhetorical tradition for insights concerning modern situations, saying,

Any discussion of what it means to read, what relations inhere between reading and writing, literature and composition, “the word and the world,” and how reading and writing should be taught must consider how these questions can be answered from this tradition that not only invented the language arts, but also influenced the literary achievements of Western civilization for at least two millennia. The longevity of the tradition—the fact that numerous educators from diverse cultures and time periods found value in its precepts and methods—also invites a consideration of whether those precepts and methods continue to hold value today. (“The Master Double Frame” 72)

Christiansen is joined by others in the belief that the precepts and methods of the classical tradition are worthy of scrutiny and possible reimplementaion. D’Angelo writes that the rhetorical tradition is a venerable tradition “whose practical usefulness has

proved itself over many centuries and that remains relevant today” (*Composition* xiv).

Stanley F. Bonner, in his comprehensive work detailing education in ancient Rome, writes that Roman education

is not merely a subject of antiquarian or specialized academic interest, but one which has in several ways a continuing relevance far beyond ancient Rome, and is not without significance today. It is concerned with human relationships...with home as well as the school, and with those changes in society which affect both home and school. (xi)

And Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, modern rhetoric scholars who also see value in the classical tradition, write

ancient rhetoricians invented and taught an art that was immersed in the daily traffic of human events and in communal discourse about them. This art differed markedly from the modes of composition ordinarily taught in school today, which present writers and speakers with an abstracted set of pseudo-scientific rules that dictate how a finished discourse ought to look. (*Ancient Rhetorics* xiv)

Donald Lemen Clark, in his *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* declares the ancient art of teaching rhetoric has helped him in his own teaching, saying,

For the old art of teaching rhetoric, or the art of speaking well, has helped me, at least, to identify and solve many of the problems which I have had to confront in forty years of teaching thinking, speaking, and writing. As I became aware, bit by bit, of ancient teaching wisdom, as I learned the ancient precepts, imitated ancient methods, and practiced on generations

of college students, I became increasingly effective as a midwife to others' thoughts. And I have made some progress towards learning to avoid the mistakes of other teachers. So it is my hope that I may make available to younger teachers something of what I have learned. (ix)

Richard Lanham is yet another modern rhetoric scholar who sees value in classical theory and pedagogy for modern instruction. Lanham, writing specifically about classical language analysis, asserts that classical figural analysis will benefit today's students in ways modern composition approaches cannot. Lanham points out that in order to truly analyze language there must be a way to classify basic types, a set of names for the classes—a nomenclature. “Such a nomenclature has been available, in the classical rhetorical writings, for over two thousand years,” he writes. “Rhetorical analysis, using the classical terms at least, seems awfully old-fashioned nowadays. But if a better set of terms has gained common acceptance, I don't know of it” (*Analyzing Prose* xvi). Lanham's work shows the value of having a terminology, from the classical tradition, for naming and describing what we see and hear in language.

Edward P. J. Corbett and Robert Connors, in their text *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, argue that because rhetoric is pervasive in contemporary society “it behooves us to be aware of the basic strategies and principles of this ancient art. If nothing else, a knowledge of this art will equip us to respond critically to the rhetorical efforts of others in both the oral and written forms” (25). In specific relation to writing instruction, Corbett and Connors write that rhetoric can assist students in becoming better writers. They explain,

Students have too often been inhibited in their writing by the negative approach to composition—don't do this, beware of that. Classical rhetoric...in the main, offered positive advice to help writers in the composition of a specific kind of discourse directed to a definite audience for a particular purpose. ...[R]hetoric lay[s] down the general principles that writers can adapt to fit a particular situation. At least, it can provide writers with a set of procedures and criteria that can guide them in making strategic decisions in the composition process. (25)

Corbett and Connors join other theorists who see the classical rhetorical tradition as relevant and valuable for today's students.

Scholars and the Progymnasmata

Several modern theorists have also found worth specifically in the classical progymnasmata. D'Angelo writes specifically of these exercises that they “overcome the problems of empty formalism, lack of purpose, and arhetorality for which current-traditional and other kinds of pedagogies have come under fire in recent composition theory” (*Composition* xiv). D'Angelo's book *Composition in the Classical Tradition* is based entirely on the progymnasmata. Each of the twelve chapter details a progymnasmata exercise, what it accomplishes, how it has been taught and how it may be taught in a contemporary classroom. D'Angelo also champions classical imitation in teaching the progymnasmata. Although he does not call his method imitation, D'Angelo provides questions throughout his chapters to guide reading of model texts and student writing of their own texts. The questions and models provided show that students are

expected to critically read and analyze example texts, and use this reading to guide their own creation of similar works.

Christiansen also advocates teaching the progymnasmata to students in her “The Master Double Frame and Other Lessons from Classical Education.” After illuminating lessons the progymnasmata supply both readers and writers, Christiansen states, “While I add my witness that these pedagogical ideas work I also suggest that we can add to, subtract from, substitute for, and transform them to meet the ever-changing needs of the present” (95). Christiansen’s view matches the view of other theorists who agree that classical exercises can and should be taught in ways that meet modern needs.

James J. Murphy likewise argues that pedagogical values of Roman writing instruction, including the progymnasmata, “surely seem worth studying” (*A Short History* 76). Murphy argues that the progymnasmata can profitably be taught today, especially if taught together in a sequence, saying, “Many of the individual exercises can be used profitably today, of course, since each is largely self-explanatory. Nevertheless a modern reader should understand that the full power of their use resides in their interrelation to each other, and in their place in a proven sequence” (*A Short History* 75).

Other authors, including Edward P. J. Corbett and Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, and George Kennedy all support the idea of teaching progymnasmata in modern classrooms. Corbett and Connors and Crowley and Hawhee all include in their textbooks teaching classical rhetoric a chapter outlining the progymnasmata and giving examples of how the exercises were taught anciently and how the exercises may be taught in classes today. Kennedy, in his recent *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, states that the progymnasmata may

be of interest to students of literature, as “In classical, medieval, and renaissance literature, fable, narrative, chreia, ecphrasis, comparison, speech in character, and other progymnastic forms were often combined in different ways to create epics, dramas, histories, and the genres of lyric poetry” (ix). In addition, Kennedy states,

The handbooks of progymnasmata may also interest modern teachers of composition, for they present a sequence of assignments in reading, writing, and speaking which gradually increase in difficulty and in maturity of thought from simple story-telling to argumentation, combined with study of literary models. As such, the exercises were certainly effective in providing students for centuries with verbal skills that many students in our time seem less often to develop. (ix-x)

These authors all see benefits for students in learning the progymnasmata.

Richard L. Harp is yet another advocate of teaching the progymnasmata in modern classrooms. Harp, in his article “Practicing What We Preach: Using the Classics to Teach the Classics,” describes an integrated humanities program teaching the Great Books developed by three professors at the University of Kansas in which “the classics” are taught in conjunction with some of the progymnasmata. Students in the program read Aesop’s fables, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and Homer’s *Odyssey*, and use what they learn in their reading to write fables and narratives. Students then study Socrates’ *Republic* and write comparisons of, for example, Platonic aristocracy, French aristocracy in the eighteenth century, and United States democracy. Students also work to strengthen their memory, by first not being allowed to take notes on lectures, and second, by memorizing notable English poems (a total of ten poems each semester per student). Students select

lines from poems they have memorized to expand, in the form of the chreia and proverb exercises, by “elaborat[ing] upon the statement by means of a fable, and incident from a history and one from an epic poem, a line or passage from a poem they know by heart, and finally, to apply to it an incident from their own lives or from their observation of contemporary social or political affairs” (485). Students do not write all of the progymnasmata, only these five. However, the five progymnasmata are taught very much the way progymnasmata were taught anciently with the best of literature as models. Instructors in the University of Kansas course also model exercises for their students, shaping lectures on literature in the form of a thesis “expanded upon by means of the exercises contained in the progymnasmata, and the professors are in effect required to review all of their own education in order to locate significant examples and arguments that would support or attack the thesis” (487). Harp claims, “In this way a teacher becomes something more than merely a dispenser of rhetorical precepts; he must also himself embody those precepts and his authority over his students might then flow naturally from the kind of example he sets” (487).

Harp’s advocacy of teaching the progymnasmata in conjunction with the Great Books is strong. Harp, in comparing the University of Kansas humanities program’s use of the progymnasmata with methods of many ordinary freshman composition programs, states, “Grammatical correctness and term paper antisepticness, which in the absence of substantive material becomes the frequent subject of the freshman course, are no proper substitutes for demonstrating the myriad ways in which students can use great literature to understand and express the nature of their own experience” (486). Harp also argues that grammar, logic, and rhetoric cannot be taught in isolation, but must be taught “in

union with the greatest expressions of significant human experience” (486) as they are taught in the progymnasmata.

In addition to other theorists listed, educators Joseph J. Comprone and Katharine J. Ronald both support combining classical progymnasmata with modern composition approaches in order to benefit students. Comprone, in his “Classical ‘Elementary Exercises’ and In-Process Composing,” suggests that teachers, by combining classical imitation as taught in conjunction with the progymnasmata with more recent writing across the curriculum pedagogies, will help students “develop both general literacy processes and particular reading and writing skills” (11). Comprone advocates teaching copying, paraphrasing, summarizing, translating, and amplifying as methods for teaching students to write, for example, a general science essay. Comprone concludes,

These exercise and assignment traditions can be integrated, and if they are integrated, students will come to feel a part of language as it has been used in the past as well as a part of the more modern process of coming to know and discover through writing. (12)

Comprone and Ronald in their “Expressive Writing: Exercises in a New Progymnasmata” also argue that current work on expressive discourse, learning theory, and the classical progymnasmata may be combined to create “a flexible yet systematic heuristic model for writing teachers” (38). Comprone and Ronald suggest a new version of exercises that re-integrate processes of reading and writing, calling for students to examine another writer’s thinking. The exercises also advocate oral presentation of writing.

Other supporters of the progymnasmata include Tina Hansson and Anders Sigrell who currently head the Swedish Progymnasmata project, “From Aphthonius to the

Writing Process,” sponsored by Swedish Tercentary Foundation. Unpublished papers delivered at recent ISHR conferences in Warsaw, Poland, and Los Angeles, California, by authors Manfred Kraus, Alan Church, and Gideon Burton all also strongly support use of progymnasmata in classrooms. Some of these authors’ works will soon be published.

I also advocate using the progymnasmata to teach reading, writing, and thinking, specifically in secondary schools, as the exercises provide needed solutions to problems in modern composition approaches. While I agree with much of what these theorists who advocate the use of the progymnasmata think and feel in regards to the exercises, the view of the progymnasmata expressed in this thesis differs in some important ways from views expressed by other theorists. For example, while I greatly admire D’Angelo’s work dedicated to teaching the progymnasmata, one difference between my understanding of the exercises and his is that D’Angelo includes as example texts many texts of quite poor quality, including quite a few excerpts from newspaper articles. While such examples may provide subject matter for exercises, they do not provide quality examples of good writing upon which students may build or with which they may productively rival.

My understanding of the progymnasmata as central in the classical rhetorical curriculum also differs from Crowley and Hawhee’s and Corbett and Connors’s presentation of the exercises as peripheral. Corbett and Connors and Crowley and Hawhee include the progymnasmata at the end of their texts on rhetoric, after chapters on canons of rhetoric, logical topics, and imitation. These authors and their texts seem to propose that precepts of classical rhetoric are taught apart from the progymnasmata,

while my argument is that the progymnasmata were used to instruct students in the precepts.

The program Richard L. Harp describes makes good use of progymnasmata in teaching reading and writing; however, my understanding of the progymnasmata differs in one important way from that of Harp, who writes that, while the University of Kansas program emphasizes important parts of rhetoric—memory and invention—the program has “not been able to devote much time to the subordinate matters of arrangement and style” (486). Harp continues, “Style and arrangement clearly must be taught in a classical rhetoric program. Our conclusion is, though, that this can be deferred past the underclass years” (486). My argument is that style and arrangement are not subordinate matters of rhetoric, and that these elements were and should be taught in conjunction with other elements of the progymnasmata; furthermore, it is not difficult to do so. Harp reports that students, upon being assigned to write fables and fairytales, created texts that were “lifeless and unsatisfactory” (480). Harp and other professors then reviewed with students “the basic elements of the story: conflict and climax,” (480) and noticed a change for the better in student writing. What the professors could have done from the beginning is teach close reading of the model texts and analysis of stylistic elements and patterns of arrangement in order to point out to students elements that make certain fables and narratives vibrant and satisfying. Such was done classically in conjunction with teaching the progymnasmata. With the program Harp and his associates already have in place, they may add close analysis of texts and implementation of patterns learned to help students better construct their own exercises. Patterns of arrangement are also already embedded in teaching the places of the progymnasmata.

A last difference between my understanding of the progymnasmata and that of authors Joseph Comprone and Katharine Ronald who propose new “progymnasmata” for students is that Comprone’s and Ronald’s proposed exercises do not offer students all of the benefits and understanding of key precepts of rhetoric the classical exercises offer. Comprone and Ronald create exercises through which students read texts, write personal responses to the texts, read their responses aloud, and write new responses to other students’ responses. Comprone and Ronald see value in certain aspects of classical teaching of progymnasmata, including integrating acts of reading, thinking, writing, and speaking. However, the exercises Comprone and Ronald propose draw much more from modern expressivist theory and ideas of reader-response literary criticism than from the classical progymnasmata.

While differences exist between theorists who support the idea of teaching progymnasmata in modern classrooms, it is important that so many theorists see value in these exercises that, until recently, have been largely forgotten and unknown to educators. There is also great variety in what theorists see to be of value in teaching the progymnasmata, a condition that is also encouraging. Bringing a variety of perspectives to the table, theorists who study the progymnasmata can together find ways to adapt the exercises to meet the needs of modern students and classrooms.

New Contexts for Old Exercises

In contemporary reading and writing theory, more than once a theorist has thought long and hard about a particular problem and finally come up with a solution; however, unbeknownst to them, that solution was already part of classical rhetorical training. For example, Marie Foley, thinking of ways to escape formulaic teaching of the

five-paragraph essay thought of new ways to teach introductions and conclusions. Foley teaches students, “Their introduction is an occasion to make connection with their readers—appeal to them, anticipate their needs—and orient them as to the direction of the coming journey. The concluding paragraph is not merely the slot for reiterating main points; it marks the destination of the journey. It develops the final, most significant point or the climax or the surprise” (234). Quintilian, on the subject of the introduction, writes that it is the student’s opportunity to win the favor of his hearers (IV.1.2-3). Quintilian’s next 18 pages detail different ways the student may accomplish this, and what considerations are to be taken with regard to situation, subject matter, audience, and so forth. Following the introduction come the narration in which the student gives relevant information surrounding the case, and the division and proposition, in which the student orients listeners in regard to what is to come. Quintilian spends another 39 pages detailing all of these parts, their considerations, and how one may go about constructing them. As for conclusions, Quintilian teaches that the conclusion is the student’s opportunity to refresh the memory of those listening, and, more importantly, the final opportunity to “win the judge’s good will...and excite and assuage his emotions” (VI.1.11). He states that “here, if anywhere, we are allowed to release the whole flood of our eloquence” (VII.52). Quintilian thereafter devotes 24 pages to detailing concerns in regard to conclusions.

What Foley probably never realized is that what she was trying to teach her students was something that had been taught, recorded, and discussed in a good amount of detail over 1900 years earlier. She could have looked back and drawn from an abundant rhetorical past. Foley’s case isn’t an isolated incident. Whole theories of

modern composition—current-traditional, expressivist, cognitivist, social constructionist—often unknowingly bring back forgotten elements from the classical rhetorical tradition.

James J. Murphy makes a comparison to illustrate why modern teachers should build on the classical past. He writes

Is this all just impractical antiquarian hogwash? Consider just one example of old principles reshaped to fit modern needs: when the internal combustion engine made motor cars possible, the cars used regular carriage wheels. The vibration ruined the delicately constructed engines, so Charles Goodyear invented the pneumatic tire to fit that ancient invention, the wheel. The wheel itself had worked for thousands of years, but the motorcar wheel had to be rethought and replanned to fit modern times. (“Rhetorical History” 10)

Murphy, with this example, calls for educators to come to understand the principles of classical rhetoric, and then make a modern adaptation work to suit our needs. Too often, as in Foley’s case, we teachers spend immense amounts of time and energy “reinventing the wheel,” so to speak. When the methods and theories we have studied (usually those from the past two or three decades) begin to fail us, we believe that we have to figure out new and better ways to teach reading, writing, and thinking, and that we have to do it practically on our own. Some quite brilliant and helpful techniques have been come up with in this way; many, however, have turned out to be reproductions of parts of the classical rhetorical curriculum. If this is the case, we might instead choose to start out

with that curriculum, and, rather than ignoring it or being afraid of its complexity, learn it and build on it.

The classical curriculum has been rejected because of its complexity. However, Robert Connors makes the statement, “If [mistakes of current traditional rhetoric] teach us anything, it is that we as teachers must always be wary of neat, comprehensive-sounding conceptual schemes that are easy to teach but that have no real contact with what students need to learn” (“Static Abstractions” 367). In recent decades new theories have arisen that point out the complexity of writing in real, social, multi-genred situations, and differences between these situations and conceptual schemes like current-traditional rhetoric that simplify writing to an extreme degree. We are moving back toward the value of a complex scheme for writing instruction.

The goals national organizations like the NCTE, IRA, and CCCC have published for learning and writing in the language arts, and in relation to assessment, have much in common with classical goals for instruction. Student preparedness to perform well as members of society is highly valued. According to the statements of these organizations, students are expected to learn to read, interpret, evaluate, and respond to texts, and to learn how to engage with a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes. Students are also to learn strategies and processes for composing in many genres and social settings. The organizations also believe methods of writing assessment should improve teaching and learning.

The progymnasmata, within their rhetorical contexts, offer practical methods for fulfilling both classical and modern goals of reading and writing instruction. Goals of classical rhetorical instruction, including development of natural talents for practical

purposes, development of moral judgment, mental dexterity, and the ability to judge well and perform well in speaking or writing on demand are goals that find value in today's world. The classical curriculum offers practical methods (and exercises) for teaching and assessing all of these aspects of learning. If we will improve student learning, we will have to consider methods and objectives of a forgotten curriculum.

CHAPTER TWO

CURRENT-TRADITIONAL RHETORIC AND THE PROGYMNASMATA

What is known as current-traditional rhetoric developed in the nineteenth century and remained dominant in classrooms through the 1970s when challenged by rising theoretical and pedagogical movements begun in the 1940s (Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric* 15). Robert J. Connors describes the development of current-traditional rhetoric, calling it “composition-rhetoric” as current-traditional rhetoric is neither current (enjoying an ongoing sense of development), nor traditional (adherent to or developed from the older, classical rhetorical tradition) (5-6). Connors explains “this composition-rhetoric grew out of and interacted with concurrent cultural trends [of the nineteenth century], as American college and university teaching were shaped by pressures that were economic, political, and theoretical” (4). Catherine Hobbs and James Berlin give additional insight into such concurrent cultural trends, describing current-traditional rhetoric as “positivistic and rational, offering writing as an extension of the scientific method” (Murphy, *A Short History* 253). The new rhetoric of the nineteenth century was “schematic, structural rhetoric” characterized by its “love for lists, rules, and [l]aws” of composition (Connors, “Static Abstractions” 356). Connors explains that the idea of having precise “Laws” for composition matched the enthusiasm of the nineteenth century for all things “rational” and “scientific.”

Although what we know as current-traditional rhetoric was not, in Connors’ findings, a unified, unchanging phenomenon, basic elements of at least later versions of this rhetoric are understood to include (1) pedagogy that esteems formal and mechanical correctness, also called a “product” approach to teaching writing; (2) classification of

discourse into modes: description, narration, exposition, and argument; (3) style taught in terms of unity, coherence, and emphasis; (4) analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs, and (5) a preoccupation with the informal essay and research paper (*Composition-Rhetoric* 12-14). This chapter focuses on two residual features of nineteenth century current-traditional rhetoric that continue to have strong presence in today's composition classes: writing formulas and modes of composition. Teachers who focus on these elements in class do so for several reasons: writing in modes is required on state exams, and modes and formulas of writing are codified, simple to teach and to grade. Teachers may also, knowingly or by default, accept larger educational and political goals associated with current-traditional rhetoric.

One goal shared by those who developed and first implemented current-traditional rhetoric was the goal to simplify rhetorical curricula taught to students in universities and secondary schools. Numbers of students enrolling in educational institutions increased rapidly year after year from the mid 1800s on. Student bodies in the 1800s and later enjoyed wider diversity than they had previously, including diversity in level of educational preparedness. In response to increasing numbers of disproportionately prepared students, teachers began to use grammar drills and to teach formulas of writing to bring students up to levels of competency in writing expected at the secondary and college levels. In a time when the scientific was also increasingly valued, being able to teach students fixed, seemingly scientific "rules" and divisions of composition, like modes and formulas for arrangement, lent credibility to composition instruction while making composition teachable for a large and diverse student population.

Composition curricula were also changed to meet values of rising technical and vocational colleges, including the value of education as preparation for vocation. Current-traditional methods continue to be valued as a productive system for teaching composition to rising professionals. Hobbs and Berlin describe the rise of current-traditional rhetoric as taking place at the same time the modern high school and college came into being. In these schools, following the German research university model, curriculum was specialized rather than general and the overall purpose of the schools “was to train certified experts in the new sciences to produce the knowledge that would move capitalist society forward” (249). According to Hobbs and Berlin, “The new high school and college then were part of the creation of a meritocracy—a hierarchical class structure in which the certified professional is given an inordinate amount of power and reward for solving the problems considered worth solving by the demands of corporate capitalism” (254). Hobbs and Berlin note that the certified professionals trained in modern schools “usually find through their scientific decision-making process the solutions to problems that best serve their own class interests” (254). Thus, current-traditional rhetoric is an epistemology “complicit with a politics designed to preserve the interests of corporate capitalism and the university-trained experts who serve it” (253). The idea that current-traditional rhetoric continues to promote values of modern technical and vocational colleges provides one explanation for current-traditional rhetoric’s continued strong presence in classrooms and on state exams.

Writing Formulas

The most widely taught formulas of writing in modern composition classes are the five-paragraph model and the Schaffer curriculum guide. The five-paragraph model—

introductory paragraph including thesis statement, three supporting paragraphs, and concluding paragraph—is a model that still has strong presence in much of secondary school composition instruction and state writing exams. Teachers value the five-paragraph model because most students easily understand it. Papers written following the model are also easy to grade: teachers may look at the introductory paragraph, find the thesis statement containing three main points, and read the first line of the next three paragraphs to make sure all of the three main supporting points are discussed. If all supporting points are discussed, the paper may receive an ‘A’ grade. If only two supporting points are presented, the paper receives a ‘B’ grade, and so on.

The second formula taught in classes is the Schaffer curriculum guide developed in 1995 by Jane Schaffer, a teacher in San Diego. It is now taught in schools across the country. Schaffer’s formula advocates a four-paragraph essay, with each paragraph following a specific format. For example, body paragraphs are arranged in this order: Topic sentence, concrete detail #1, commentary #1a, commentary #1b, concrete detail #2, commentary #2a, commentary#2b, concluding sentence (Wiley62). Mark Wiley explains that each body paragraph must have eight sentences and contain concrete details (CD) and commentary sentences (CM). A CD “is any kind of specific detail such as facts, evidence, examples, proofs, quotations or paraphrase, or plot references” (62). A CM is the writer’s own analysis, interpretation or reaction.

The Schaffer model follows these rules:

The ratio of 1 CD to 2 CMs must always be maintained... Body paragraphs must have at least two chunks [groups of 1 CD and 2 CMs] and be a minimum of 100 words. Introductions and conclusions must be

40+ words, with the introduction containing at least three sentences and a thesis somewhere in the first paragraph, while conclusions must contain all commentary and provide a finished feeling to the essay. (Wiley 62)

Schaffer claims these numbers were created after calculating ratios and counting words in hundreds of high-scoring AP exam papers. The method she proposes reflects patterns found in the highest scoring papers. Schaffer's method of instruction is constructed to take forty-five days to teach, including prewriting and peer-editing activities where students count the number of words in each other's papers and make sure all parts of the paper fit the correct pattern. Teachers comment on papers in the same way, counting words and matching papers to the prescribed pattern. Given the tenets of the model, educators who adopt the Schaffer curriculum guide do so with the idea that the approach will lead students to score well on AP exams and other writing tests. Educators also adopt the Schaffer approach because it is a straightforward approach, one that takes relatively little time to teach and to evaluate. In addition, the approach lends itself easily to machine scoring, which scoring reduces grading time for teachers and test scorers.

Teachers who teach the five-paragraph model believe the model provides students a point of departure and needed instruction in form. Many middle and high school teachers feel that form, in some way, needs to be taught. David Peter Noskin, in his "Teaching Writing in the High School: Fifteen Years in the Making," writes that, in his first year of teaching high school, it became quickly apparent his students needed structure. He felt, in a sense, that his college professor had betrayed him, instructing him in processes of teaching writing which involve little or no structure and which are "too messy and idealistic for the realities of secondary education" (34). Critics who argue in

favor of the five-paragraph model contend that the model provides students with “a structure, a format, a plan,” and salvation from a “menacing blank sheet of paper” (Chauncey 80,82; Smith 16). Alison Kuehner argues that the five-paragraph model is a “useful step for beginning writers” that helps students “overcome writer’s block,” while teaching “the primary concepts of an essay” (83).

The five-paragraph essay is argued to be a form that is used in professional, “real-world” and high-stakes testing writing situations. The model presumably also works as a constant for many students learning to perform in new writing situations. Scholars in favor of the five-paragraph model cite research that finds the formula helps students in testing situations, especially in tests where time limits are imposed (Kueher 83, Smith 16). In addition, scholars argue that the five-paragraph essay is a form that recurs countless times in professional, “real-world” writing and in their own writing (Chauncey 82, Smith 17). Learning the five-paragraph model may help students transition from one kind of writing to another where basic requirements for structure remain the same. Taking the five-paragraph essay from students, according to one critic, is like “pulling the rug out from under them, further reinforcing some students’ belief that English is subject to the whim of the teacher” (Kueher 84).

The five-paragraph model and Schaffer curriculum guide have their critics, though, and those critics name two main drawbacks of teaching formulas: formulas stifle exploration of ideas and formulas eliminate the need for judgment. Marie Foley, in her essay “Unteaching the Five-Paragraph Essay,” claims that formulas and formula writing thwart student discovery of new ideas and encourage superficial discovery and research. Foley writes that the five-paragraph formula “relieves students of the need to probe

relationships” (232). She gives an example of a student who, while writing about three benefits of jogging—health, weight control, and stress reduction—discovers an interrelationship between feeling healthy and looking trim that reduces stress. Because the model calls for only three areas of discussion, the student will probably “let the insight slide,” not knowing really what to do with a fourth observation (233).

The Schaffer curriculum guide is seen to hinder creativity and development of students in ways similar to the five-paragraph model. Mark Wiley claims the Schaffer model stifles exploration and interpretation of issues and inhibits discovery through writing. The model, in Wiley’s view, sends the wrong message to students and “uninformed teachers” about what writing really is. He states, “Formulaic writing of the kind Schaffer advocates forces premature closure on complicated interpretive issues and stifles ongoing exploration” (64). As an example, Wiley claims that writing we do concerning literature “should reflect the connections we make in our own lives, the tentativeness of those interpretations, the complexity of the human drama, and the often unanswerable questions that inevitably remain with readers” (65). Formulaic models do not allow for this kind of discovery through writing. Wiley explains that the Schaffer curriculum guide also impedes development of students since teachers who use the Schaffer model have difficulty helping students advance beyond the formula. “Teachers,” he writes, “while acknowledging that students must move beyond the Schaffer method if they are to continue improving, were nevertheless left wondering what to do next. Unfortunately, there is no *next* in the Schaffer approach” (63).

With both the five-paragraph model and Schaffer curriculum guide, the tendency toward strict formulism is also a noted danger. Critics acknowledge that student

discovery and understanding of writing is limited when an instructor requires an exact number of supporting paragraphs, concrete details, or commentary sentences, and bases grading on student adherence to those strictures. Such devotion to formula can narrow students' perceptions of what writing entails. Rather than being encouraged to make choices in writing and examine the effects of those choices, students are taught to conform to a prescribed procedure. Progression beyond the formula is also never taught or is discouraged until some later state. Most of all, strict devotion to formula eliminates the need for students, peers, and teachers to exercise judgment and to base decisions in writing on larger considerations of self, subject, situation, and audience.

The progymnasmata offer solutions to problems seen in current-traditional teaching of formulas. These exercises provide structure and starting points for students, so students don't have to begin from nothing, but without limiting students in ways modern formulas are seen to do.

The Progymnasmata and Form

The progymnasmata succeed in teaching form without using formulas, in a way that encourages in-depth exploration of issues, creativity, and use of judgment throughout the writing process, and without creating a break between classroom writing and real-world experience. The progymnasmata accomplish this by first teaching form through the "places" of each exercise. As outlined in chapter one, places provide starting points through which students find suitable material for their cause. Places also give an idea of how a composition may effectively be ordered. For example, Aphthonius explains the places through which the refutation exercise is accomplished. His description includes indications for how the exercise may be organized. Aphthonius writes,

It is necessary for those engaged in refutation to state first the false assertion of the opposition; next, to add the exposition of the matter; and, then, to use these topics: first, the obscure and the unconvincing; after this, the impossible, the inconsistent, and the improper; and, finally, to add the irrational. (268)

The form for the exercise is already present in the assignment of the exercise and the places given. The student then takes each of the places of the exercise and finds or creates matter for that place until each place has been treated.

While this presentation of places may seem at first like it could offer a good formula for writing, two considerations refute the idea. First, each exercise, which is a unique genre, contains its own places, meaning the places of each exercise, or genre, are different from the places of the others. Because each exercise contains its own places, students learn there is not one set formula for content or arrangement that applies to every kind of composition. The second consideration is that the standards of judgment taught in conjunction with the progymnasmata are the standards of decorum. Students are evaluated primarily on the basis of how what they write (and how they arrange their discourse) meets the needs of and is appropriate for situation, self, audience, and subject. Where principles of decorum are the primary bases for evaluation, students cannot follow the form of an exercise slavishly without detriment.

The progymnasmata give no prescriptions for numbers of sentences or paragraphs for each place of the exercise, and so students focus on ideas, rather than on requirements for length. In writing a thesis exercise, for example, a student seeks to examine a question (political or speculative) by examining how something is lawful, just, profitable,

and possible, which considerations are places of the exercise. If the question under examination is whether a person should marry, and the student is treating the place of profitability, for instance, the student will find the best arguments and proofs he or she can to show that marriage is profitable. The goal is not to write a certain number of paragraphs or sentences, but to prove, to the best of the student's ability, that marriage is profitable. In completing the exercise, the student may find it takes three paragraphs to defend well the idea that marriage is profitable, and only a few sentences to defend the idea that marriage is possible. Determining necessary length for treating each place requires the student to exercise judgment.

Places listed in any of the progymnasmata also offer a guide, rather than a formula, for arrangement. Wilson, in describing the ordering of discourse advises students to "consider the nature of the cause itself, that the rather he might frame his whole oration thereafter" (51). In other words, the nature of the composition points to how it should be ordered. Accordingly, places of the progymnasmata do not have to be treated in a set order, but in the order that makes the most sense given the subject, situation, and so on. Places of each exercise are generally listed in an order that would make sense in most situations, but students are not discouraged from making judgments in regard to the order in which they treat places. The progymnasmata provide natural patterns for organizing discourses within specific genres, but those patterns are workable and changeable, not set in stone.

The following is a legislation exercise that illustrates flexibility in content and arrangement. The student follows the places for the exercise of creating an exordium, showing the contrary, showing the proposed legislation lawful, just, profitable, and

possible, answering objections, and providing a conclusion, but decides to add a place: expediency. This student chooses to arrange her composition in the order of the places as they are listed in the exercise, but could have also chosen another order. The student also determines to what extent she treats each place in her composition. Places for the exercise appear in brackets, each place located above the paragraph that treats that place.

A Proposed Amendment to the BYU On-Campus Recruiting Policy

[exordium]

Last week, Blueline Marketing held a training meeting in the BYU Wilkinson Center for their newly-recruited summer sales representatives, mostly students from UVSC and BYU. Despite the fact that Blueline Marketing has been reported to the IRS and the Better Business Bureau for tax evasion, illegal hiring, withholding payment from employees, and misrepresentation of benefits, and that at least one BYU official has expressed awareness of the misdeeds of this company, the company has been recruiting students again for this year's summer sales program, on the BYU campus, for the past two months. What is troubling about this is that Blueline Marketing is probably not the only less-than-honest company being allowed to recruit BYU students on-campus.

[the contrary]

The BYU official website for On-Campus Recruiting advertises to companies, saying,

Are you seeking interns or full-time candidates? BYU is home to over 29,000 students from around the world who are anxious

to make a difference in your organization. Meet these students through on-campus interviews or information sessions. Contact our Manager of Recruiting Services to schedule a visit.

The website offers opportunities to companies to set up on-campus interviews or information sessions, but what are the policies that will protect the students from being recruited by a dishonest company? If we look through the website further, we find only two: a policy for recruiting for full-time jobs, and a policy for recruiting for internships. The policies are so briefly outlined that, together, they take up less than a page.

What is stated in the policies makes it clear that a company like Blueline should not be offering BYU internship credit, as they did last summer. The first requirement listed in the policy for recruiting for internships, states, “Internships must be paid. (No commission sales).” How is it that companies, specifically those which recruit for summer sales, that in no way fulfill the requirements stated by either of these two policies, are still found recruiting and holding training meetings on the BYU campus, working under the guise that they are endorsed by the university? The answer is simple: there is no specific policy or policy enforcement that prevents them from doing so.

[expedient]

If BYU does not wish to come under scrutiny for allowing dishonest companies to recruit and take advantage of their students, then it would be wise to summarily amend their On-Campus Recruiting Policy to

specifically prohibit commission sales companies, especially those who have record of dishonest dealings, from recruiting or holding training meetings on-campus.

[lawful]

A few considerations need to be made regarding construction of this amendment. First, BYU is a private university and may lawfully establish any policy that does not disagree with federal regulations for private universities. The decision of who may be allowed to perform business recruiting on a private university campus is strictly up to the university.

[just]

Second, in considering any policy regarding on-campus recruiting, the university's first consideration should be the safety and well being of the students. Those who know much about BYU know that much is expected of BYU. Parents who send their students to such a university expect the university to be a safe place for their children, a place where students will not be met with duplicity or deceit.

[profitable]

Third, it is important to remember that BYU students can gain a lot through the right kinds of internships and employment opportunities. BYU students are trained to make contributions to society, outside of the school, and internships and employment can provide them an opportunity to do this. On a purely practical note, internships and employment provide

many students with needed funds to continue on in school. But a dishonest company that does not pay employees promised commission, after students spend money to travel to and live in cities across the nation, can cause students to lose a lot of money. Surely BYU doesn't want to be held responsible for endorsing dishonest companies and allowing them to contract with BYU students.

[possible]

This policy will not be difficult to enforce. It will call for hiring one person who will request reports from the Better Business Bureau, IRS, state Divisions of Labor, etc. regarding each business that asks to recruit on the Brigham Young University campus. If the company meets all of the requirements stated in the On-Campus Recruiting policies, and has clean business records, they will be invited to recruit on the BYU campus.

This policy will need to be clear, in ways that our current policies are not. If a company has been reported for fraudulent behavior in the past, there will need to be an established amount of time the company will need to have been free from fraud before being allowed to recruit on the BYU campus. This requirement will be the same for every company. If a company has changed its name within a specified number of years, the previous company will also need to be investigated.

[answer objections]

An argument will be made that this policy will turn away companies that would otherwise have recruited on our campus, and the

answer is yes, it will—but only the dishonest ones. Those companies who have a record of illegal action or fraud will not want to be investigated, and we do not want them on our campus. For all of the other companies, it should be noted that, because of the efficiency of the staff BYU hires, this process will not take long, and as soon as they are cleared they may recruit.

[conclusion]

Blueline Marketing has been allowed to recruit and to train BYU students on BYU's campus, despite a record of fraudulent activity. This summer they will put more students in danger of being cheated and forced into debt. It is my hope that BYU will not be found responsible. But it is my greater hope that, by this time next year, companies like Blueline will not be found recruiting BYU students or holding their summer sales training meetings anywhere on the BYU campus.

Natalie Baxter, February 2005, Brigham Young University

The progymnasmata offer what composition theorist John Hagaman describes as both a free and structured heuristic (22). Hagaman believes that “a way of addressing the problem of how teachers can integrate free and structured inquiry effectively can be found in the classical *progymnasmata*, exercises designed to train the classical student in the art of *inventio*” (22). Hagaman believes the places of the progymnasmata train students “to view their subjects from multiple perspectives,” such as looking at how an idea is lawful, just, profitable, and possible, and not just one of these. Hagaman also claims the progymnasmata are “sequenced to guide the student through several patterns

of thinking” (25). Yet students have freedom in writing the exercises, including freedom to select and expand subjects as the students see fit (26).

The places of the progymnasmata encourage in-depth exploration of issues by requiring students to look into core human values of equity, justice, expediency, profitability, safety, possibility, propriety, rationality, consistency, and credibility, among others. For some exercises the sheer number of places will require students to look deeply into issues from a variety of angles and to reject preliminary or superficial conclusions. Of course teachers still have the responsibility to guide students toward in-depth exploration and breadth of research, and to point out the inadequacy of superficial exploration when it happens.

Consequently, teachers will also find that the progymnasmata do not preclude creativity. In fact, having a general form already laid out lets students spend more time finding what they want to write about and writing it. Students also still create authentic works, even when writing the same exercises and following the same guidelines. With respect to originality and the progymnasmata, it is important to note that each student writing these exercises comes from a unique social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental situation. Students draw on their own socially and environmentally situated perspectives to complete assignments. The places are more specific than, for example, the five-paragraph model’s mandate to find any three instances of support of a topic, but general enough that each place may be treated in numerous ways. Students researching the same issue will find different sources and interpret the same sources differently or highlight certain sources over others. Seeing how several students treat the same topic and even the same sources differently can teach students in the class valuable

lessons about the situatedness of knowledge and interpretation. In addition, students who will perform in front of others who are completing the same exercise may feel encouraged to find original things to say about a topic. When that is the case, students may list their first ideas on a topic, then search past those ideas to others in order to explore ideas other students will be less likely to explore. Such incentive to explore topics in depth and from a variety of perspectives can be great preparation for high-stakes and AP testing, which often reward students for treating topics in original ways.

Critics of the five-paragraph and Schaffer models are concerned that “real world” writing or even college writing will ask students to do something more than or different from writing to a formula. With the progymnasmata, exercises are based on types of occurrences that happen regularly in everyday life, for example, the opportunity (or necessity) to refute a false assertion or confirm a right assertion, which a schoolchild may do among friends on the playground, a senator may do in a press conference, and a mother may do in settling a dispute between her children. Because the exercises are already developed with “real world” experiences at their core, there is no break between the form of the exercise and what happens or will happen in the everyday life of the student, a consideration that perhaps explains the longevity of these exercises. The progression that is to be expected for students, then, who write the progymnasmata, is not progression from a “school” formula to “real-world” writing, but rather progression from first learning and using the places as starting points, to knowing the places so well they become second nature. The goal of precept becoming second nature is written of time and time again in classical texts. Students also progress by dealing with more and more sophisticated subjects as the exercises are repeated throughout the students’ training.

The progymnasmata themselves have been criticized as appearing to have been “meticulous,” “strict,” and “dogmatic” (Marrou 173-175), and “impersonal” (Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric* 300). The exercises with places laid out for students may appear *too* structured; however, in writing the exercises, students find the structure is helpful. Students who have written the progymnasmata report that having places for an exercise allows them to spend more time choosing a subject and developing what they want to say, rather than spend the bulk of their time figuring out where to begin or how to go about treating the topic. Places in the progymnasmata do not constrain, but rather free up invention. In addition, when writing the progymnasmata, students don’t follow a form blindly, but rather judge for themselves how to treat all of the places, and in which order. Students may also include places not named in the exercise if they see fit. For example, if a student is refuting the saying of a famous person, the student may choose to combine places of the chreia and refutation exercises. Places of an exercise should be those that best help a student fulfill the purpose of the exercise. Places of the progymnasmata have been formulated to do just this, but, again, the places are not set in stone.

Of course those who are looking for a formula can try to turn the progymnasmata and their places into formulas by perhaps teaching the order of places as inflexible or requiring a certain number of sentences or paragraphs per place, but that is not how the exercises are meant to be taught. There are those who are mechanically minded in our field, those who seek scientific, lock-step formulas for teaching writing, and generally find or create them. For this reason it is necessary to understand that the progymnasmata cannot be removed from the rhetorical precepts they teach and the pedagogy by which they are taught and still retain their optimal use for students. For example, in order for

the progymnasmata to work, the standards for evaluation must continue to be the principles of decorum and performance, and teachers should not lapse into checking off places that have been explored.

In summary, writing formulas currently used in secondary writing instruction provide needed structure for students, but at the expense of creativity and critical thinking, while also becoming a crutch for students, one that limits progress. Places in the progymnasmata exercises provide structure and starting points for students, but do not limit students in the same ways current formulas do. Places provide a variety of directions from which a student may approach a certain writing task; they aid both creativity and critical thinking, while also providing structure. Because places of the progymnasmata are different for each exercise, students also learn that there is no one set form that will unfailingly work in every writing situation. Form changes with genre and purpose, and this is clear in the way progymnasmata are taught. In the end, students learn principles of form that apply in a variety of oratorical and formal genres, principles that apply in various writing situations and situations of everyday life. Thus the progymnasmata fulfill the current-traditional desire for a teachable and practical method for instructing in form, without relying on formulas that, in the end, impede the development of students.

Modes of Discourse

Modes of discourse—exposition, narration, description, argument, and (sometimes included) poetry—were created by current-traditional composition theorists and continue to be taught in classes today. Modes of discourse grew out of faculty psychology of the late 18th century. Faculty psychologists believed the human mind

consists of separate powers or faculties, including the intellect, the emotions, and the will. Hobbs and Berlin explain that composition theorists in the 19th century connected mental faculties with genres of discourse they called “modes.” In this view, exposition and argument correspond with the faculty of reason or intellect, description and persuasion arise from the emotions and will (Murphy, *A Short History* 253). Ferreira-Buckley and Horner trace the advent of the modes of discourse to Alexander Bain, an immensely popular psychology teacher who also taught rhetoric, and who delineated the modes of discourse as narration, description, exposition, argument, and poetry (Murphy, *A Short History* 200). Connors points out, however, that although Bain popularized the modal system and became the “father of composition,” the idea of a multimodal rhetoric existed before Bain, beginning with George Campbell and Hugh Blair, and it was manifested in a handful of secondary and elementary level “grammar and composition” textbooks between 1800 and 1830 (*Composition-Rhetoric* 210-223).

It is easy to see the influence of faculty psychology in Campbell’s *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) where he writes, “All ends of speaking are reducible to four; every speech being intended to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will” (*Philosophy* I, qtd. in Connors *Composition-Rhetoric* 214). Campbell, in his *Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence* (1807), explicates five different sorts of sermons including explanatory, controversial, commendatory, pathetic, and persuasive (*Lectures* 133-35, *Composition-Rhetoric* 214-215). The difference between Bain and the score of teachers and theorists who went before him is that Bain, unlike others “who merely mentioned their modal terms in passing [...] used the modes as an organizing principle in his *English Composition and*

Rhetoric [1866]” (223). After Bain, the modes became “accepted not merely as a classification of discourse, but as a conceptualizing strategy for teaching composition” (223).

The theory of faculty psychology was debunked almost as soon as it developed, but teaching “modes” stuck for a number of reasons. One was that they came out in a time when, as Connors explains, categories and “rules” of composition were highly valued. The rational and scientific approach to composition fit the values of the new 1880s technical college. Another reason for the popularity of modes Hobbs and Berlin explain is that modes present an “objective, disinterested, and mechanical rhetoric” (254). This rhetoric taught to an emergent class of professional experts reinforced the authority of those experts “and concealed the economic and political sources of power on which their claims to privilege were based” (254). Modes became the most popular strategy for teaching composition to the rising class of professionals, and according to Connors, “By 1920 the origin of the modes was lost in the mists of time; they had presumably been carved in stone during the Paleolithic Age” (*Composition-Rhetoric* 226).

Current-traditional rhetoric remains a strong presence in secondary schools, despite criticism and abandonment beginning in the 1940s and continuing until now. Connors asserts, “More students have been taught composition using the modes and methods than any other classification system, and these classifications still exert a powerful influence today” (*Composition-Rhetoric* 210). Interestingly, one fourth of the new rhetoric texts published by Pearson Longman for college students and teachers in 2007 focus specifically on modes of discourse. Teaching modes at the high school level

is more prevalent still. George Hillocks, in his 2002 study of state tests, found that four of the five states included in his study test their students in modes of writing (21-27).

Modes are usually presented in middle and high school texts in sections or units students work on throughout the year. For example, in *The Writer's Craft*, a newer and widely used textbook for grades nine through twelve, students work through ten sections, including sections on personal and expressive writing; observation and description; narrative and literary writing; informative exposition: classification; informative exposition: analysis; informative exposition: synthesis; persuasion; writing about literature; reports; and writing for assessment (Blau, Elbow, and Killgallon vii-xvi). The first seven of these sections come directly from the modes of discourse.

Typical of a modern modes approach, each section in *The Writer's Craft* is designed to take a few weeks to complete. For those weeks students practice writing in the mode that is the focus of the section. In *The Writer's Craft*, the text guides students through prewriting, drafting, and revising activities in each section that lead the student to create, for example, a piece of expressive writing in the first unit. When students complete the personal and expressive writing unit the class moves on to a new unit on observation and description. Students are taught conventions for each type of writing. Also typical of a modern modes approach, the longest and most detailed section or set of sections are those on expository writing. Students often learn additional "methods of exposition" such as definition, comparison/contrast, or cause/effect. In *The Writer's Craft*, students learn as methods of exposition classification, analysis, and synthesis. Often these methods of exposition become papers in the course; students will write a comparison and contrast paper, or an analysis paper, for example.

Both students and teachers may value a modes approach to writing. Teachers like modes because the modes offer a simplified schema of teaching writing. Connors describes the modes as being “convenient to teachers” (“Rise and Fall” 455). Like formulas of writing and grammar drills, modes of discourse offer structure and a teachable method, even if that method turns out to be somewhat restricting. Students and teachers may both also value modes of discourse because working through these modes offers some sense of progression, for example, a progression of beginning with personal expressive writing and working toward exposition and argumentation. Some textbooks even highlight progression experienced in working through modes, such as progression from personal to impersonal writing, or from writing what we know to writing things we do not yet know. Lastly, because modes include argumentative or persuasive writing and expressive writing, and because modes can be combined with process instruction, a modes approach lets expressivists, cognitivists, and rhetoricians who see rhetoric as argument all have their day in the composition classroom.

One benefit of modes teaching is the benefit of teaching students to write in more than one mode of discourse. Even if a student only ever learns to write in these four modes of discourse, he or she will at least learn that writing is different for different situations. He or she will learn to create narratives and descriptions and to perhaps argue persuasively a cause. And he or she will learn principles that do apply in a variety of writing situations.

Connors points out that in the face of a growing number of formal genres students were expected to learn in the early 1900s—letters, reports, proposals, editorials, narratives, poetry—current-traditionalists clung to the modes of discourse as a way to

condense and group such genres in teachable ways. Modern teachers face the same conundrum. Which genres do we teach and why? Do we group genres, and if so, how? Modes of discourse organize an almost innumerable array of formal genres into a workable number of discourse modes. If teachers teach principles governing each of these discourse modes, they don't have to teach an overwhelming assortment of genres. Being able to delineate a few seemingly encompassing modes of discourse, as it turns out, is extremely helpful for creating a teaching procedure. To most, these modes seem as logical a scheme as any for dividing discourse types.

Modes teaching has been criticized, however, for presenting a methodology that does not actually foster improvement in student writing. Albert Kitzhaber in 1953 asserted that modes represent an unrealistic view of writing by promoting formula and ignoring social context of writing (*Rhetoric in American Colleges* 220-221, qtd. in Connors, "Rise and Fall" 453-454). More contemporary theorists find that modes offer a schema of discourse easily taught and learned, but one that valorizes classification over teaching ways "writing is actually done" (Connors, "Rise and Fall" 454-455). Connors points out that, despite criticism of modes dating back to the 1950s, "even today the modes are accepted by some teachers despite their lack of basis in useful reality" ("Rise and Fall 455). One 1986 study finds disparity in quality of student writing performance across modes of discourse. Because of such disparity, evaluations of students tested in only one or a few of the modes are unreliable (Kegley 147). However, as Hillocks notes, state assessments continue to test students in modes of discourse.

Sharon Crowley describes as a great weakness of the modes the fact that aims of discourse are assigned and limited to particular genres of discourse. Crowley points out

that in the writings of Campbell and even Bain, *aims* of discourse were primarily considered. According to Crowley, Bain names the ends of discourse as three, “to inform, to persuade, to please” (*English Composition and Rhetoric, A Manual* 1, qtd. In Crowley, “Response” 89). Bain’s ends of discourse are similar to Campbell’s: “to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions or to influence the will” (*Philosophy* 1). Bain’s formulation of modes is built on two assumptions: first, the assumption that ends of discourse correspond to departments of the human mind (following faculty psychology), and second, the assumption that intention dictates formal features of kinds of texts (“Response” 89). Bain and those who followed him separated modes of description, narration, exposition, persuasion, and poetry, and linked them to individual aims of discourse “to inform, to persuade, to please.” According to Crowley, the weakness of Bain’s theory of modes is the notion of aims as a means of classifying discourse. Modes theorists, in order to create a simplified teaching schema, turned aims of discourse into a brief list of discourse types that, in theory, represent all aims of discourse.

Modes teaching can be both prescriptive and limiting, enforcing the idea that writers only persuade when writing in “persuasive” genres, only share personal experiences when writing in “narrative” genres, and so on. Modes instruction also restricts types of reasoning to particular modes of discourse: comparison and contrast belong to expository writing, for example, and ignores the fact that all areas of inquiry (classical logical topics) apply in all writing genres. In reality, expressive, literary, and persuasive writing make use of comparison as much as does expository prose.

The Progymnasmata and Modes

The progymnasmata solve problems of the modes because they do not attach forms of discourse to separate aims of discourse—the aims to teach, delight, and persuade—classical aims associated with the entire rhetorical art. If a student applies well all of the principles learned in the progymnasmata, the student will teach, delight, and persuade in every genre. In addition, the progymnasmata show students that all genres of discourse are ultimately persuasive, and that all logical topics, such as definition, similarity, difference, cause, effect, and others, apply in all genres, not just in “expository” writing. Finally, the progymnasmata teach exposition, description, narration, argument, and poetry; however, the progymnasmata do not teach these as mutually exclusive modes but as parts of discourse that function separately and also within larger discourse. In short, the progymnasmata accomplish what the modes accomplish and more.

In classical theory, the distinctions of modes just do not stand up. The classical tradition does not connect mental faculties with forms of discourse. All discourse, in the classical conception, engages the mind, emotions, will, and character of its participants. The degree to which the reason, emotions, etc. are engaged is determined by a complex combination of choices both speaker and listener or reader and writer make and other attendant circumstances. The connection modes do have with classical theory is that the three aims of discourse that both Bain and Campbell reference—the aims to teach, delight, and persuade—come from classical rhetorical theory. Campbell was perhaps the last true classicist of his time, although influenced as well by faculty psychology. However, classically, the three aims of discourse—all of them together—are accomplished when an orator sufficiently considers and applies all parts of the

curriculum: places, topics, parts of decorum, genres of oratory, canons of rhetoric, and so on. The aims do not constitute genres of discourse themselves.

In classical understanding as well, all genres of discourse are ultimately persuasive and the progymnasmata show this. Classically, all texts are arguments. According to Christiansen, some of the progymnasmata are obviously arguments: the chreia, proverb, refutation, confirmation, encomium, vituperation, comparison, commonplace, thesis, and legislation (82). Christiansen argues that even the remaining exercises—the fable, tale, description and impersonation—are seen as arguments. For example, tales function as proofs within larger works. In a description exercise, the author vividly describes a scene or a thing or events, but always with the purpose of moving the audience to do something, to understand, think or feel something they did not previously understand, think or feel. And the impersonation works as an argument for what the author thinks the person would have said in that situation, which, in turn, creates an argument for what the author believes the character to be like or to have been like. Christiansen also points out that, ultimately, the fact that a student must examine and vie with an original text makes all exercises an argument between student and previous authors, since the student argues, so to speak, for a new and better way to tell a story, confirm a myth, and so on (82-83). In these ways, the progymnasmata teach that all genres are persuasive and that all texts create arguments.

All of the current-traditional modes of discourse are fundamentally persuasive: narrative, description, and exposition, as well as argumentation. Narratives and descriptions create their own arguments as described above. Exposition, which involves writing informatively from a variety of logical standpoints such as definition, cause and

effect, etc., also persuades. When we inform others, there is an expected outcome. If we define something, we expect others to accept or reject our definition. If we look at causes and effects it is to learn something so we will know how to act. Every expository act informs someone's decisions and actions and is therefore persuasive. The separation of persuasion into its own mode of discourse, when all of the modes are fundamentally persuasive, does not make as much sense as teaching that all genres are persuasive.

The progymnasmata further teach logical topics as applying to all kinds of discourse, not to a mode called "exposition." In modern teaching of expository writing, theorists have taken classical logical topics described by Aristotle, Cicero, and others, including definition, genus, species, property, similarity, difference, contraries, conflicts, antecedents, consequences, adjuncts, causes, effects, conjugates, and quality, and have separated them into kinds of writing. The logical topics, however, apply in any kind of writing. The topics describe various logical standpoints a writer may take, and writers and speakers always speak and write from a logical standpoint, irrespective of genre.

Students gain experience with logical topics through the progymnasmata and their places. The places of the chreia and the proverb, for example, include the cause, the contrary, analogy, example, and testimony of ancients. The places of the refutation include the obscure, the unconvincing, the impossible, the inconsistent, the improper, and the irrational. To write on each of these places, students will have to consider quality of arguments and evidence, contraries, conflicts, and similarities and dissimilarities between reality (based on experience and evidence) and the statement being refuted. In addition to these logical topics, in determining possibility and self-consistency, students may have to reason concerning antecedents, consequents, adjuncts, causes and effects. The

commonplace includes places of incompatible, comparison, intention, lawful, just, rational, possible, which coincide with the logical topics compatibles, similarities and dissimilarities, and conjecture. In determining possibility, once again, the student may have to visit other logical topics. Encomia and vituperations include the places of genus (a logical topic), race, fatherland, forebears, and fathers (coinciding with the topics quality and antecedents), education, achievements, spirit – courage or prudence, body – swiftness or strength, fortune (power, wealth, friends). All of these last places relate to the logical topic “quality” as well. The exercise ends with the place of comparison (relating to similarities and dissimilarities, and contraries). The proposal of a law, or legislation exercise, also focuses on quality (of a law). The specific places given in the exercise include the lawful, the just, the useful, and the possible.

The fact that the progymnasmata teach logical topics as applying in all genres is significant because students learn to approach topics from various logical standpoints and to deeply analyze situations. Students also become able to analyze others’ logical approaches to issues. Students who are familiar with all of the topics will be able to see which ones are being considered in any speech or written work, and which ones are being left out. For example, a student familiar with the topics can question why an organization argues for a policy on the basis of precedent rather than consequences or effects.

The progymnasmata do actually teach all of the current-traditional modes, but not as separate modes. Discourse types, the way the progymnasmata present them, are not as fixed nor as separate as modes teaching suggests. For example, the progymnasmata teach narratives and descriptions as their own exercise because both of these stand as individual text types; however, narratives and descriptions also serve as parts of other works.

Narrative, for instance, can appear as a proof, a statement of facts, or a digression within an argument. Descriptions can also appear as proofs, and serve well in moving the audience in the conclusion of a work. Exposition can be a part of any of the exercises, and the logical topics usually taught in modern classes in conjunction with exposition are taught in the progymnasmata in all of the exercises. Persuasion is taught as part of all the exercises with the view that all texts are arguments. And poetry, which is sometimes included as a mode, is taught by the progymnasmata as students will recreate poetic works into prose works or vice versa as one form of transforming an original text into a new work. The progymnasmata do teach all of what is included in the modes, and therefore accomplish what the modes accomplish, but the progymnasmata, because they do not restrict persuasion, exposition or logical topics to a mode, and because they teach description and narration as parts of discourse that can function alone or as parts of larger discourse, rather than as mutually exclusive modes, avoid the tendency of modes to oversimplify and formularize facets of writing that are more complex and less mechanical than modes of discourse suggest.

Conclusion

Current-traditional teaching of modes of discourse and formulas of writing offer the modern teacher an efficient and relatively simple schema for teaching writing. The modes and formulas can help students learn aspects of writing that will prove useful in professional and academic careers. However, critics argue that modes and formulas present writing in a way that is too simplified, teaching writing as a process of following the “rules.”

The progymnasmata offer many of the same benefits seen in current-traditional methods—a workable set of methods for teaching writing, preparation for professional and academic writing—while also supplying solutions to some of the problems current-traditional methods create. The progymnasmata answer problems of writing formulas by teaching forms as flexible and adaptable for situations, encouraging student creativity and exploration of issues, and teaching forms that are relevant to real-world experience. The progymnasmata offer, as an alternative to modes of discourse, the view that all genres of discourse are ultimately persuasive, that all aims of discourse are accomplished by applying well the full art of rhetoric, and that all logical topics also apply in all genres of discourse. The progymnasmata teach genre in a way that emphasizes the interconnected nature of genres in ways that modes teaching does not. The progymnasmata also teach narrative, description, exposition, argument, and poetry in ways that make more sense than teaching them as modes.

In the end, the progymnasmata accomplish goals that are in some ways similar to, but not the same as, those of current-traditional rhetoric. The progymnasmata, through their places, provide students with starting points for composing. The progymnasmata, unlike current-traditional methods, however, provide students with avenues for creativity and in-depth exploration and discovery regarding subjects. The progymnasmata also emphasize judgment over following “rules” or formulas of writing. Where current-traditional methods seek to simplify the rhetorical curriculum, but do so at the expense of eliminating important principles, the progymnasmata teach complex principles of an expansive rhetorical curriculum through basic exercises repeated over and over again with increased complexity. The methods of the progymnasmata are approachable for

teachers and students. Because the progymnasmata offer these specific benefits in response to problems with current-traditional methodologies, the progymnasmata provide a sensible alternative to current-traditional modes and formula teaching in secondary schools.

CHAPTER THREE

EXPRESSIVISM AND THE PROGYMNASMATA

Expressivism is often associated with Peter Elbow, Donald Murray, Ken Macrorie, and the 1960s; however, modern scholar James Berlin asserts, “Expressionistic rhetoric developed during the first two decades of the twentieth century and was especially prominent after World War I in response to current-traditional rhetoric” (484), and composition and rhetoric scholar Robert J. Connors points out that valuing personal taste in writing began as early as the late 1700s with Hugh Blair’s *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres*. Indeed, the value of the natural and idiomatic self seems evident in Richard Whately’s writing in 1828 that claims a student must “be encouraged to express himself (in correct language indeed, but) in a free, natural, and simple style” (*Elements of Rhetoric*, in Bizzell, *The Rhetorical Tradition* 1013). Whately believed that the student allowed to write on matters of interest to him would produce prose that is “lively, unfettered, [and] natural” (1013). With the nineteenth century Romantic Movement, writing instruction shifted remarkably toward the personal. Connors finds that romanticism “began to appear openly and in earnest in composition after 1870” when, “For the first time, students are told that their responsibility is to be original in their writing, and usually this meant writing from observation” (*Composition-Rhetoric* 313). Connors notes that “after 1900 personal writing was (and has remained) a large part of composition” (318).

Berlin describes the metamorphosis of expressionistic rhetoric from “a scheme arguing for writing as a gift of genius, an art accessible only to a few” to a “gift” that is “democratized, writing becoming an art of which all are capable” (484). More modern

conceptions of expressionism have become fixated on the individual and on processes of self-discovery and self-expression. Historian and scholar Martin Nystrand describes the Dartmouth Seminar in 1966 in which an instructional alternative to current-traditional teaching—an approach emphasizing “personal growth”—was proposed (12).

Expressivists generally agree that self-discovery and originality of expression are of supreme importance in writing, regardless of the genre in which one is writing. Modern expressivism is also concerned with empowering the individual by teaching the individual to find and use his or her *own* voice.

The main claim of modern expressivism is that the ultimate standard for good writing is that an author is true to his or her own self. When a writer is uninhibited by exterior influences, that is what constitutes “true” writing. Main learning goals of expressive approaches to writing include the goals of helping students find confidence and enjoyment in writing, helping students discover their own individual voices, and empowering students to ultimately rely on themselves and not on an audience for evaluation of their writing (Berlin 485-486). Several classroom strategies are designed to carry out these ends, including writing in genres that are personal in nature, engaging in abundant freewriting and brainstorming, and encouraging students to trust themselves as writers.

Expressive theories of writing encourage writing in genres that are “personal” in nature. Students are encouraged to “write what they know,” meaning to write from experience. Margot Soven, in *Teaching Writing in Middle and Secondary Schools: Theory, Research, and Practice*, describes the expressive approach as the “personal growth” approach to teaching. Writing classrooms that adopt such an approach “invite

students to write personal narratives about topics of interest to them...” and include “many activities for personal writing” (205). Teachers assign “journals, personal responses to literature, and creative writing based on personal experiences” (205). These types of assignments focus on originality of expression and encourage students to write on subjects familiar to them. One personal example of this approach comes from my literature class, my junior year of high school. We were instructed by our teacher to each keep a journal of any kind of thoughts we wanted to record. He collected the journals, “read them,” and wrote a few, carefully non-judgmental comments in them like “Interesting,” or “What happened next?” We received credit if we had done the assignment. This assignment encouraged us to “express our individual selves” and focused, more or less, on topics of interest to us. Another example of an expressive assignment is the commonly assigned Personal Essay in first-year writing classes through which students learn to question their own interpretations of events in their lives. Students in secondary schools prepare for the personal essay genre by writing memoirs, as is shown in the *Writer’s Craft* textbook which assigns students to write an essay describing an autobiographical incident (25-28). Personal writing is often seen as easy and familiar for students, and so often precedes teaching of other genres in classes that teach, for example, argumentative genres in addition to personal genres.

As for style, expressive models equate style with “voice,” a term defined in a number of ways: an expression of the writer’s personality; a quality of good writing; a moment of truth, passion, or flavor. Expressive theorists value the “authentic” voice congruent with a writer’s individual personality. This voice belongs uniquely to one writer and comes forward on its own when that writer writes in personal genres, free

writes, and brainstorms. The view of style as authentic voice is congruent with expressive view of writing as “the discovery of the true self” (Berlin 484), and the expressive goal of writing as “authentic self expression” that “lead[s] to authentic self-experience for both the writer and the reader” (484). The concept of authentic and honest voice is key in expressive pedagogy. Donald M. Murray writes, “voice is the quality, more than any other, that allows us to recognize excellent writing” (21). He goes on to explain that an effective voice “causes things to happen for [readers] as they happened for the writer or narrator” (24). Although this quality is key, there seems to be a lot of variation on what voice is or means. Peter Elbow describes voice as a unique way of writing that “resonates” with an individual’s distinct personality (*Writing With Power* 281-288). Vicki Spandel writes, “For me, voice is a moment of truth, or what I sometimes call ‘the chill factor’” (20). Spandel believes that individual experience helps to shape a person’s “personal definition for voice” (20). Spandel quotes a rubric that defines voice as “passion” and “flavor,” and a student who adds her interpretation: “It’s when you feel the exclamation point even though it’s not there” (19). Certainly, voice seems a difficult concept to pin down.

Expressivist theory also believes the key quality of voice cannot be taught. Because students are believed to already have within themselves everything they need in order to write well, expressivist pedagogy aims to liberate individual voice, rather than teach it. In *Telling Writing*, Ken Macrorie states, “all good writers *speak* in honest *voices*” (15). The way to allow an individual’s honest voice and distinct personality to come forth during writing is through abundant brainstorming and free writing. Elbow writes that students will “improve [their] writing more through free writing and sharing

than through any other activity..." (24). The idea is that when given enough opportunities to freewrite and brainstorm, a writer's natural style appears. As mentioned, expressive theories of writing encourage writing in genres that are "personal" in nature: personal narratives, journals, personal responses to literature, and creative writing based on personal experiences. These types of assignments focus on helping students feel enjoyment in writing and drawing out the student's authentic, uninhibited voice.

Expressivists intend for students to learn to trust themselves as writers and to assert their own individuality in the face of current political, economic, and social arrangements; however, Berlin points out, "Strategies for doing so must of course be left to the individual" (487). Expressivist writers Elbow and Murray do both offer advice to students in this regard. Berlin quotes Elbow in saying, "we need to learn to write what is true and what needs saying even if the whole world is scandalized. We need to learn to eventually find in *ourselves* the support which—perhaps for a long time—we must seek openly from others" (*Writing With Power* 190, Berlin 486). Murray also writes, "[T]he writer is on a search for himself. If he finds himself he will find an audience, because all of us have the same common core. And when he digs deeply into himself and is able to define himself, he will find others who will read with a shock of recognition what he has written" (*A Writer Teaches Writing* 4, qtd. in Berlin 486). Although this advice is freely given, no classroom strategies for teaching students to trust themselves as writers and individuals are presented. Theorists also make clear their advocacy of individual protest against political and social forces, but offer no ideas for what form such resistance might take, as that would eliminate individuality in the protests.

An expressive approach can benefit students in certain ways. Expressivist theories teach honesty as an important element in writing, an element that is apparent in a person's style. Expressivism also brings needed attention to creativity and enjoyment in writing. An added benefit of expressive teaching is that of teaching students to trust themselves as writers rather than placing full trust in "rules" or formulas of writing, as students are encouraged to do under the current-traditional paradigm.

Expressivism, however, has also been criticized for limiting students. For example, expressivism has been criticized for limiting instruction to genres that are considered personal, expressive, or creative, and for limiting students to one option for style—the personal expression option. Patricia Bizzell criticizes expressivists for harming students by failing to teach academic language, which puts students at a disadvantage when they must write within the academic disciplines (Bizzell, "Cognition" 215-216; "What Happens" 295). Another problem with instruction in expressive genres is that teachers feel disinclined to grade these genres for fear of thwarting students' creative development. Students in expression-centered classrooms are often given credit for completing assignments only. Expressivism has been further criticized for assuming that students already have within themselves everything they need in order to write well, thus expressivists refuse to offer instruction in components of good writing. Spandel points out that refusing to instruct on any aspect of writing is unfair (20). From my experience, when teachers teach "personal" genres of writing, it becomes easy to adopt an opinion a co-instructor expressed to me regarding a personal essay assignment. She said, "Some students do really well at this type of writing and some just don't. Not every student is a creative writer." Expressive assignments call for a conception of style or

voice that is intuitive and offer no instructive help for students who struggle (other than the idea to “keep writing”). Such assignments seem minimally useful to students and teachers who hope to understand and master style. An added limitation of an expressivist approach to writing is that it does not teach students principles for inventing, other than encouraging brainstorming and freewriting. Expressivism also does not teach principles of form. The idea is that an uninhibited writer will discover on her own the form that is most natural for what she is trying to accomplish.

The Progymnasmata and Expressivism

The progymnasmata offer solutions to problems in expressive pedagogy. The progymnasmata teach what may be called “voice,” by encouraging creativity and use of humor in writing the exercises; however, “voice” is included in a larger art of style, a teachable art that is more encompassing than the expressivist concept of voice. The progymnasmata, in addition, blur distinctions between creative and argumentative genres and give students experience with a variety of genres. And finally, the progymnasmata teach students to cultivate judgment by giving students a good sense of the general criteria for good writing, while also teaching students to consider and value the response of an audience of peers and instructor, making writing and speaking both a personal and a social experience.

The progymnasmata encourage the creation of “voice” by giving students room to be creative. Because the places of the exercises free up invention, as discussed in the previous chapter, and also provide forms that are wide open for creative adaptation, students feel free to make their own renditions of the exercises as individual as they would like. Many students find that the exercises, because of their simplicity and

heuristic nature are enjoyable to write. For example, the places of the fable from Rainolde are retell the tale, praise the author, place the moral, declare the nature of things contained in the fable, have the characters reason with one another, make a similitude, include an example to prove the matter, and make the epilogue (B.j.). A classmate in my English 613 Rhetorical Criticism class, Chris, wrote and presented a fable to our class following these places. True to what has been said about the places and judgment, Chris chose to treat many of the places of the exercise, but not all of them. Chris chose to transform Aesop's well-known fable, "The Hare and the Tortoise," by expanding the fable and changing the ending. Her rendition reads

Then there was the Hare. What shall I say more? There was the Hare. Of the swift, there was not a swifter one among all of Aesop's creatures; of the long-eared, his ears were the longest; of all track champions, he was the Nike in the forest of Reeboks, the cheetah in a jungle of pronghorns, and the Dauer 962 LeMans in a brickyard of Camaros. What shall I say more? There was the Hare.

"I shall demolish any beast with two legs," said the Hare. "I am a cocky jerk. I have the longest ears and the fastest paws in the Milky Way. Eat squid. Whether I win or lose, I will throw a temper tantrum so loud and so political, that the fox will be forced to o'er turn the results of whatever race you are stupid enough to challenge me to."

"I am stupid enough to challenge you to a race," said the Tortoise, green and slower than snails. For my innocence and naivety will win the hearts of generations, regardless of my pace (which my friends have told me is

‘slow and steady,’ not that I would say so much of myself). Certainly, it is a universal fact that the most likeable character wins, in the hearts of all men everywhere, if not the physical race around which an entire fable may be written.”

“You’re on,” said the Hare, who had eaten Wheaties for breakfast and was stretching his quads next to the pear tree.

The fox shot the gun, but there was a false start on the part of the Tortoise, who was trying to win the role of underdog, but who instead was made to look like a cheater.

Christine Spencer, September 2004, Brigham Young University

The open form of the fable exercise encouraged Chris to be creative and to use her own voice.

The progymnasmata teach “voice” by encouraging use of humor in the exercises. Chris’s exercise, as she has written it, turns out quite humorous. It’s easy to tell she had fun writing it. We, as a class, enjoyed listening to her read it to us as well. So many of these exercises have us laughing, no surprise—laughter was highly valued in the classical curriculum. The progymnasmata give students a chance to learn to use humor. One reason is that, because the exercises are taught using classical imitation, the progymnasmata lend themselves to parody. In transforming a text, it seems natural to play off of the first text. The new text then becomes the old text and others may play off of it. Another way the progymnasmata teach humor is through class presentations. Students presenting works to a classroom of peers quickly learn that humor is highly valued and that laughter is one of the most gratifying responses of an audience; it

immediately means the audience is on your side. Thus, in classes where students write and present the exercises, students often come up with ways to make each other laugh. My memories of the first class in which classmates and I wrote the progymnasmata are that the exercises were so funny; they were fun to write and to listen to.

An example of using humor in writing an exercise comes from another classmate, Dave, who created a narrative by writing an extended speech for one of the characters in the film *A Christmas Story*. Dave chose to rework Ralphie's petition for a Christmas gift, which reads, "What I want for Christmas is a Red Ryder BB gun with a compass in the stock and this thing that tells time. I think everybody should have a Red Ryder BB gun. They are very good for Christmas. I don't think a football is a very good Christmas present." Dave creates humor in his exercise by amplifying the original text through inflated language (the figures *bomphiologia* and hyperbole), extensive epithets such as "insignificant petition," "remarkably simple Christmas gift," "adult-scorned but adolescent coveted ...", "functional merits," and so on, and allusions to scripture. Dave's exercise reads:

My most humble, insignificant petition for a remarkably simple Christmas gift (yet one of lifesaving importance), a gift that, if granted, would deem all other Christmas gifts received in my entire lifetime of no consequence, is the adult-scorned but adolescent-coveted Carbine Action Two-Hundred Shot Lightning Loader Range Model Air Rifle, also known as the Red Ryder BB gun. Indeed, I ought not even expound the greatness of such a gift, but the circumstance compels me to do so. [...]

Surely, this is no ordinary BB gun, for although ordinary BB guns certainly have their functional merits of firing silver projectiles, the Red Ryder BB gun functions with an efficiency one-hundred fold that of an ordinary BB gun. The Red Ryder BB gun also has a compass in the stock, which lends an additional degree of use to those tracking encroaching enemies in the exposed territory of one's backyard. And surely, the other component of the Red Ryder BB gun—"this thing that tells time"—is equally crucial to assisting those members of secret societies in being punctual in listening to secret messages transmitted via radio waves. Clearly such benefits, which extend far beyond the life of the gift, could not be gleaned from something as trivial as a football.

Indeed, following this lengthy amplification of the nature, nobility, and utility of the Red Ryder BB gun, adults who have heretofore scorned this blessed, yea, even the holy grail of Christmas gifts, yea, even the Father and Hope of all BB guns, would do well to speedily repent of their obstinate pessimism, rash dismissal, and unjust condemnation and prohibition of the Red Ryder BB gun and thereby omit from their vocabularies "You'll shoot your eye out!" and bestow into the hands of their adolescent children, the wonderfully awesome and noble Red Ryder BB gun. Now is the time to act, before the opportunity to purchase and distribute this priceless gift fades into the night of darkness, wherein no labor can be performed.

David Stock, September 2004, Brigham Young University

The progymnasmata do teach “voice,” but not by ever calling it that. The progymnasmata do not explicitly focus on bringing out students’ individual voices. That is because the notion of the individual voice and individual genius has only really gained strength since the Romantic Period. Classical theory has more in common with modern day social constructivist theory that proposes a person’s “voice” reflects more his or her educational, social, and familial past and present, and his or her socio-cultural and socio-economic past and present surroundings than an actual consistent and unique personality. There is room, in the progymnasmata, however, for all elements of a student’s individual experience to be brought into play. The progymnasmata encourage “voice,” not by trying to stimulate the discovery of an authentic self, but by providing open forms with which students may be imaginative and creative in individual ways.

The idea of voice is also encompassed in and teachable through the larger classical art of style. Instructors of the progymnasmata teach style by walking students through close reading of texts, and looking specifically at elements of style—metaphor, simile, allegory, hyperbaton, alliteration, zeugma, isocolon, epimone, asyndeton, parenthesis, bomphiologia, enargia, euphemismus, synecdoche, metonymy—figures of speech and thought of which there are hundreds. Students identify elements of style (figures) and then practice them, imitating a text’s constructions and creating their own. Once a student has mastered a figure of speech or thought, the student will be able to use that figure in his or her own writing, keeping in mind the principles of appropriateness or decorum that govern all choices for style.

This process of learning style, however, does not prevent students from developing a style that is honest or individual to them. Because students will favor some

stylistic patterns over others and come to enjoy how certain stylistic elements work within certain settings, students still create their own styles in writing. Stylistic choices continue to be individual, although more informed and less haphazard when students receive training in style. Like expressivist theories, classical theory agrees that honesty in writing is an important element and that honesty is apparent in a person's style; however, unlike expressive theories, classical theory believes that honesty is not a style itself, but is manifested where stylistic choices are self-consistent and where message and style are consistent with each other.

Methods of the progymnasmata for teaching style oppose the expressivist idea of voice as unteachable, and some theorists feel the classical approach makes more sense and is better for students. Composition theorists Joseph J. Comprone and Katharine Ronald agree that many things that “nineteenth-century romantics, with their emphases on the expressiveness of writing understood as undefinable and rationally uncontrollable processes, can be empirically studied, are reducible to systematic theoretical analysis and description, and – ultimately – can be made into pedagogical models” (37). Comprone and Ronald continue:

Certainly this does not mean that we will ever be able to reduce the teaching of writing to a totally mechanical system of mental and physical operations that behavioral theorists might have once argued was possible, but it does mean that we can, as a profession, organize ourselves around a set of heuristic operations that are neither too mechanically simplistic nor too romantically mysterious. (37)

The progymnasmata taught in conjunction with classical imitation offers such a “set of heuristic operations” that takes style from the realm of mysterious and undefinable to the realm of controllable and learnable for teachers and students.

The progymnasmata also avoid the criticism of teaching only one or a few kinds of discourse. While the preliminary exercises do give practice in what are considered creative genres of writing—tales, fables, descriptions, and characterizations, they also provide experience in other genres, such as refutation and confirmation of ideas or stories, proposal of laws, praise and blame of persons or things, creation of arguments concerning issues of finite scope, and expansion of sayings and proverbs. Rather than separate fiction and non-fiction, the personal essay and the persuasive argument, the exercises blur the lines between the two. For example, in an encomium, a student may praise a person, real or fictive. A student may praise (and one has praised) a fly—a real insect, but an encomium praising a fly turns into a comedy. Fables are written about fictitious characters; however, the moral is an admonition applicable to real life and the narrative its proof. The characters in a tale are also created, but may represent true persons. Even a “true” tale about real persons is a fabrication of sorts, because it represents the point of view of one individual. In proposing a law, a student may discuss an existing or an imaginary law. And refutation or confirmation of a myth or historic event reveals the fictitious nature of some of the “factual” stories we have grown up with.

The progymnasmata teach creativity and argumentation together, and teach genres in a way that assigns equal importance and validity to many kinds of genres. The progymnasmata’s blurring the lines between fiction and non-fiction and between creative genres and genres that do the “real-world’s work” differs from expressivist division of

creative/ expressive genres from argumentative/ communicative genres and emphasis of creative/ expressive genres over other genres of writing. Blurring the lines between fiction and non-fiction, creative and argumentative, helps students understand all genres as fundamentally argumentative, and causes students to realize that creativity and other kinds of social action coexist in many genres. The progymnasmata do teach both expressive and communicative genres with equal emphasis and importance. The first few of the progymnasmata, including the fable, tale, chreia, and proverb, may seem both more expressive and less sophisticated than later exercises of confirmation, refutation, thesis and legislation. However, the fact that preliminary exercises are repeated throughout a student's training with varying levels of difficulty emphasizes the importance and complexity of all exercises. Comprone and Ronald, who argue for using a sequence of assignments based on classical progymnasmata in secondary classrooms, point out that the sequence of the progymnasmata "moves [...] from expressive to transactional writing. [...] However, the sequences are recursive" (39).

Finally, the progymnasmata teach students to cultivate judgment by giving students a good sense of general criteria for good writing—the principles of decorum, which principles center on the relationship between a speaker or writer and his or her audience. In writing, we still consider how well the audience will understand us; how well the material, form, and style we have chosen fit the occasion; how well our words and ideas flow together, and to what extent the audience will be willing to listen to us, based on the beauty and variety of our composition. These principles have not lost their applicability over a few thousand years because they are built on basic human needs and

desires—the need to understand and be understood, the desire to hear that which pleases the ear, and the need and desire to trust those who are most knowledgeable.

The principles of decorum are built on the idea that speaking and writing are social actions, a notion expressivists do not always embrace. Isocrates' rhetorical curriculum, we remember, was constructed to help students become able to engage in public discourse in many spheres, and teaching students principles of decorum helps students make good judgments as they express themselves to others. Instead of encouraging students to rely solely on themselves and to ignore audience, as do both Elbow and Murray, the progymnasmata teach students to both trust their own judgment, based on understanding of universal principles, and to consider and value the response of an audience of peers and instructor. Writing, as taught by the progymnasmata, is not solely a personal experience, but is more often a social undertaking.

In the pedagogy of the progymnasmata described earlier, students practice self-correction of their works and then present their works before peers and instructor. Self-correction involves considering principles of decorum. Seeing the principles in action, however, does not happen until students present their works before others and gain a response. Students have to be able to see that response in order to tell whether the decisions they made had the effect the students had hoped for. And so students who write the progymnasmata learn to value the response of instructor and peers, in addition to valuing their own judgment and correction of their work. Methods of self-correction and public presentation seem, simply, more helpful to students than leaving students to their own resources. Where much writing students will do throughout their lives will have a public audience, instruction focused on writing for a private audience, and

instruction that eliminates the scrutiny of others, disadvantages students and ill-prepares them for the future.

Expressivists may here argue that students can make judgments concerning writing on their own by following their intuition, which claim is valid regarding students who, by nature or by upbringing, have developed social aptitudes. Principles of decorum, however, can help even these students improve their abilities to make good judgments in social interaction. Principles of decorum also make teachable aspects of discourse that seem intuitive for some students but that are not so intuitive for others.

Conclusion

The progymnasmata offer instruction in some aspects of writing that expressive methodologies teach, such as individual creativity, and in some aspects of writing expressive methodologies do not teach, such as invention, arrangement, style (including voice), and principles for evaluating writing. The progymnasmata do foster creativity and enjoyment in writing and sharing writing, but do so without limiting class instruction and student writing to writing in genres deemed personal and expressive. Because the progymnasmata offer these benefits to expressivist teaching, teaching the progymnasmata in classrooms that favor expressivist methodologies can expand student understanding and provide valuable additions to what is now being taught.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL EPISTEMIC METHODOLOGIES AND THE PROGYMNASMATA

According to James Berlin, social epistemic rhetoric began in the late 1960s with theorists Kenneth Burke and Richard Ohmann, gathering over the next twenty years other spokespersons such as Richard Young, Alton Becker, Kenneth Pike, Kenneth Bruffee, Ann Berthoff, and Patricia Bizzell (488). One stimulus for the movement was that theorists saw a lack of concern for social aspects of writing in current-traditional, expressive, and process approaches (see next chapter). Although there are many points on which social epistemic theorists disagree, one element that unifies them is “a notion of rhetoric as a political act involving a dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as the agency of mediation” (Berlin 488). In essence, individuals interacting through the medium of language are influenced by material and social conditions always present, and interaction itself is a political and social act. Unlike other modern composition approaches described in this thesis, the social epistemic approach takes into consideration historical and social aspects of discourse. In addition, social epistemists critique economic, political, and social arrangements by critiquing dialectical interactions that take place within and between those arrangements.

Social epistemists have developed genre theory, the newest composition-teaching methodology and most recent expression of social epistemic rhetoric. Dean explains how the teaching of genre and of social situation coincides. Dean writes,

By definition, genre is discourse that arises out of recurring communicative acts in certain social situations. [...] Understanding genre

requires some understanding of the social context it arises from as well as an ability to read a text with certain considerations of the social nature of its context in mind. (*Strategic Writing* 54)

Genre theorists Amy Devitt, Mary Jo Reiff, and Anis Bawarshi explain that genre theory sees genres “not simply as types of texts but as forms of rhetorical action that are intimately related to forms of social organization and action” (xvii). By “rhetorical action,” the authors mean actions of speakers and writers meant “to accomplish something with language” (6). While some versions of genre theory in the classroom focus solely on teaching formal features of genres, other genre-based classroom approaches teach students to read, write, and critique with the situational and social functions of genres in mind.

Although genre theory is not completely unified, most genre theory instruction can be seen as accomplishing at least part of three main goals. The first goal is that of teaching students strategies for working within genres. The second goal is helping students develop genre “awareness,” what Devitt calls “a critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms” (*Writing Genres* 192). Critical genre awareness is developed as students learn to analyze ways genres respond to and derive from situations, and to consider ways genres create or reinforce social relationships. The third goal is that of bringing students to critique and conscientiously embrace or resist, through writing, social ideologies witnessed in, created by, or enforced through genres. The last goal is realized when students learn to critique social roles of readers and writers as well as distribution of social power and privilege enforced in the forms

of genres, and then to act on their new understanding as students create their own renditions of genres.

Much of genre theory instruction focuses on teaching students to write a variety of formal genres, because writing within different genres is now required in state core curricula and on state exams. Some teachers create assignments that lead students to use several genres to accomplish one purpose. For example, Dean relates the story of two seventh-grade teachers who assign their students to write about a day in a place they like. Students are required to compile in a short book writing that takes the form of a variety of genres such as personal letters, rules, instructions, and short reports (all functional genres required by the state core curriculum), and other genres such as packing lists, recipes, maps, wanted posters, daily schedules, store receipts, and poems (*Strategic* 56). The purpose of the assignment is to train students to use a number of genres to accomplish a writing task, such as the task of communicating to an audience what a day is like in a certain place. Such training Devitt proposes will provide students with more “potential antecedents...for addressing new situations” (qtd. in Dean, *Strategic* 57). Another assignment requiring students to write in more than one genre is the multi-genred research paper, an assignment that allows students to combine with the traditional genre of the research paper other genres such as poetry, articles, essays or letters. The assignment encourages students to recognize ways in which certain types of thinking and expression are promoted or restricted by genre, in addition to giving students experience working within genres.

Teaching formal genres benefits students in other ways as well. Some genre theorists see teaching form as liberating for students, as form guides structured search and also enables creativity. Of form as heuristic, genre theorist Richard Coe writes,

Form, in its emptiness, is heuristic, for it guides a structured search. Faced with the emptiness of form, a *human* being seeks matter to fill it. Form becomes, therefore, a motivator for generating information. Like any heuristic, it motivates a search for information of a certain type: when the searchers can anticipate what shape of stuff they seek, generation is less free, but much more efficient; by constraining the search, form directs attention. (“An Apology for Form” 18)

Devitt also points out that “genres constitute the already existing from which the creative writer diverges, but they also constitute the divergence” (152). Knowing expectations of genres allows writers to both work efficiently and effectively within genres and also to determine what will be unique in their particular writing task or instance of the genre (153).

In order to teach genres, instructors teach students to analyze scenes, situations, and genres. This analysis encourages the use of model texts (usually called genre samples) in the classroom. Students learn to work within a genre by analyzing patterns within genre samples and noting how those patterns reflect scene and situation. Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi claim this is how students turn “their *reading of* a scene into their *writing in* a scene” (xxi). In explaining ways students analyze scene, situation, and genre, I draw from the text *Scenes of Writing* by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi because it is currently the most used text in genre theory instruction. Most other authors who provide

examples of genre theory instruction in the classroom take their examples directly from *Scenes of Writing* or create exercises by adapting exercises from the *Scenes of Writing* text.

Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi define three key concepts of genre theory: the *scene*—the overall setting where communication happens, the *situation*—the rhetorical interaction happening within a scene, and the *genre*, “a common way of responding rhetorically to a situation” (7). For example, within the scene of a criminal trial we find the situations of swearing in witnesses and testifying, and, within those situations, the genres of courtroom oaths and testimonies. Genre is also described as a repeated “pattern of action” within a situation that is “widely accepted by participants in the scene to guide them as they act in that situation” (21). Genres “all involve certain conventions for using language to accomplish efficiently and effectively certain tasks within the situation” (22). In this model, it is within the genre that rhetorical actions take place, and in those rhetorical actions, a writer or speaker makes choices, including choices of vocabulary, sentence structure, tone, persona, organization, and supporting evidence. The writer’s understanding of scene and situation affects these choices.

First, in analyzing the scene, students ask questions of what kind of “place” the scene is (for example, a courtroom is a scene as is academia), who the participants are, and what objectives the participants share. In *Scenes of Writing*, a student who wants to place a classified ad is encouraged to analyze a scene this way:

You might start by defining the groups of people involved in this scene and their shared objectives. One group involved includes the subscribers to the newspaper who come to this place where communication happens

(the classified section) with the shared objectives of looking for a product/service to buy or sell. Another group of people in this scene is the newspaper's classifieds staff, whose shared objectives are to sell advertisement space and to compile all of the necessary information for selling the product (name, price, contact number) of service while maintaining the newspaper's policy of brevity and space for other ads. The group of those (including you) who *place* ads may even share some objectives with the classifieds staff, such as the objective of brevity, since the cost of advertisements is per word. (10)

The authors make the claim that knowledge of the scene is critical because it helps guide choices regarding content, language, length, and format. For example, "knowing that the classified staff needs to pack many ads into a small space and that they charge by the word, you will understand why your ad must be short" (11).

In analyzing situation, students ask questions regarding participants (who they are), subject (what it is), setting (where the interaction is taking place), and purpose (why the writer is presenting the subject in this way). For example, Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi ask students to read three editorials that discuss drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and then to reflect on how "when [the editorials] were published, who wrote them, and who would be reading them" determine how the editorials treat the same topic differently, and how "shared objectives, beliefs and values of the differing scenes (the national conservation organization, the academic scene, and the corporate scene) affect rhetorical choices the writers make and "how the writers

present themselves” (*Scenes* 21). Analyzing situation helps students make connections between characteristics of genres and a genre’s participants, subject, setting, and purpose.

In analyzing genre, students look at a number of samples of the same genre and determine commonalities among the samples. Students look specifically at content (what kind of information is typically included or excluded), appeals to the audience (following logos, pathos, and ethos), structural patterns (what the various parts are and how they are organized), format (including layout, appearance, length), syntax (sentence structure, length, complexity, patterns and passive or active voice) and diction (word choice and connotation of words). Finding common patterns in the genre samples in each of these areas helps students do what others do when writing within the genre. This type of genre analysis provides students with strategies for working with unfamiliar genres as well as genres with which students are already familiar.

The second goal of genre instruction is teaching students critical genre awareness, or, in other words, strategies for thinking critically about genres. Students learn genre awareness by looking particularly at how genres respond to and derive from situations. For example, Dean, in *Genre Theory: Teaching, Writing, and Being*, writes that students learning about résumés “may recognize how the features respond to a social situation—a busy reader who wants to gather information specific to the situation quickly” (31). Students also cultivate genre awareness by asking questions regarding the social and ideological workings genres permit, create, or reinforce. Using the terms described above, students analyze what patterns found in the genre reveal about situation and scene.

Students thinking critically about genres ask the following types of questions regarding a genre:

- What do participants have to know or believe to understand or appreciate the genre?
- Who is invited into the genre, and who is excluded?
- What roles for writers and readers does it encourage or discourage?
- What values, beliefs, goals, and assumptions are revealed through the genre's patterns?
- How is the subject of the genre treated? What content is considered most important? What content (topics or details) is ignored?
- What actions does the genre help make possible? What actions does the genre make difficult?
- What attitude toward readers is implied in the genre? What attitude toward the world is implied in it? (Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi 94).

Students working through these questions seek to connect structural, stylistic, and idea features of genres with the values, beliefs, goals, assumptions, and world-view those features reveal. For example, Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi give the example of terminology used in military settings, and as a specific example, the use of the word “rack” instead of “bed,” the term “rack” implying a hard surface on which items are stored. Implications of the term “rack” de-emphasize the human and emotional qualities of military personnel who sleep on the racks. In thinking critically about word choice and connotation, the authors posit that use of words like “rack” dehumanizes soldiers so they will be able to think of themselves more as objects than humans with feelings in order to perform under the horrible conditions of war; soldiers are spoken to this way and learn such terminology as part of their training and socialization into the military scene

(51-52). Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi's critical analysis of word choice in military language is based on what the authors know about the scene and situation, as well as the genre. The authors claim that this kind of critical genre analysis allows outsiders to "gain insight into both behaviors and values of the participants in the scene" (52).

A second example for uncovering values, beliefs, goals, assumptions, and world-views implicit in textual patterns comes in an essay from Perri Klass in which Klass analyzes jargon and abbreviations that doctors and nurses use when communicating with each other, their use of expressions that place the patient as the subject of the verb, and employment of baseball metaphors. In Klass's evaluation, these language patterns reveal assumptions of the medical scene and those who participate in it that doctors are at liberty to criticize patients as long as the criticism is in code, that patients are responsible for their own physical state, and that patients' feelings are subordinate in importance to doctors' getting their work done.

Analysis leads to critique, the third goal of genre instruction. Critique takes critical reading one step further into questioning the practices that a genre reflects and enables. Because communities or groups of people use certain genres, a critique of a genre often becomes "a part of a larger critique of the [...] community and its typical assumptions, beliefs, and practices" (151). Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi also claim, "Critiquing genres can also help explain how and why some genres might fail to function effectively in a scene of writing" (153). The authors give as an example a student who uses the five-paragraph essay in a college-level writing course and discovers the genre is not sophisticated enough to help her accomplish all she wishes to in the class.

The critique of genres is a valued part of genre-based instruction, because such can potentially lead persons to change genres to make them more equitable or effective. Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi give two examples of how genre critique leading to change. The first is a student critique of wedding invitations that points out a cultural irony in how wedding invitations appeal mainly to brides while at the same time least serving the bride's self-interests by reducing the bride to a piece of property that is being transferred from parents to husband. Evidence for this critique is drawn from analysis of patterns of color, drawings, lettering, and wording in wedding invitations. The second example is a scholarly critique from Randall Popken who analyzes the résumé genre and concludes that patterns of "subjectless sentences," physical restraints of length, overall structure and prescribed categories, and limited kinds of acceptable topics in résumés support the conclusion that résumés "depersonalize[] job seekers, portraying them as commodities that can be sold" (159). Given the social variables relating to genres, it may be easier for students to change the characteristics of a wedding invitation than of a résumé. Changing the traditional format of any genre will have consequences of some sort. The idea of critique is, "If you understand a genre's limitations when you write it, you might be able to resist its embedded assumptions" (162). Genre theory teaches students to be aware of possible consequences of resisting the conventions of genres and to make decisions with both their own ideas and beliefs and also possible consequences in mind.

The questions guiding critique of genres differ from those guiding analysis of genres. Questions for critiquing genres are these:

- What does the genre allow its users to do and what does it not allow them to do?

- Whose needs are most served by the genre? Whose needs are least served?
- In what ways does the genre succeed the most? In what ways does it fail?
- Does the genre enable its users to represent themselves fully?
- Does the genre limit the ways in which its users can do their work?
- Does the genre create inequalities among its users that lead to imbalances of power?
- Do the assumptions that the genre reflects privilege certain ways of doing things?
- Do those privileged ways of doing things run counter to the supposed objectives of those who use it and the scene in which it is used?
- Does the genre allow its users to do certain things at the expense of others? And if so, at what cost? (Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi 161).

Asking these questions of genres should help a student to critique assumptions, values, beliefs, and goals of communities or groups that use the genres. A student who questions the beliefs and practices of communities or groups through genre critique can better decide to what extent he or she will identify with those beliefs and participate in those practices.

Peter Clements suggests a methodology for accomplishing all three genre theory goals with students by moving students through three stages of using genre: a textual stage in which students closely read and compare examples of a genre, a contextual stage in which students focus on ways specific features and patterns of texts work to achieve

rhetorical purposes, and a critical stage, which extends the discussion to social roles that genres instantiate (206). Clements first asks his students to analyze genre samples, looking at noticeable characteristics of sentence structure, vocabulary, and transition signals in terms of their purpose in the genre (207). Clements then moves his students through a series of three steps developed by Devitt, Bawarshi and Reiff in which students study the situation of the genre, identify and describe patterns in the genre's features, and analyze what these patterns reveal about the situation, in order to learn about situational variables underlying genre (209). In the last stage, students focus on social roles of the reader and writer made evident in the text's patterns. Clements walks his students through questions created by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi (listed above) for critiquing genres. In the process of critique, patterns in genres give students concrete ways of drawing conclusions about "how readers and writers are constituted through the genre...how texts assert specific forms of authority, and how they signal affiliation with discourse communities" (212). Clements has used this pedagogy in first-year writing classes; a few instructors have used it in secondary schools.

A genre theory approach to instruction has many advantages. It offers the practical benefit of teaching students strategies for writing in many genres and for familiarizing themselves with unfamiliar genres. Students learn through a genre-based approach to write in personal, academic, and public/ workplace scenes and genres. A genre theory approach also offers students strategies for analyzing writing in terms of its larger social context and for critiquing both elements of genre and larger elements of society and social expectation.

Genre theory resurrects important elements of classical rhetoric. First is the teaching of form as heuristic and the idea that form enables creativity. A second element is the recognition that formal features of texts reflect the situations that evoke those texts. In teaching writing as socially situated, genre theory brings back an attention to context that was had in the classical tradition. Third is an attention to stylistic patterns in texts that is absent in all other modern composition theories. Along with this attention to style, genre theory reinstates use of example texts in teaching students to write. Fourth is an attention to assumptions, beliefs, and values embedded in patterns of writing and speaking. Genre theory is the first composition theory to recognize ways in which elements of text reflect values of a society. And fifth is the teaching of writing as a series of choices that have immediate social consequences. In teaching students strategies for making informed decisions regarding the extent to which they will adhere to or depart from a genre's expectations, genre theory takes a sort of middle stance between current-traditional rhetoric and expressivism regarding the role of the writer. Where current-traditional rhetoric teaches students to follow the "rules" no matter what, and expressivist teaching encourages breaking from conventions regardless of consequences—for example, if your boss wants you to write a memo and you feel like writing a poem, write a poem—genre theory presents a good middle ground where students learn expectations of genres and consequences (both positive and negative) of breaking from those expectations.

Another benefit of genre theory is the positive effect it has had on teachers and school boards in teaching them to consider that teaching genres can be the same as teaching ideologies. Dean quotes Romano who urges teachers to "examine our courses

and school curricula for genre hegemony. Does one genre dominate?” (“Teaching” 174, qtd. in Dean, *Genre Theory* 26). If one genre dominates, teachers and school boards are reinforcing certain ideologies for students and ignoring others (26).

A last benefit of genre theory is the teaching of genre critique through which students consider influences of society and ideology on forms in writing and make decisions regarding how to act based on what they have discerned. Bawarshi points out that “Genres [...] carry with them social motives—socially sanctioned ways of ‘appropriately’ recognizing and behaving within certain situations—that we as social actors internalize as intentions and then enact rhetorically as social practices” (“Genre Function” 341). Teaching students to critique genres helps students to challenge existing social motives manifest in forms and patterns of discourse, even possibly motives and assumptions that the student has formerly complacently internalized. Purposeful acceptance or rejection of social motives and the forms and patterns that support or communicate those motives can potentially change societies.

Progymnasmata and Genre

Genre theory is good, but not perfect. I see three primary drawbacks, all of which are answered in the progymnasmata exercises: first, genre theory’s teaching of identifying patterns in texts is too limited to optimally help students; second, genre theory de-emphasizes decisions of individual persons by speaking of what genres “do” instead of what writers or speakers do through genres; and third, genre theorists and teachers of genre disagree on their definitions of genre and on what the emphasis in genre-based instruction should be. In this regard, some genre theorists want to expand the realm of

the genre to include all social action while teachers of genre see practical benefits of teaching genre as form.

First, genre theory's methods for teaching patterns in genres, at least the methods presented by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi, limit students to analyzing texts for patterns in content, appeal, structure, format, syntax, and word choice. From a modern perspective, this brief list seems adequate. It is only when compared with classical rhetoric's naming of over 500 such patterns (called figures) in text that the genre theory approach appears wanting. Students of genre theory who are taught to notice patterns in content, appeal, format, syntax, and diction are given the further instruction and clarification in *Scenes of Writing* that "appeal" refers to logos, pathos, or ethos, "structure" denotes ordering of items, "format" indicates layout, appearance, and length of a document, "syntax" refers to length and complexity of sentences, and "diction" denotes word choice. One limitation here, aside from limitation in scope, is that students are not taught names (other than the five general terms listed above) for patterns they see in texts. Rather, students are instructed to notice general characteristics of texts and to name or describe the patterns they see. It is not that genre theory denies that names of figures of speech and thought can be taught, but rather that no widely used genre theory approach yet teaches names for figures.

Classical theorists named and described hundreds of figures, which students can learn to identify and replicate. Students do not necessarily have to learn all 500 figures, but learning names for some is a great benefit. When students learn a name for a pattern, and have that pattern pointed out to them, the pattern becomes easier to recognize. After learning what a certain figure is and does, students can more knowingly use figures and

create the text effects they wish to create. In light of the fact that hundreds of figures of speech and thought have been identified, it seems unfair to expect students to both recognize and rename all those patterns on their own. The expectation for students to identify and describe many text patterns without aid is an approach of starting from scratch that needlessly wastes student energy.

One rebuttal to the idea of teaching students names for figures in order to help students identify patterns in texts comes from the constructivist approach that theorizes that students retain more from working at discovering things than they do in a traditional approach that teaches students figures and names and then has students identify and use figures. The constructivist approach may require much time and energy on the part of the student, but constructivists would say the result is worth the time. Empirical evidence suggesting which approach truly takes more time and which approach is more productive for students is not readily available; however, from my own experience, learning names for and being provided with examples of figures in texts has helped me to learn and become familiar with many more figures than I believe I could have on my own. Knowing names for the figures also gives me a nomenclature, as Lanham suggests, that enables me to discuss figures with other students and teachers. That is not to say that students have to learn the Greek terms for figures. Thomas Wilson gives many figures described in the Greco-roman tradition English names. Students and teachers today may do the same.

Genre theory offers the most complete modern pedagogy for teaching elements of style; however, this pedagogy is not nearly as complete as the classical approach. Through genre-based instruction, students learn to analyze genres for patterns in content,

appeals, structural patterns, format, syntax, and diction. Through recognizing patterns of appeal, structure, and so on, in genres, students can become self-conscious regarding the same kinds of patterns in their own writing. Students taught this way see writing as a process of making choices; they will analyze the choices that others have made and make their own writing choices. Close analysis of texts and the idea of assimilating best features of texts are both part of the classical tradition. The classical tradition also teaches students to notice how all decisions in a text relate to context, “for no quality belongs to any part of utterance outside of the complex or context of speech in which the part is found” (Quintilian I.5.4).

The progymnasmata offer a broad pedagogy for teaching patterns in speech and writing. The classical approach teaches students many different kinds of patterns and many names for the patterns they see, with the idea that having a name and an example of a pattern makes the pattern easier to see and to practice in the student’s own writing. Learning figures, their names, and the patterns the names represent, can be valuable for students as it give students a vocabulary for what the author does and a point of departure for creating new text effects. For example, it is easy to create a metaphor once you know what one is and have seen a few. Students are often surprised and delighted to learn there are names and descriptions for what an author does.

Students can also replicate figures seen in other texts in their own works. I wrote a description exercise after examining figures in Louise Plummer’s “First Things First.” The subject matter of my exercise is different from Plummer’s subject material, but I try to create some of the same kinds of patterns Plummer creates and use figures she uses,

including vivid detail (prosopogrophia), descriptions of sights and sounds of a place (topographia), asides (parenthesis), and simile. The following is my description exercise.

Fishing

I remember fishing with my Dad like most people remember their favorite Christmas. Mammoth Lakes in the summer, Florence Lake around September, just before it snows, even the small and muddy Big Rock Creek was a pleasant relief from the desert we called home.

All around us was desert, the thick smell of sage brush, and the hot desert stillness that breaks only when a car passes or a raven crows from a Joshua tree. Everything seems to be in slow motion in that heat; even sound is too hot to move quickly. The thought of that rippling, gurgling water that spills over and through the rocks crowded together, and those shady trees whispering and swaying, dropping their leaves into the water, was enough to send us piling into the car with fishing poles flung helter-skelter across the seat tops any way they would fit, and tackle boxes stored under our feet. As soon as all arms and legs were inside the vehicle, we would go.

“We” is the six of us—Mom, Dad, my two sisters, one brother, and I. Those were the Big Rock Creek trips, where Mom would usually bring and set out a nice picnic, then sit and read her book. Chrissy and Lisa, who didn’t like to fish, would play in the water and climb up and over the big rocks that explained how the creek got its name.

As children, we were drawn to the water, and the stream, to us, was beautiful. As soon as we got out of the car, we would run down, hopping and climbing over the warm rocks to the stream, to see how big it was. We would dip our hands in the cold water and feel it push at our fingers. There were trees growing in and around the water, and even though the air was still warm, the soft, cool breeze coming out of the canyon would rustle the leaves on the trees and brush our faces.

Dad would almost always let me fish with him, and even share his pole, since my poles were usually hand-me-downs from Robert, and by the time I got them, the reels and bails didn't work so well.

I think I liked fishing for the water and the fish. The water was cool and just kept slipping by, like it had somewhere to be by dinnertime. And there's that sound that comes when the water hits a rock just right and makes that "Gunk, Gunk" sound like a big swallow an actor does to show everyone he's swallowing. Then there are the higher-pitched sounds like wet fingers touching a tin bell over and over again. I guess that rhythmic repeat of the sounds, new water hitting the same depreciations in the rocks, over and over again, is what makes water sound like it's talking to you. And then sometimes it's singing to you, and I remember the time that Dad stood by the creek and waved his arms like a conductor, and he asked me, "Can't you hear it?" It was God's music to him.

And the fish, the fish were beautiful. Not like you see wrapped up in Styrofoam and plastic at the grocery store. These fish would shine in

the sun and they would jump and bend on the line, scales gleaming and the light shooting off of them; and the sun would catch the fish and the water splashing, all at once, in a moment of perfect art. I liked the feel of a fish in my hands, cold and slick. I always wanted to just hold the fish and admire it for a moment before I let it go. Robert taught me to point the fish upstream and push the water into its gills so that it would be okay when it swam away.

Sometimes I would sit behind Dad and watch him fish and I would try to be really still so as not to scare the fish with my shadow. That's what makes me think that maybe what I really liked about fishing was my dad. Dad, who worked late hours, Dad, who had to spend evenings with clients on the telephone, Dad, who always rubbed his eyes like he had a headache during the prayer over dinner. Out here, Dad was just him, he was happy. He could conduct the music of the stream and show me how to cast into a difficult spot. He could joke with Robert about how many fish they would catch and tell us stories from his growing-up days.

We don't go fishing so often anymore, but I see that sort of happiness in Dad every once in a while—when he sits and watches his grandchildren play or shows us the new trees he has planted in the yard. He still works a lot, but I think he enjoys it more now that the market is better.

Dad always says that he wishes he had been home more with us kids when we were little. He got his degree in psychology and wanted to

be a schoolteacher or counselor, but he couldn't make enough to support a family, and that's why he went into realty. Then the market fell and he struggled all those years, sometimes sleeping at the office, just to make ends meet.

I still get that lump in my throat when I think about Dad. I think that's why I love to remember those fishing trips and the way he loved the trees and the sky, and the water. That hike up around Florence Lake that one summer, with the sun streaming in through the trees and all the little colored leaves, the size of pennies, falling down everywhere, made it feel like we were in another world, a perfect world.

Dad said the universe has music, that day that he was conducting. I think he was right. Someday we will go fishing again, maybe at the end of this summer. We can touch the water and listen to it slide over the rocks, and it will be music, and happiness, all over again.

Natalie Baxter, March 2005, Brigham Young University

Examining the techniques (or use of figures) in another author's writing helps me to vary and expand my own technique (or the figures I use) in writing. D'Angelo writes that this process of observing figures in texts and practicing those figures in writing spares novice writers the painful stumbling and fumbling through "all of the embryonic phases characteristic of an evolving style ("Imitation and Style" 283). Furthermore, observing and practicing figures helps students internalize alternate modes of expression (290).

Having a vocabulary of figures also keeps students and teachers from drifting into abstraction. Often students struggle with creating the text effects we describe to them

when we say, “Be sure to maintain a sincere tone,” or, “create a story that is engaging and humorous.” Some students struggle with the nuances of these somewhat abstract descriptions and others like them, and those students feel unsure of what teachers mean. Giving students examples of how authors create works that are engaging and humorous, pointing out specific patterns and giving names for those patterns gives students a more concrete idea of how authors create style that works. Practicing discourse patterns leads eventually to their becoming second nature.

A second problem of the genre theory approach is genre theorists’ tendency to focus on what *genres* “do,” and to use terminology that places responsibility for the perpetuation of ideologies and social expectations on *genres*, rather than on persons or communities. The authors of *Scenes of Writing* cannot seem to decide which have more power—genres, or writers and speakers. Throughout the text, the authors treat genres as entities responsible for their actions, saying that genres “enable users,” that genres “limit users,” that genres “create inequalities among users” (161), that genres “fail to function effectively in a scene of writing” (153), and so on. Really, if a genre “failed to function within a scene,” doesn’t that mean the person who chose to use that genre in a certain setting made an incorrect or ineffective choice of genre, not that the genre itself is deficient? Referring to genres as though they are accountable themselves for the poor decisions of writers and speakers shifts responsibility from writers and speakers who use genres to genres, and seems as illogical as a child saying it was his arm who hit his brother and not himself. The language used by genre theorists creates an ideology itself, one that enforces a sort of “group think” where no individual or group is truly responsible for the patterns that “occur” in genres.

Genre theorists sometimes contradict themselves in their references to genres as acting agents when they sometimes intermittently refer to genres as tools. Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi, in the same text quoted above also make statements like “Genres do not change magically on their own; *people* change genres...” (163, emphasis in original), “As attitudes, ways of knowing, and goals change, *people* revise already existing genres and sometimes develop new ones that more effectively reflect these new attitudes, ways of knowing, and goals” (162, emphasis added), and “Genre critique can help reveal shortcomings in the ways *we* communicate and act in our various scenes” (159, emphasis added). And so the idea of genres as tools of communication is not negated entirely by genre theorists, but theorists’ referring to genres as both agents and tools is confusing.

In connection with genres being assigned the status of agents in themselves is the idea that genres represent the values and beliefs of whole societies. While patterns in genres may certainly reveal assumptions, values, beliefs and goals of persons and communities that use those genres, the idea that a genre sample (so, a text) represents primarily the views of a society de-emphasizes the autonomy of the individual author, treating authors and speakers more as mirrors of their surroundings than as self-directed beings. In addition, teaching genres as representations of societal goals and beliefs has important implications for students trying to critique and change genres. Where patterns in genres represent the beliefs and values of whole societies, critiquing and changing a genre appears to be the equivalent of challenging a whole society, which can be quite intimidating for a single student. The process may also seem futile to many students who are taught that, through the process of changing genres, perhaps, over time, society’s values eventually change (see Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi 162-163). Devitt does point

out that genre theory does consider choices of individual authors, but usually considers those choices in light of how the author conforms to or subverts established expectations of the genre, which acts entail consequences such as acculturation or diversion from the norm (Devitt *Writing Genres* 141). Analysis of even individual choices, then, focuses primarily on societal values and on an individual's willingness to support or reject established social expectations.

The kind of text analysis students are taught in conjunction with the progymnasmata emphasizes authorial choices and judgment in text acts. While authorial choices are considered within social and historical context, the choices of the individual author, nonetheless, remain the central emphasis of textual analysis. This focus on the judgment of the author is built on the classical understanding of text. Christiansen explains that, in the classical tradition, all texts are read as “purposeful ‘acts’ before hearers in a certain place, time, and social situation” (73). Christiansen continues,

The “text” is motivated behavior, composed of signs (verbal only one kind) that point to the speaker's decisions and their meanings in the larger social context. The meanings include the speaker's explicit and implicit interpretations of reality, both that which is the subject and that which is the context of the discourse, and the speaker's character, both the persona (image) that he or she intentionally adopts and the person (identity) that unintentionally emerges from the text's totality. The text's subject is the socio-physical-psychological world and the context includes both that world and the moral world—the relationships between the speaker and the audiences, as well as the assumptions the speaker makes about the

characters of self and audience, the relationships inhering between them, the appropriate way to treat audiences, and the bases for good judgment.

(86)

In this classical definition of text, signs (including behavior) point to the speaker's decisions, which have meaning within a larger social context. Text points us to an author's assumptions and his or her bases for judgment, as well as his or her interpretations of social, physical, moral and psychological realities. Text, in all the ways we read it, points back to the author. With this view, patterns within texts point more to an author's interpretations and internalizations of social and physical conditions than to those social and physical conditions themselves.

Of course when reading text, students consider context. Quintilian explains that parts of text, such as words, do not hold meaning outside of context, for "none of these qualities belongs to [a word] except in so far as it is part of a complex or context of speech: we praise words when they are well adapted to the matter" (I.5.3). The classical consideration of context is a comprehensive one. Again, Christiansen explains

In the irreducible context, there is always the speaker (who has been shaped by many environmental influences, but who also shapes self and environment) using a medium (signs) to comment on a subject (some aspect of "reality") in a certain manner (behavior) in order to elicit a response from an audience (who has been shaped, but also shapes) with whom the speaker shares physical, historical, cultural, and moral experiences. (87)

In this definition of context, physical, historical, cultural, moral and environmental influences are not seen as the sole elements of context, nor as existing absolutely, but are perceived by readers and writers, speakers, and listeners who make decisions and behave in certain ways based on their perceptions of the exterior world. In this understanding, if the persons who are making choices and perceiving realities are left out of context, that view of context is incomplete.

Genre theory does not teach students to critique a speaker's bases for judgment, aside from considering social and political influences, nor does genre theory teach students to assess an author's perceptions of moral realities. Rather, critique of genres focuses on how elements of a genre are effective in relation to task and context, with context signifying socio-political-physical conditions. The concern in adding critique of moral grounds is a concern of inculcating moral values in a world where a moral "true north" is not agreed upon. However, teachers of rhetoric in ancient Greece and Rome and in the Renaissance (periods and places that adopted very different interpretations of moral values) understood that agreement on moral values is not requisite for teaching students to recognize and critique moral grounds. Each student will formulate critiques of other works from the viewpoint of his own moral compass, which does not have to be altered by the teacher. Classical practice simply acknowledges that perceptions of moral realities are always present in texts and presents those perceptions for critique.

In the classical reading of texts, it is clear that authorial decisions are paramount and that responsibility for authorial choices remains with the author. Student are taught to consider, for example,

[...] the way in which the judge is conciliated in the Prooemium; the clarity, brevity, and credibility of the Narrative; the speaker's plan and hidden artifice [...]; the wisdom shown in dividing the materials; the delicate and dense argument; the vigour that stirs and the charm that delights; the sharpness of the invective, the wit of the jokes; and how finally the orator reigns over the jury's emotions, forces his way into their hearts, and makes their feelings reflect his words. (Quintilian II .5.8-9)

Authorial choices are seen as direct reflections of the wit, the accomplishment, and good judgment of the author. Reading text in terms of authorial decisions also places responsibility on the writer or individual as an agent who makes his or her own choices. Although certainly affected by society and common ideologies, the individual, in the classical tradition, is still accountable for the beliefs and values he or she assumes.

The view of text as representing the choices of an individual author has important implications for students. With emphasis in analyzing texts placed on analyzing the judgment of the author, students are also taught that when they transform a text, they are vying with the author and that author's judgments seen in the text, not just a text itself without an author. The text is not seen as something static or an authority itself, nor as a reflection of context without the interpretation of a person, but as a creation demonstrating decisions and perceptions of an author, and it is those decisions that students challenge and make over again for themselves. Students practicing classical imitation are already given the confidence of knowing they are vying with the best authors and being taught they have every right to do so. In addition, the idea of transforming a text by challenging one author and one author's decisions is a more

accomplishable feat than the idea of one student challenging the views of a whole society.

A third drawback of genre theory is a split between theory and classroom practice, which split is critiqued by genre theorists themselves. One ongoing discussion/ debate in genre theory occurs between some teachers of genre who are interested in the practicality of teaching genre as form and some theorists who conceive of genre as action rather than form. Theorists who lean more toward genre as action also often claim that students cannot really learn genres (as ways of acting) except by being immersed in the situations that use the genres. Essentially, they claim there is no way to teach genres in school except as rules or the kinds of writing we do in school (Freedman 766).

For a while several genre theorists have sought to extend the definition of genre to mean more than groups of texts with similar formal features. Carolyn R. Miller wrote the groundbreaking essay for genre theory in 1984, "Genre as Social Action," in which she defined genres as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (159). Anis Bawarshi, in 2000, wrote, "[G]enres have come to be defined as typified rhetorical ways communicants come to recognize and act in all kinds of situations, literary and nonliterary. As such, genres do not simply help us define and organize kinds of texts; they also help us define and organize kinds of social actions, social actions that these texts rhetorically make possible" ("The Genre Function" 335). Bawarshi goes on to claim that "genres constitute all communicative action" (336). Devitt expresses the same sentiment when she claims in her essay, "Genre, Genres, and the Teaching of Genre," that what is "new" about genre theory is "the study of genre as action rather than form, as a text-type that *does* something rather than *is* something" (606). Devitt highlights the

progress of theorists who have come to “treat genres as dynamic actions that entail much more than form alone” (606).

The application of what is called contemporary genre theory (focusing on genre as social action) over traditional genre theory (focusing on genre as form) proves somewhat challenging for some teachers. Some genre theory teachers see benefits of teaching students to recognize and replicate the formal features of many genres, thus giving students a repertoire of genres to use in personal, academic, and workplace settings. Also pointed out earlier is the idea that teaching form benefits students as form offers heuristics, guiding structured search, and also enables creativity by constituting that from which authors may diverge. Traditional genre theory is practical and beneficial for students and teachers, but contemporary genre theorists claim that teaching genre as form lends itself to formulaic teaching of genres. Some who prefer what genre theory has to offer in terms of teaching form criticize contemporary genre theory for ignoring form completely. Traditional theorists also criticize some contemporary theorists who claim genre cannot really be taught at all outside of its true context, and therefore genres (aside from school genres) cannot be taught in the classroom. A middle ground between the two extreme views has been found by theorists Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi in *Scenes of Writing* who see genres as changeable forms whose patterns reveal values, beliefs, and assumptions of society, rather than merely seeing genres as forms to learn and follow.

Problems in teaching genre may come from how genre is defined and delineated. Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi define genre as “a common way of responding rhetorically to a situation” (7), where “rhetorically” means using language to accomplish something (6). The definition of rhetoric as the use of language to accomplish something is interesting—

do we ever use language without the intention of accomplishing a purpose? More guidance in the meaning of “common” in the definition of genre would also be helpful. What exactly is common or typical among groups of genres other than formal features? Purpose? Stylistic elements? Methods of reasoning? Situations that evoke the genres? Textual appearance? Devitt writes that there is no single standard for what determines a genre, and says, “[A] genre can be classified as narrative or fiction or novel or bildungsroman; another as persuasion or argument or essay or article or editorial” (146). Here, Devitt names both formal genres and genres delineated by purpose. Perhaps, then, genre theorists and instructors can agree to teach genre as form and genre as other things as well.

The progymnasmata offer a few solutions to the action/ form dilemma that genre theory experiences by teaching a combination of formal genres and genres delineated by purpose and methods of reasoning, and by also teaching genres of oratory, genres delineated by the social actions they accomplish. First, the progymnasmata teach both formal genres and genres defined more by their social purposes and attendant methods of reasoning. The exercises teach formal genres such as the fables, tales, chreiae, proverbs, impersonations (dramatic monologues), and theses. In addition, the progymnasmata teach genres based on purpose: refutation, confirmation, encomium, vituperation, comparison, and legislation (proposal). It is important to note, however, that even when learning to write formal genres, students are taught by each exercise to engage in certain actions specific to that exercise such as representation, elaboration, impersonation, and argumentation. The fourteen progymnasmata, then, may be described as genres of social action indicating things we *do* within a setting, such as praise and blame, refute and

confirm, expound, retell, describe, argue, characterize, etc. Thus, progymnasmata teach form and purpose, or social action, together.

Progymnasmata also teach genres of oratory, genres delineated (for teaching purposes, although they overlap) by the social actions they accomplish—praising and blaming, persuading and dissuading, accusing and defending. Each genre of oratory contains considerations that indicate common patterns of reasoning appropriate to the actions of praising and blaming, persuading and dissuading, accusing and defending, and so genres of oratory link social action with reason and teach both. The places of the progymnasmata teach places of the genres of oratory—ways to reason about matters at hand, and so the progymnasmata teach reason, along with social action and form.

The progymnasmata, by teaching places of genres of oratory, teach students principles that govern both reason and action within large spheres of social action. For example, the places of the commonplace exercises teach places of judicial oratory such as the will to do evil, power to do evil, definition, contrary laws, general laws, special laws, man's law, God's law, custom, equity, true dealing, ancient examples, covenants and deeds authentic (Wilson 131). The commonplace exercise, an exercise amplifying the evil things connected with anyone and then applied to all who take part in that thing, for example, a speech against a traitor applied to all traitors, leads the student to explore intention or motive, or, in other words, the will to do evil. The student may also call for a rejection of mercy based on how the thing done is not lawful, just, or rational. In determining whether a thing is lawful, the student will logically consider laws of nature, man's law, God's law, contrary laws, custom, and past examples. In determining whether a thing is just, the student will consider definitions of justice, along with

principles of equity and true dealing. And in determining rationality the student will consider nature itself, laws and custom, definition, and past examples. Other places of the commonplace exercise, including the digression where the student will reproach the evil-doer's past life, and the place of possibility, coincide with places of epideictic and deliberative oratory, respectively, which brings attention to the fact that genres of oratory overlap. Students writing the progymnasmata, then, gain practice with a large theoretical framework of reasons and evidence for claims, which operates as a reference point from which to critically evaluate the bases of their own and others' assumptions and claims. In addition, practice in the genres of oratory causes students to examine social constructions such as man's law, custom or common practice, and social definitions of justice, equity, and true dealing. Combining these benefits of instruction with teaching formal genres is beneficial for students.

Teaching genres of oratory (large genres of social action) through the progymnasmata (smaller genres of social action connected with the larger genres), in addition to teaching modern formal genres (such as cover letters, résumés, curriculum vitas, essays, reports, memos, letters, web pages, etc.), can present for instructors one solution for overcoming the split between genre as social action and genre as form that genre theory now experiences. The progymnasmata, by teaching genres of oratory, teach students strategies for understanding, reasoning in, and engaging in large spheres of social action such as praising, blaming, deliberating, defending, and so on. However, there are modern formal genres and perhaps even genres of social action that the progymnasmata do not cover. Modern teaching of the progymnasmata should include all genres (formal genres and genres of social action) relevant to students' lives.

Another argument that may connect genre theory with the progymnasmata is an argument Devitt makes concerning antecedent genres. Devitt argues that, because no writing class can teach students all of the genres they need to know to succeed, writing classes can teach what Devitt terms “antecedent genres,” genres that are particularly rich in what they teach students and that “serve as antecedents for a wealth of future roles and activities for students” (*Writing Genres* 205). The progymnasmata, because they teach invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery, reason, logic, imitation, and decorum all together, represent the kind of rich genres Devitt speaks of, genres that prepare students for future roles and future action. Devitt proposes, “Selecting genres with the most potential as antecedent genres for a particular student population while teaching how to learn genres [...], may be the most responsible reaction to these facts” (205). Her proposal is reasonable, and the progymnasmata may serve as genres that carry the most potential as antecedent genres for many students. Teaching students the progymnasmata in addition to formal genres may prove beneficial for students.

Neither instruction solely in forms nor instruction solely in oratorical genres seems sufficient for students today. Today’s students must learn strategies for working within a wide variety of formal genres in order to function in modern commercial, political, social, and academic communities. Genre theory instruction teaches students valuable skills for writing genres, and guides students in critical analysis and critique of social situations that affect generic forms. Genres of oratory, however, are genres of action relevant to larger discourse communities than are formal genres, and so learning these genres is also important. For example, the formal genre of the résumé is relevant to business professionals, while the oratorical genre of deliberation is relevant to almost all

communicating beings. Learning formal genres teaches students principles of form, while learning genres of oratory teaches students principles of reason and action within social situations. As genre theory is interested in genres as types of social action, classical rhetoric's grouping of genres according to the social actions they accomplish may interest genre theorists.

Conclusion

Genre theory offers important benefits for students and advances in noteworthy ways beyond other modern composition approaches. Genre theory also resurrects important elements of the classical tradition lost to composition instruction for hundreds of years (although genre theorists do not always credit the classical tradition for these "innovative" approaches). Genre-based pedagogy instructs students in writing genres in ways that are crucial for student advancement in our modern genre-plentiful world.

Genre theory and the progymnasmata could be combined in ways that would enrich composition instruction now. While genre theory benefits students in many ways, the progymnasmata offer needful additions. Classical analysis of texts, as taught in the pedagogy of the progymnasmata, teaches students to challenge authors and their philosophical and moral standpoints revealed in authorial decisions. Genre theory needs to do this and does not. Genre theory teaches students to challenge social, economic, political and environmental constructs. The progymnasmata do this to some extent, but could do so even more. Certainly there seems to be opportunity for expanding our understanding of reason and social action, and our students' capacities to reason and to act well in social spheres, perhaps more effectively than anyone ever has before, if we

would willingly combine parts of genre theory with classical rhetoric and the progymnasmata—ironically, the oldest and the newest composition approaches that exist.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROCESS AND THE PROGYMNASMATA

In response to current-traditional rhetoric and its disregard for processes of writing, the cognitivist movement leading to process-based composition instruction began in the 1970s. Cognitive theorists like Janet Emig, Sondra Perl, Linda Flower and John Hayes researched the writing processes of both experienced and less experienced writers. They found differences between these two and posited that if inexperienced writers could learn and imitate the process of experienced writers, their writing would improve. Cognitive theory is behavior-focused; the main assumption underlying the theory is that if students learn behavior appropriate to effective writing, they will write effectively (D'Angelo, *Process* ix, Gregg and Steinberg 145). The goal of the cognitive approach is to teach students to gain control of their own composing process in order to become more efficient writers, and more effective with their readers (Flower and Hayes 2, qtd. in Berlin 482).

Process pedagogy has been argued to be just that—a pedagogy, rather than its own epistemological approach as are current-traditional rhetoric, expressivism, and social epistemism. Patricia Bizzell argues in her “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty,” that process teaching can be combined with any other epistemological approach, and not alter that approach. A look at a 1998 textbook for teaching writing in secondary schools shows that what Bizzell proposed has come about. In the textbook, *A Writer's Craft*, the book's authors organize its chapters following current-traditional modes. However, in working through each chapter, a student is taken through the steps of prewriting, drafting, and revising. Dean, in *Genre Theory: Writing, Thinking, and Being*, also proposes ways

that genre theory instruction can be combined with teaching prewriting, drafting, and revising. Cognitivist writing process functions, then, as a pedagogy that combines well with other writing approaches.

In original cognitive research, the writing process of experienced writers is described in three general phases of planning, translating and reviewing. Each of these phases is drawn out in detail so less experienced writers can follow experienced writers' processes. The research notes, however, that for experienced writers, these processes of planning, translating and reviewing are recursive, rather than linear. Writing process now taught in schools follows original cognitivist research to some degree. The writing process with which many students and teachers have become familiar is a process involving three main composing activities: prewriting, drafting, and revising.

Modern writing process, including prewriting, drafting, and revising, is generally taught at the secondary level through a series of activities students are asked to complete. Prewriting activities common in modern classrooms include brainstorming, webbing, diagramming, and freewriting. Dean, in *Strategic Writing: The Writing Process and Beyond in the Secondary Classroom*, proposes that prewriting should also teach students strategies of inquiry, of both drawing from one's own experience things to say and drawing information from a variety of outside sources (24-34). Prewriting activities help students find what to say. Prewriting activities lead to drafting. Students will take, for example, their web diagram and begin to form sentences and paragraphs that flesh out the ideas generated through prewriting. When enough paragraphs have been written, the student has a first draft. Revision in modern classrooms can take several forms. Students can work together in groups and critique each other's work, then revise taking into

considerations those critiques. Students may submit a draft to their teacher for evaluation and then make changes to their work. Students may also use a grading rubric as a reference for revision.

Teaching writing process in schools gives students an alternative to the kind of current-traditional instruction Dean describes (quoted in chapter one), instruction based on a weekly theme with grading based mostly on grammar and no instruction whatever given regarding what process or processes might help students accomplish their writing tasks. Dean writes, “What happened between Monday and Friday was up to us, as long as a clean, error-free paper was turned in at the end of the week” (*Strategic 2*). Students taught in the current-traditional paradigm received grades for their final written products, which products students were rarely, if ever, allowed to rewrite after grading took place. Dean describes the experience as being on a treadmill, and it is this repetitive and product-centered teaching that cognitivist theorists challenged in formulating and promoting a theory for teaching process in writing classes.

Theorists see potential in process-based instruction, but see problems in the implementation of process in the classroom so far. First, criticisms of teaching writing process in schools point out the drawback that the “writing process” is usually presented to students as three linearly occurring activities, rather than a recursive process. Original cognitive research describes the writing processes of experienced writers as recursive, rather than linear; however, in modern secondary classes where students learn the “writing process,” students generally first complete various prewriting activities, then write multiple drafts, and finally revise. Dean points out that when process “goes to school,” “It generally gets put into a pattern that fits school more than the individual”

(*Strategic 3*). Certainly, teaching process as three sets of activities helps the teacher to plan daily class activities and take an entire class through the “process” together. Dean describes how some teachers have even fit the new idea of writing process into the old pattern of the weekly theme by having students prewrite on Monday, draft on Tuesday and Wednesday, revise on Thursday, and turn in their final assignments on Friday. Students taught a linear process gain the perception that prewriting must always happen first, followed, of course, by drafting, and only when drafting is complete do the students revise. Experienced writers know their writing process is not so uncomplicated, nor so linear.

Second, teachers teaching writing process are also criticized for prescribing writing process activities without helping students understand why such activities could or should be helpful to the students in their writing. Students who are required by their teachers to complete steps of the “writing process,” but who are not taught (or not convinced of) reasons why those steps might be helpful, often become frustrated and, instead of finding ways to make the writing process work for them, find ways to appear to have gone through the required process without really doing so. Students will “rough up” drafts, create a web diagram once the final paper has been completed, and so on. Arthur Applebee suggests that in many classrooms, “process activities have been divorced from the purposes they were meant to serve” (102). One example of process being divorced from purpose is the story of a student who knows what he wants to write and feels ready to begin writing, but whose teacher requires him to create a web diagram anyway in order to complete “the process” (Baines et al. 68). The purpose of the prewriting activity is to aid students in finding what they want to write. If a student

already knows what he wants to write, the prewriting activity may not be necessary. Teachers entirely devoted to teaching “the process” harm students by ignoring the purposes of that writing process. When this happens, students rarely see how a writing process may be of value to them.

A third critique of process instruction argues that such instruction has caused the pendulum to swing too far the other way, leading teachers and students to focus solely on process and not at all on finished written products. Baines et al. point out problems in “the classic process classroom” in secondary schools. One problem is teachers who “mostly give As to those who turn something in and Bs to those who don’t write much or who fail to turn in the cluster or rough draft. The only students who get Cs, Ds, or Fs are those who refuse to write anything” (69). For teachers who teach only the “process” of writing, the only fair thing to grade is the extent to which students have engaged in that process, which leaves the question of whether students will produce written products of any quality up to chance.

Finally, a fourth criticism leveled at process approaches is that students are often taught to complete all parts of the writing process for every writing assignment, where, in reality, not all writing tasks call for the same writing process, and not all parts of the writing process will be equally helpful to students in every writing situation. Arthur Applebee argues that some parts of the “writing process” are more appropriate for certain writing tasks but not for others (104). For example, certain genres or the task of writing for certain audiences may call for extensive prewriting and revising, while writing in other genres or for other audiences will not. Students may extensively prewrite and revise in the process of preparing a lengthy report for school, but follow a different

process in writing a personal letter or e-mail. In classes where students are taught only one writing process and not taught to consider process in terms of writing situation and task, students again experience writing process as a set of extra tasks to accomplish rather than as a help to their writing. When teachers neglect to point out connections between specific writing tasks and parts of the writing process, process becomes formulaic.

The Progymnasmata and Process

The progymnasmata offer answers to deficiencies in the application of the modern process approach by teaching two different processes: a process relating to the five canons of rhetoric, and a process of imitation, both of which are recursive, fundamental to the development of writing, focused on product and process together, and which encourage judgment on the part of the student in regard to the processes students choose.

The progymnasmata teach the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (detailed in chapter one), which present for the student a recursive process of composition. The canons are not a step-by-step process, but rather groups of considerations and actions the student will repeatedly explore throughout the process of creating and presenting a work. Although the canons may be considered in order, they often entail each other. For example, invention and style influence each other. If a student creates a metaphor (a stylistic feature), for instance, the student is also inventing matter. Also, when revising syntax, for example, content is altered to a degree. Style and delivery are also related since style gives indications for how a text is to be delivered. Memory relates to invention since inventive matter comes from inside the mind as well as outside sources, and memory relates to style and arrangement because stylistic features and patterns of arrangement a student will use are often patterns

encountered in earlier experience and remembered. Memory and arrangement both aid delivery. And so students will generally not consider the canons in a specific order each time they write, but will rather work within each canon a number of times throughout the process of composition.

Another process taught with the progymnasmata is the process of imitation, also described in chapter one, which process intertwines with the canons of rhetoric. Imitation involves the instructor's choice of example texts, performance of the text, and close reading of the text with students, and the student's memorization of the text, transformation of the text, self-correction, and performance of the new text. These steps intertwine with the canons of rhetoric. For example, places of the progymnasmata aid invention and arrangement, as described in chapter two; however, having a model text or model texts also gives students ideas for invention and also arrangement, since students analyze authors' inventive strategies and decisions regarding arrangement. Style is also taught through analysis and imitation of texts, since students analyze figures of speech and thought in model texts and practice those same patterns in their own writing. Delivery and memory are both taught through the steps of memorizing and delivering texts. Students taught steps of imitation in conjunction with canons of rhetoric find that all parts of both processes are important, but that the parts may change order and be repeated several times while creating and refining a text.

Imitation offers some key benefits for students not had in modern process instruction. First, analysis and transformation of models both provide students with a beginning point; students contend and struggle against a written text, instead of struggling with a blank page. Second, imitation focuses on writing as a process of

choices, since students study the best authors, their inventive and stylistic decisions as well as their choices for arrangement. Students then draft their own texts, patterning decisions after those of the original author and/ or challenging the author's decisions. Third, presentation to peers and teacher gives students a chance to perform their work, observe audience reception, and receive feedback from classmates and instructor. Presentation of texts lets students experience text as action in a social sphere. Oral presentation also connects speaking and writing, which connection is important, as Quintilian explains when he says that students who are taught to read and write but not to speak are left "brooding over hoarded treasure," unable to make full use in life of what they have learned in study.

The progymnasmata answer the concern of modern process instruction that students sometimes see elements of prewriting, drafting, and revising as unnecessary or added steps. In writing the progymnasmata, the goal is to create a quality written exercise worthy of presentation. The student knows he will have to invent and arrange matter, pay attention to style, and deliver the exercise in front of the class. Memory acts as an aid in all parts of the process—there are no unnecessary steps in the process. The extent to which the student will engage in each part of the process, however, is up to the student. A student does not complete more processes than he feels necessary. It is probably important to note here that, while the steps of imitation benefit students in vital ways, it is perhaps unnecessary to go through all of the steps of imitation with every one of the progymnasmata. Sometimes the instructor will choose model texts to be studied in class, and sometimes students may select and analyze their own models. Instructors and students should use judgment in determining what is best in each situation.

The progymnasmata also answer modern process instruction's dilemma of sacrificing quality written products to a concentrated focus on process by retaining a focus on the final product while also teaching process. Writing the progymnasmata begins and ends with oral performance. Students will end up presenting before the class that which the student has written, and so the motivation to create a quality piece of writing is built into the system. While students are taught processes helpful to their completing the exercises, final evaluation is always of the written and presented work. Students thereby come to understand that the purpose of both processes connected with the progymnasmata is to create a good product.

The two processes taught in conjunction with the progymnasmata are both open enough for students to tailor the processes to their needs. While many parts of both processes apply in many writing tasks, not all of the steps will be necessary every time. As progymnasmata are repeated with varying complexity and focus, the process students go through to complete the exercises will also change. Ultimately this teaches judgment and a consideration of situation to determine process. In completing the progymnasmata, students make their own judgments regarding process and repeat parts of their process until the final product satisfies the student. When students make their own decisions regarding writing process, processes serve as aids to students completing writing tasks, rather than becoming added tasks themselves.

Conclusion

The classical canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, along with steps of classical imitation, offer students and teachers a full process that leaves out no necessary or beneficial step. The canons are built on and emphasize

purpose, with each part necessary to the success of the text as a whole. The purpose of the process is to create a good product. When taught together the canons and steps of imitation emphasize the recursive nature of each. Both the canons and the steps of imitation present considerations for writing process that benefit students but are not part of the writing process taught in secondary schools today. Because the progymnasmata provide these solutions to modern problems in process, considering the preliminary exercises and their attendant pedagogy can add much to how we currently teach process in secondary classrooms.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The progymnasmata teach many of the things we want to teach well at the secondary level—like strategies for inventing and arranging, creativity and confidence in writing, a process that is useful, practice in many genres, methods of deep text analysis and self-evaluation, and a *modus operandi* for both participation in and critique of social, political, and economic arenas. Along with these, the progymnasmata teach reason and judgment. The progymnasmata are structured to teach rhetorical genres, large conceptual frameworks for reasoning through matters, and by teaching these genres prepare students to think through life situations of varying complexity. When coupled with the facility in reading, writing, and speaking the progymnasmata also teach, this ability to reason enables students to act well in public, academic, social, familial, and personal spheres and situations of daily life. The progymnasmata prepare students for various situations they will encounter, or do encounter already, in their day-to-day experience—situations like making decisions and discussing issues. Of the progymnasmata as a whole, Quintilian writes, “These are, in a sense, weapons always to be kept ready, to be used as the occasion demands” (II.1.12).

Although the exercises are very old, the progymnasmata and how they are taught add valuable methods and understanding to current approaches in teaching composition. The progymnasmata provide answers to problems in modern composition approaches, including problems of formula and a limited modes approach in current-traditional rhetoric, problems of restricted teaching of genres and refusal to teach elements of writing in expressive pedagogy, problems of aligning theory with practice in social

epistemic genre theory, and problems of formulism and devaluation of product in modern adaptations of cognitive research. The progymnasmata provide solutions for each of these problems and offer a theory and a pedagogy that are sound, encompassing, and time-tested.

I cannot say the progymnasmata are perfect or that they can replace all of what modern composition approaches do and teach in the classroom. I have not proven that argument. Rather, this thesis provides evidence that the progymnasmata measure up positively in comparison with modern composition approaches. The thesis offers a theoretical foundation for teachers to begin to teach the progymnasmata in their classrooms, perhaps in conjunction with parts of other composition approaches, to see if teaching the exercises provides positive results. The rationale for such implementation is based on evidence provided in this thesis that the progymnasmata and their pedagogy provide solutions and better alternatives to problems in modern composition approaches. The progymnasmata may and should be adapted to suit the needs of modern secondary school instruction, as long as that adaptation is thoughtful and does not eliminate important elements of what the progymnasmata teach.

Adapting Exercises for Modern Needs

Chapters three and four of this thesis make suggestions for possible adaptation of the progymnasmata to meet modern needs and align with modern values. For example, chapter three points out it may be appropriate to add to or adapt original progymnasmata to include more kinds of personal writing. The idea of adding or allowing personal examples in any of the assignments is possibly a modern idea; however, George A. Kennedy points out that the classical instructor Theon allowed students to write about

their own experiences (x). Nothing in the progymnasmata themselves prohibits including personal examples in writing where appropriate. The progymnasmata also encourage individual creativity, and this can be highlighted in the way we teach the exercises. Chapter four likewise suggests combining genre theory's critique of social and political values of discourse groups made apparent in patterns of genres with classical rhetoric's critique of psychological, moral, and behavioral grounds of individuals made apparent in patterns within texts. In ancient Greece and Rome, explicit critique of social and political structures was somewhat suppressed for reasons of personal safety. However, social and political critique is often implicit in critique of literary works (which works often depict common social, cultural, and political beliefs) accomplished through the confirmation and refutation exercises. Looking at both texts and genres and also learning to work within a variety of formal genres can be important for students today.

Also important for teachers today is the possibility of expanding curricula to include modern genres. Classical rhetorical theory, because applicable to all kinds of interaction, is a good framework in which to instruct students in new, existing, and future forms of discourse. Because of its breadth, the classical tradition can guide analysis of forms of interaction not yet discussed to a large extent in the composition class, including visual, cinematic, and electronic communicative acts. The broad genres and principles of classical rhetoric apply in these types of action. Principles of imitation will also help students seeking to develop fluency in newer written and spoken genres available (online, among other places), and developing fluency in these new genres will allow students to interact in a variety of social settings, including the emerging global community.

Also, with modern technology and newer venues of communication, social contexts within which students may share their works may be expanded. In classical times and in the Renaissance, students shared their written works orally with teacher and peers, and the classroom as an available social scene should, in modern times, not be undervalued. The classroom provides a context where students practice speaking, hear and see how ideas are received, and gain immediate feedback from persons with multiple viewpoints. However, students, even in ancient times, were encouraged to experience contexts outside of the classroom, including the forum, so their ideas of social interaction would not be limited to what goes on in schools. Students today should be enabled to share their ideas within as many social contexts as are available. Students can publish their works in student publications, write pieces for a local newspaper, or post on blogs. Students may also be introduced to scholarly works that, together, form conversations in academic or business settings in which students will one day participate. Allowing students to present their ideas in varied social situations will help students see ways their writing represents them and also see writing and speaking as relevant outside of school.

Some modern instructors will be concerned that the progymnasmata will seem antiquarian and esoteric to the modern student, or that the “places” of the exercises are ancient and obscure for modern purposes. Many theorists have feared the same and have never actually written the exercises to see how that would change their perspective. Only through actually writing the exercises may some students (and teachers) possibly see that the exercises are not antiquarian and esoteric, but rather that they are enjoyable and, at the same time, very instructive. Students writing the exercises will write on topics of interest to them, expand, transform, and critique modern sayings, stories, and literary

works, examine modern questions and propose laws relevant to modern situations. The fact that Renaissance teachers and students wrote the progymnasmata over a thousand years after the exercises were used in Greece and Rome shows that the exercises are adaptable to fit various cultural, social, religious, political, and educational settings.

The places of the progymnasmata are also understandable if students know rhetorical terms. However, where necessary, teachers could present the places of the exercises in a way that is accessible to their students. For example, in preparing a refutation exercise as an assignment for eighth grade students, I wrote the following:

Refute a False Assertion in a Literary Work

This exercise will allow you to critique assertions made in a significant literary work. We have studied, as a class, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Choose a major assertion either Orwell or Hawthorne makes in his literary work that you feel you may challenge, and write an essay refuting that assertion. The assertion you choose to focus on should not be something clearly true nor utterly impossible, but something between those extremes. You will discuss your ideas for this paper in class with a group and also meet with me on _____ to assess the feasibility/ appropriateness of topic selections.

In refuting your chosen assertion, follow these guidelines, adapting them to suit your purpose:

1. State first the false assertion you will refute
2. Explain, describe, and give examples of how the author makes this assertion

3. State and/or explain why the assertion is:

- Unconvincing
- Impossible
- Inconsistent
- Improper
- Irrational

You may use examples in the novel, personal examples, and statements from authorities and experts to support your critique. We will also study several similar examples of criticism in class that will give an idea of how to accomplish this exercise.

Although all essential elements of the classical refutation exercise are present in this particular assignment example, wording and formatting have been changed to be more familiar to students today.

In adapting exercises for modern needs, teachers need to be aware that if we oversimplify the progymnasmata or take the exercises out of their rich context, we will lose the benefits the progymnasmata offer. Experience with other composition approaches suggests that teachers sometimes formalize and simplify. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, the progymnasmata can be simplified, but simplifying also eliminates important benefits. Only within their full rhetorical contexts, those explained in chapter one, will the progymnasmata benefit students in all the ways described in this thesis.

Modern teachers will also want to know how teaching the classical progymnasmata will fit with a grading scale, and how time is to be made for each student

to present a work orally every time an exercise is completed. To be sure there may be many ways for teachers to work out grading of exercises and presentation schedules. One idea is that the exercises be taught in sections, one exercise per session or the teacher may group some exercises to create nine or ten sections. At the end of each section, the teacher chooses at random four or five students to present their work to the class, thus each student presents three or four times throughout the year or term. Because students don't know when they will be called to present, all exercises will have to be prepared in a way that they are presentation worthy. Possibly students could also be assigned presentations or could volunteer to present as well. For reasons of fairness, I would probably require my students to turn in a portfolio at the end of the year with what they consider to be their four best exercises that they did not present orally. That portfolio would be graded and would count, along with grades from the oral presentations, for a percentage of the final grade. Such a process would hopefully prevent the instructor from being overwhelmed with grading, while simultaneously increasing the quality of student written works. Teachers will have to determine what works best for their situation and plan accordingly. Harp's example of progymnasmata taught in an integrated humanities course is an excellent example of teaching the exercises to meet student needs and fulfill broader academic goals.

Progymnasmata in the Future

The work of this thesis has been to carefully look at the progymnasmata to discover and describe what value these ancient preliminary exercises have for today's teachers looking for sound ways to teach their students. At the very least, these chapters lay open the progymnasmata for closer consideration and scrutiny. There is more work

that may be done. My hope has been to create interest among instructors and theorists in the exercises and show how they are of worth in education now.

Because the progymnasmata are not presently taught in many schools, it is difficult to compare actual practice of teaching the progymnasmata with actual practice of the other approaches; however, there is evidence from ancient times as well as the present of the success of these exercises. We have as evidence of the efficacy of the exercises their longevity—that they were taught for hundreds of years over wide geographical areas in Greece, Rome, and Renaissance Europe demonstrates that teachers and students found the exercises to be of worth. We also have more modern evidence of the success a few schools are having teaching this curriculum today. For example, in Kansas City, Missouri, students grades four through nine at Whitefield Academy are taught the progymnasmata, which training helps the students write with greater cohesion and focus, and score well on national writing exams (whitefieldacademy.org). The Wilberforce School in Princeton, New Jersey also teaches the progymnasmata as part of their classical curriculum, and reports the exercises improve student writing. Because of lack of extensive data, what is described in this thesis regarding the progymnasmata is an ideal; however, evidence of past and modern-day success teaching the exercises suggests that there is real potential for students and teachers who write and teach these exercises today.

I end by reiterating my advocacy of teaching the progymnasmata in modern secondary classrooms. The progymnasmata are good exercises. I have written them and have spoken with others who have written them. I have also examined the works of great authors and ordinary students trained in this curriculum. The works are extraordinary, in some cases, and in others, still encompass the qualities of good writing. In the

progymnasmata, I find a strong base for my own teaching. The exercises and their surrounding pedagogy offer a beginning point on which to build a teaching theory and methodology. They offer pedagogical methods on which to build and from which to move forward. In doing so, I can spend time teaching things that will be valuable to my students, and build on, rather than reinvent the past.

Edward P. J. Corbett writes of his own work with classical rhetoric,

All “my work” [in rhetoric] is really somebody else’s work. I have stolen all of it from wiser heads than mine will ever be...

What I have appropriated from others is indeed ‘goods.’ In fact, it is good goods. This much at least can be said for me: I was shrewd enough to recognize valuable property when I saw it. Others of my contemporaries had gone to the fountainheads before me. Apparently, many of them did not realize the value of what they found there. Even before I had sluiced the streams, I detected the golden grains suspended there in solution. (“My Work in Rhetoric” 288)

Corbett, who floundered, as many of us do, in his first teaching assignment, discovered classical rhetorical texts that “gave [him] hope—and something of a method” (288).

Classical rhetoric does give hope, and especially method—methods that work—for teaching at any level. The progymnasmata are especially suited for the secondary school level, and because they provide strong answers for questions of instruction at this level, they prove themselves to be, in Corbett’s words, “good goods.”

The progymnasmata provide solutions for and alternatives to a modern composition situation that is less than satisfactory. They constitute an important part of

the classical past Murphy encourages teachers today to build on, “reshaping old principles to fit modern needs” (“Rhetorical History” 10). Murphy acknowledges that such building and reshaping will require “curricular courage” among educators. Where courage is needed to bring classical theory and practice into modern classrooms, that courage is enabled by evidence that the classical curriculum and classical preliminary exercises fill in gaps where modern theories and methods fall deficient. If modern composition approaches fall short in teaching students, and if the classical tradition and progymnasmata can enable students in ways modern approaches cannot, exploring the possibilities of teaching progymnasmata in secondary schools is worthwhile.

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