Towards Revitalization: Introducing a Dualistic Style to the First-Year-Writing Classroom

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Scholars in the field of stylistics have recently claimed that teaching on the canon of style has gone missing in much of modern composition. For instance, Kate Ronald admits that she feels that, although she does not explicitly teach style, she is "still rewarding and punishing [her] students for their writing styles" (197). As one of the classical canons of rhetoric, style can be a powerful tool for those students who comprehend it, but it seems that more and more students are missing out on opportunities to learn and practice style. To begin to solve the issue of how style might be revitalized in composition, this article puts forward the research question: What happens when a writing fellow attached to a section of first-year-composition introduces a dualistic style into the classroom?

Introduction

Style has long been considered a powerful tool in composition, allowing writers to influentially position (or even manipulate) their readers. In "Style: The Hidden Agenda in Composition Classes or One Reader's Confession," Kate Ronald claims that her students' writing styles influence her more than she would like to admit, making her more or less disposed to punish or reward them based on their stylistic capabilities (197). Additionally, stylistics scholars claim that teaching upon the canon of style has been diminished in much of modern composition, and the other classical canons—like invention and arrangement—have certainly not languished in style's absence. For instance, in "(Re)figuring Composition Through Stylistic Study," Ellen Carillo claims that modern composition "has stressed—above all else—two traditional parts of rhetoric, namely finding and arranging arguments" (379). As a result, style has slowly faded into anonymity; in a manner, it has gone "missing" (379).

To address this underemphasis of style, I—as both a researcher and writing fellow—ask in this study: What happens when a writing fellow attached to a section of first-year-writing introduces a dualistic style into the classroom? As an undergraduate Professional Writing major and writing fellow at York College of Pennsylvania, the site of this research project, I am required to perform the following duties while attached to a section of first-year-writing:

> Meet with students individually to help them during their revision processes, providing support for developing aspects like organization, clarity, argument, analysis/synthesis and style; attend each class session, so [I] will know what students are learning day-to-day; contribute to and support class discussion and help facilitate small group work. (*Writing Fellows Program* 5)

This essay details my efforts to introduce this dualistic style into the first-year-writing classroom and to provide a beginning framework for those interested in similar efforts.

Literature Review

Style's Disappearance

I have already mentioned the problem that teachers of composition face: Style has become "largely invisible" in most conversations about writing (Butler "Diaspora" 5). Some speculate about the strangeness of this vanishing act and the why and when of its occurrence. In *Out of Style*, Paul Butler asserts that "while interest in the study of style grew exponentially during the three-decade Golden Age of style, Connors (2000) has shown that attention to style studies dropped off abruptly in about 1985 or 1986—the end of the Golden Age" (17). Dominic Dellicarpini and Michael Zerbe in "Remembering the Canons' Middle Sisters: Style, Memory, and the Return of the Progymnasmata in the Liberal Arts Writing Major" believe that, ironically, "the teaching of grammar and sentence style was out of fashion soon after the resurgence of rhetoric began, and it still is in many circles" (180).

However, in spite of obstacles, style has managed to remain present in composition. Butler argues in "Style in the Diaspora of Composition Studies" that style has become "ubiquitous" and also "that evidence of its continued presence can be found in many diverse places in the discipline" (5). His conclusion is that style has not suddenly become absent in *presence* from composition instruction, but instead it has become absent only in *name*, often falling under other categories, such as genre conventions (Butler, "Diaspora" 5). In a response to Butler, Star Medzerian agrees: "While it seems as though style is simultaneously absent and present in our discipline, the concept of style has remained present and it is the name style that is now absent" ("Making" 87). She also asks: "So why does it matter whether or not style is called 'style'?" and concludes that an unnamed style is a style without its methodology, a style that is difficult, maybe even impossible, to practice with any kind of efficiency (87). An interesting separation has occurred: Style itself remains present, but it is unnamed, anonymous, and thus it has been stripped partially of its power as a rhetorical canon.

Others blame the deemphasis of style on an exaggerated focus on the other classical canons of rhetoric. Carillo says that writing instruction "has stressed—above all else—two traditional parts of rhetoric, namely finding and arranging arguments," and that "missing, of course, is that third traditional part of rhetoric: style" ("(Re)figuring" 379). Carillo also argues that, in its anonymity, the prescriptive qualities of style—the qualities that might make it seem villainous in modern pedagogy—have risen to the forefront of its definition: "Style has become synonymous with grammar and usage, and discussions of style have been largely relegated to the pages of handbooks" ("(Re)figuring" 379-80). In fact, in "The Importance of Tutoring Style in the Writing Center," Carillo challenges readers that they "would be hard-pressed to locate a widely circulating tutoring handbook that uses the term 'style' within a more complicated context or, for that matter, uses the term at all" (9). Her concern is that the writing center is just another place in which style has gone missing. Butler agrees, but also broadens the context, stating that "the public conceptions controlling debates on style today—which often reduce style to the equivalent of grammar or prescriptive rules—have effectively usurped the topic from the discipline itself" (*Out of Style* 19).

Style's Importance

The problem seems evident: Style is in a position of relative anonymity and non-importance. However, researchers insist that the interpretation of the canon as secondary (compared to, for instance, arrangement or invention) is faulty and deprives students of style's potential benefits. For example, Butler suggests "that the availability of a reservoir of stylistic features would offer valuable help to writers, teachers, and students at all stages of the writing process" (*Out of Style* 18). Butler even claims that knowledgeable writers who are unfamiliar with style are generally not equipped to fully interpret the texts they must read as students—a classification that includes, arguably, all texts: "Scholars with excellent rhetorical skills are not exploiting the full range of stylistic—and thus analytical—options that would allow a more complete understanding of textual objects" ("Diaspora" 22).

And because style remains an important factor for teachers when they assess student writing, other researchers identify tangible ways that students are being rewarded for their knowledge (or lack thereof) of style. Medzerian's research shows that "higher-scoring essays had greater variation in sentence type—simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex—and number of sentences per paragraph" ("Making" 88). Ronald admits that, although she feels she does not actually teach style, she has been "still rewarding and punishing [her] students for their writing styles" (197). It is clear that teachers of composition want to recognize and appreciate style in student writing, but these same teachers now also maintain creeping suspicions that they are not giving style as much explanation in the classroom as they should. Perhaps, as Ronald fears, we are grading for style without teaching it.

Problems and Solutions: Developing a Dualistic Style

Especially considering this evidence, it seems that a dearth of style is not benefitting anyone—not students, not teachers, not even the general public. Butler calls for a resurgence: "As a field, composition must… reanimate style on our own terms—as a group of language experts who can provide the leadership to reeducate writers and a public passionately interested in the study of style, but often unable to see beyond its prescriptive affiliations" (*Out of Style* 19). My goal in this project is to do just as Butler suggests, to reanimate style on my own terms as I ask: What happens when a writing fellow attached to a section of first-year-writing introduces a dualistic style into the classroom?

But why a *dualistic* style? What is a dualistic style, exactly? Definitions of style are far ranging, and "good style" is nearly impossible to define succinctly, let alone quantify. "Depending on what aspect of a stylistic relationship is being emphasized," says Butler, "one of several definitions of style might be used, each one representing a different theoretical approach to the topic" (*Out of Style* 2). As one of the classical canons of rhetoric, style has traditionally been Erasmus' *copia*, the "idea of being able to express one's meaning in a variety of ways" (597). However, there have also been undeniable tendencies in modern composition to describe style as a kind of personal outpouring. That is, if a writer does *not* embody his or her own words, the writing falls flat, lifeless, voiceless. Style-less. Ronald equates personal style with what she terms as "presence." She laments that students "choose to be safe" in their writing instead of employing a "more risky, personal style," and her definition of style is in line with the idea of

a writer's personal embodiment of his or her words: "I'm defining style not simply as word choice or sentence structure, but as a kind of 'presence' on the page, the feeling I get as a reader that, indeed, somebody's home in this paper, somebody wants to say something—to me, to herself, to the class, to the community" (198, 200). This definition of style cultivates the distinct writing that arises from a writer's purposeful, personal engagement with a text. At the same time, this method of defining style also makes value judgments of writers' styles much more subjective—what is "good" personal style? Ronald uses the following examples of writing with high and low presence in her article, respectively:

Much Too Young to Be So Old
The neighborhood itself was old. Larger than most side streets, 31st Street had huge cracks that ran continuously from one end to the other of this gray track that led nowhere special. Of the large, lonely looking houses, there were only six left whose original structures hadn't been tampered with… (197)

The Dog
In 1980 I lived in a green split level house. It was a really ugly green but that is beside the point. The neighborhood was really rather pretty, with trees all over the place and not just little trees. They were huge. My friends and I played football in my backyard… (197-98)

Ronald admits that the first paragraph "appeals" to her more than the second; she is "much more drawn into the world of 31st Street than [she is] to the neighborhood with huge trees" (198). The first paragraph has "words" and "rhythm" that "evoke a bittersweet expectation in [Ronald]" (198). It is plain, then, that this definition of style as "presence" is assessed rather subjectively—by the reader evaluating their own emotional response to the personal voice of the writer and what the reader perceives as the writer's interesting or charismatic engagement with the text.

Perhaps an effective method of teaching style is one that embraces the disparities of these two approaches and recognizes the duality of the canon. Thus, my decision for this project was to teach a dualistic style: rhetorical devices (variety of expression in keeping with Erasmus' classical style) coupled with presence (Ronald's personal style), a definition of style that also avoids the prescriptive connotations that Carillo is so adamantly against ("(Re)figuring" 379-80). In this study, material from Robert A. Harris's collection of stylistic devices with explanations and examples, *Writing with Clarity and Style*, served as my resource for classical devices. Ronald's framework for improving "presence" served as a guideline for my delineation of presence (personal style).

It is also worth noting that not only first-year-writing students may stand to benefit from teaching on the canon of style. Students within disciplines such as English or Writing may also be missing out on style. Dellicarpini and Zerbe describe the course Advanced Composition (WRT 315) as a class designed to give Liberal Arts majors at York College a necessary introduction to the canon of style. They position this course as a response to a perceived lack of emphasis in writing studies generally upon the canon (179). Their certainty of the benefits students receive from studying style follows: "Writing majors benefit greatly by explicit attention to, and guided practice in, stylistic exercise that hearkens back to the rhetorical canons of style and memory and which reconstitutes the stylistic exercises

and playful spirit that reconstitute the pro-gymnasmata" (184). If even students in writing-intensive disciplines are in need of more coursework on style, then surely first-year-writing students are presented with even less of an introduction to the canon. It also stands to reason that if English and Writing majors may benefit from this kind of instruction, then so might students in other writing-intensive courses—such as FYW classes.

Finally, my lens for this research is guided by my teaching philosophy, which incorpo-rates some elements of feminist pedagogy. For instance, I began this research in the spirit of creating a "liberatory" environment, wherein knowledge is treated as a tool that students may use to better understand their experiences and the experiences of their peers (Shrewsbury 6-7). My vision for this project was to introduce students to the "lib-eratory" powers of style during a learning experience wherein they were independent, active agents of their own learning, and wherein they could "take risks" as well as develop a "respect for and ability to work with others" (Shrewsbury 7). What Shrewsbury seems to be getting at is a com-munity of respect in which learning (and its challenges) are approached openly and col-laboratively. These dualistic style lessons encouraged students to practice, discuss with others, receive and give constructive feedback, and share the work that they were doing. In other words, students were allowed to practice and experiment with their own styles in a classroom-facilitated "no judge-ment zone"—a community of respect.

Methods

To examine the effects of implementing a dualistic style into the first-year-writing classroom, I collected samples of student writing at the beginning and at the end of a single semester. The open-ended prompt for these writing samples directed students to write a paragraph of six sentences or more using "good style." Writing samples from the study were assessed using a three-part rubric:

1. *Frequency* measured how often stu-dents used rhetorical devices.
2. *Variety* assessed the diversity of rhetor-ical devices students employed.
3. *Presence*, scaled 0 (not at home) to 3 (at home), represented Ronald's factor of "being at home" and quantified stu-dents' abilities to engage on deeper, personal levels with their own writing.

I compared students' average rubric scores on the first sample to their scores on the sec-ond sample to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the mini lessons and stu-dents' ability to comprehend the material presented to them. Between the two writing sample collections, I presented a series of mini lessons that had students learn about and practice a dualistic style. To introduce students to the methods of employing stylis-tic devices (classical style) and improving their own presence (personal style), I made use of the two aforementioned resources (Ronald's "Style" and Harris's *Writing*). Overall, I taught a total of 15 different sty-listic devices and provided students with five pointers for developing their presence, averaging three or four stylistic devices and one tip for presence per mini lesson. In the spirit of feminist pedagogy, I made frequent assertions that, while we were sharing exam-ples of our work with the entire class, the room was a "no judgement zone" (I believe the colloquialism was effective). I also encouraged students to treat stylistic devices as items to add to a repertoire of writing tools; by doing this, I was attempting to encourage students to take a more active

role in their own learning, which Shrewsbury asserts is critical (7).

York College of Pennsylvania is a medium-sized private liberal arts college in the northeast United States. Participants in this semester-long study were enrolled in the first course of the two-course sequence of first-year-writing at York, self-selected, and informed of the pertinent details of the study and their rights as participants via an informed consent document at the beginning of the semester. There were 24 students in the class, and a total of 17 (N=17) students participated in the study, resulting in a participation rate of 70.8 percent. Additionally, as part of ensuring that propriety and ethics were maintained during all parts of the research process, I submitted a research proposal to the college's IRB for approval.

Results

Rubric Scoring

To acknowledge the weight of both the quantitative and qualitative portions of this study, I use this results section to report the quantitative data obtained from assessing participants' writing samples with the three-part rubric (before and after the style mini lessons) and also to examine the writing samples of two participants as miniature "case studies."

Tables 1, 2, and 3 show the average scores per sample of students' writing on the three-part rubric. The scores are based on simple counts, so that, for example, a student who used polysyndeton four times and asyndeton once in his or her paragraph received a frequency score of 5 and a variety score of 2. Students used stylistic devices an average of 1.88 times per paragraph before the mini lessons on style and an average of 4.06 times per paragraph after, resulting in a 116 percent increase in frequency. Students used an

average of 1.59 different devices per paragraph before the mini lessons on style and 3.18 different devices after, an increase of 100 percent in variety. Finally, students scored an average of 2.29 per paragraph for presence in their writing before the mini lessons, and an average of 2.47 for presence in their paragraph after, resulting in a 7.86 percent increase in presence.

Frequency	
Before	1.88
After	4.06
Percent Change	+116

Table 1. Frequency of Style Devices

Variety	
Before	1.59
After	3.18
Percent Change	+100

Table 2. Variety of Style Devices

Presence	
Before	2.29
After	2.47
Percent Change	+7.86

Table 3. Quality of Presence

Table 4 shows the distribution of devices that students used before the mini lessons and the distribution of devices that students used after the mini lessons. The three most popular devices used in the first samples collected as well as the three most popular devices used in the second samples collected are highlighted. Interestingly, students used stylistic devices that were not taught in the mini lessons: simile, metaphor, personification, antimetabole, antithesis, parenthesis. There were also three devices I had taught that students did not use

at all in their writing (consonance, metabasis, and procatalepsis).

Device	Frequency Before	Frequency After
Simile	2	1
Personification	2	13
Onomatopoeia	0	11
Assonance	0	1
Epistrophe	1	4
Parallelism	13	7
Asyndeton	0	3
Metaphor	1	0
Antimetabole	1	0
Example	2	3
Alliteration	2	13
Polysyndeton	4	3
Hypophora	1	2
Anaphora	0	3
Repetition (general)	1	0
Symploce	0	2
Antithesis	1	0
Rhetorical Question	1	0
Parenthesis	0	1
Expletive	0	1
Total	32	68

Table 4. Stylistic Devices and their Before and After Frequencies

Case Studies of Two Students' Writing Samples

Although the quantitative data I obtained by assessing students' writing samples with the three-part rubric is useful for examining the effectiveness of this project, I also want to acknowledge the qualitative value of the writing samples I collected, the importance of these individual voices. The following are two examples of student writing. The first pair is from Student A, whose writing exhibited marked changes in the frequency and variety portions of the rubric. The second pair of writing samples is from Student B, whose writing exhibited comparatively minimal changes. (I use the term "minimal" not to suggest that Student B somehow fell short of Student A's apparent success and comprehension, but instead to acknowledge that these lessons on dualistic style did not have a singular impact.) In both pairs of samples, I have **highlighted** and labeled the stylistic devices I coded for when assessing these students' writing.

Student A, Sample 1 (Before)
Last week I had the most embarrassing moment of my life. See, in my family we have a curse, the [lastname] curse. It means that every woman in my family is way to [sic] clumsy for their own good. So it was no surprise to me when, two weeks ago, I was leaving Campbell hall [sic] after my very first class, and I fell. Down the stairs. Both my knees got completely obliterated, and I could hear people talking about it as I rushed back to my dorm. ***For a whole week it's looked like someone stuck bubble gum on my knee, and it turned black from exposure to the weather [simile].*** *Thank goodness it's almost gone. At least now I always pay attention when I'm walking out of Campbell Hall.*

Frequency: 1
Variety: 1
Presence: 3

Student A, Sample 2 (After)
As the ***cat sauntered down the alleyway [personification]***, *the* ***loud clash [onomatopoeia]*** *of a trashcan [assonance?] lid being thrown to the ground scared him. He*

*arched his back and **hissed [onomatopoeia?]**. This was his territory, and every every [sic] cat on **5th street, 6th street, heck, even 7th street [epistrophe]**, knew that. **He crawled toward the can [personification]** slowly and then, in one swift motion, pounced and knocked the can over. After a **loud screech [onomatopoeia]** and some rustling, **out pranced the most gorgeous feline [personification]** he had every layed [sic] eyes on. She was slender and graceful, a tabby with bright green eyes. Just as he was about to ask her name… he woke up! He rolled over and curled up to his wife, Priscilla, knowing that he'd never find anyone to beat her tabby coat and luxurious, stunning green eyes.*

Frequency: 8
Variety: 4
Presence: 3

I gave Student A a score of 3 on the rubric for presence in each paragraph. A number of items contributed to my decision to assign her this score: First, there seems to be a distinct voice (especially considering the use of first person in Sample 1) that emerges in this student's writing, whether that voice is representative of the writer (as in Sample 1) or representative of a portrayed character (as in Sample 2). Second, just as Ronald says she is "drawn into" her students' writing with good personal style, my feeling about Student A's writing is that I am being included in her retelling of a narrative (real or imagined), and this beckons me to participate emotionally (198). Student A also more than doubled her usage of stylistic devices (both in frequency and variety) in Sample 2. Interestingly, Student A made use of personification quite liberally in Sample 2 (perhaps mainly due to the nature of its content), a device that I did not teach in the mini lessons. In Student A's Sample 2, I have also included question marks in my identification of devices in two places: These question marks indicate my skepticism of intentionality on Student A's part. For example, in the following excerpt, it appears that two rhetorical devices have been combined to produce an interesting effect:

*…the **loud clash [onomatopoeia] of a trashcan [assonance?]** lid being thrown to the ground scared him.*

With these question marks, I am acknowledging that this combination may have been unintentional. Did Student A realize that clash and trashcan in proximity create the interesting effect of assonance combined with onomatopoeia? Or was the choice of a trashcan for the plot of this miniature story purely coincidental? Thus, intentionality becomes an issue.

Student B's writing samples present a whole new set of information for analysis:

Student B, Sample 1 (Before)
One of the most inspiring movies of all time is Miracle on Ice. This movie is about the 1980 Olympic men's hockey team. The movie follows the struggles of the team as they try to work together at their goal of beating the Soviet Union. The U.S. hockey team is know as the underdogs and nobody has faith that they can actual [sic] beat the Soviets. The only person who believes in them at first is their coach Herb Brooks. Herb Brooks transforms a group of college hockey players into one of the best hockey teams to ever play for the United States. Herb Brooks gives Americans the opportunity to once again dream and believe.

Frequency: 0
Variety: 0
Presence: 1

Student B, Sample 2 (After)

*One of my favorite places is the beach. I love the way the sand feels between my toes or the way the colder water slowly comes to shore. I love swimming in the ocean. I like not being able to touch the bottom. **The sea carries me [personification]** and I am weightless. I am finally free.*

Frequency: 1
Variety: 1
Presence: 2

Neither of Student B's writing samples incorporate any of the stylistic devices discussed in the mini lessons, just one example of personification. The two samples at first also appear fairly disparate in length, even though both meet the required six sentences for the prompt. It seems, however, that Student B seemed to create more of a personal connection with her writing in Sample 2, choosing to write from a first-person perspective. Thus, her score for presence on the rubric increased. However, I found that Student B's writing felt overall less energetic, less charismatic, and less "vocal" in general than Student A's; I did not feel the same kind of connection to Student B's stories as I did to Student A's. But student B's writing again raises the issue of intentionality. For example, I offer the following two sentences, which exhibit qualities resembling parallel structure or anaphora:

> *I love the way the sand feels between my toes or the way the colder water slowly comes to shore. I love swimming in the ocean.*

The questions here then become: Is Student B's repeated use of similar sentence structures (e.g., "I love… I love…") an intentional attempt at structuring her sentences in this manner? Or is this merely an ingrained writing habit? I lean toward the latter conclusion, simply because the majority of Student B's

sentences privilege the beginning of the sentence for subject and verb placement. Still, Student B's true intentions are not completely unveiled. Intentionality is still a question. What remains obvious, though, is a low presence of stylistic devices. Since the second sample was collected toward the end of the semester, it is also, of course, possible that Student B had either become disinterested in the style lessons or had become busy with other schoolwork.

Limitations

First of all, even while putting forward a dualistic definition as my working vision of style for this project, I do not assert that this is the only valid definition of style. The variety of ways in which style may be defined make it at once exciting and frustrating, yet this kind of fluid definition allows both teachers and students to experiment quite freely.

As I mentioned in my results, an unexpected (and interesting) limitation of this study was that students used devices I had not taught in the lessons and neglected to use some of the devices I had taught. For instance, even though I did not teach personification, I saw an obvious increase in student usage of the device (overall frequency of 2 to overall frequency of 13). One explanation for this is that, when students found themselves in a "liberatory" environment in which they were not penalized for taking risks with their writing, they were more apt to experiment (Shrewsbury 6-7). Also, students are obviously not blank slates—even when it comes to style—a fact that might actually serve them well when they are working with style in college. For instance, from high school, many students might already have at their disposal devices like parallelism, personification, or alliteration. As for the reason for why students neglected to use some of the devices I taught,

they may have found the devices too difficult to construct in a relatively short period of time or thought them inappropriate for the genre (which was, after all, only a paragraph).

Another limitation that became an issue in assessing writing samples with the three-part rubric was the aforementioned intentionality. That is, as a researcher coding for rhetorical devices, I was not always certain that students had intentionally used a rhetorical device (especially one I had not taught) or even intentionally combined rhetorical devices in interesting manners (as in Student A's second paragraph). One way to circumvent this issue in the future would simply be to ask students to indicate where they have intentionally used rhetorical devices. A practice like this would allow researchers to code not only for intentional uses of rhetorical devices but also for *unintentional* uses, the instances of which may present grounds for questions about how conscious or unconscious stylistic choices are for writers.

Conclusions

When I began this project, I had two goals: To examine the effectiveness of my methods of introducing a dualistic style into the FYW classroom and to provide a beginning framework for those interested in similar efforts. These starting goals led me to a number of other conclusions and questions.

Definite increases in frequency and variety lead me to conclude that, yes, first-year-writing students can understand and employ fairly complex stylistic devices—successfully expressing themselves "in a variety of ways" as Erasmus suggests—and this even as they also digest the flood of new information so common to freshman composition courses (597). In other words, I agree with Butler's assessment in *Out of*

Style when he says "that the availability of a reservoir of stylistic features would offer valuable help to writers, teachers, and students at all stages of the writing process" (18). To give style more attention is also to lift the burden of responsibility stated by Ronald (and echoed by other researchers), the idea that teachers have been "still rewarding and punishing [their] students for their writing styles," even if teachers do not explicitly name style (197).

While definite increases in variety and frequency (classical style) have led me to draw the above conclusions, I observed minimal changes in students' presence (personal style) in their writing. This suggests that my manner of teaching presence was simply not effective. In the future, I would return to a method closer to the one Ronald utilizes in "Style." For instance, Ronald incorporates much modeling of writing with good personal style, a technique that may better help students understand what exactly it means to be "at home" in their writing. Extensive journaling may also prove a useful tool as it allows students to spend more time *within* their own personal styles. Because of time constraints, personal style might be a challenge to work into a FYW curriculum. However, I am of the firm belief that issues like these also give composition scholars an opportunity to do as Butler suggests and "reanimate style on [their] own terms" (*Out of Style* 19). Style's invisibility presents a kind of blank slate that is both formidable and brimming with possibilities for composition teachers.

These issues also lead to the question of how style in general is being assessed. Although style may find its way onto FYW rubrics, since style's definition is often fluid (for both teachers and students), the question of how exactly composition teachers

are defining and assessing writing style is currently unanswered. This issue of assessment is tied intrinsically to the nature of style itself, which may be interpreted in many different manners. Butler claims that "depending on what aspect of a stylistic relationship is being emphasized, one of several definitions of style might be used" (*Out of Style* 2). It would make sense for a composition teacher to assess writing for what they define as good style—but do students know what that definition is? Thus, just as my own rubric was designed to assess a dualistic style, teachers of composition may find their assessment facilitated by a clarification of their own expectations of their students. In "What Scoring Rubrics Teach Students (and Teachers) about Style," Medzerian Vanguri asserts that "a rubric's confining structure has the potential to impede how teachers and students alike understand style" (358). Her conclusion echoes mine in that she claims that a "productive" assessment of style is one in which "assessment practices… allow us to express our values and to teach students how to achieve them" (359).

All of these previous points have been circling one larger issue that underpins many of the other problems associated with style's disappearance: its definition. I would assert that style itself need not only be recognized as a *dualistic* canon but also as a *multifaceted* one, capable of being defined, taught, and learned in many different ways. Butler's claim regarding style's multiplicity seems again relevant (*Out of Style* 2). Instead of viewing this multiplicity as a problem, the field might do well to embrace it—but on the right terms. For instance, one definition of style that has garnered much criticism is its prescriptive one. Teaching a non-prescriptive style such as the dualistic one in this study could begin to move the field away from the idea of style

as prescriptive and toward the idea of style as multifaceted. For example, Carillo argues that style as defined in the writing center has become a prescriptive style concerned predominantly with "grammar and usage" and "largely relegated to the pages of handbooks" ("(Re)figuring" 379-80). Actual discussions of a complex, multifaceted style in writing center conversations also seem to have dwindled (if they ever occurred at all). Carillo, well-acquainted with tutoring manuals, assures us that we "would be hard-pressed to locate a widely circulating tutoring handbook that uses the term 'style' within a more complicated context or, for that matter, uses the term at all" ("The Importance" 9). The point is that the field of stylistics is calling for a renaming, a revitalizing, a re-cognizing of style, and we know we want to do it on "our own terms" (Butler *Out of Style* 19). Perhaps part of the terms of style's revitalization should be clarification about its definition, specifically that its definition is multifaceted (individualize-able) and not prohibitively prescriptive.

Future Research

There are also a number of ways in which this project presents implications for future research, both short- and long-term. I have already briefly mentioned in my limitations that asking students to identify stylistic traits in their own work and then comparing what they have identified to what stylistic traits researchers have coded for might bring up insights into the question of how conscious these stylistic choices are. Additionally, even though students were able to effectively employ stylistic devices when asked to write with "good style" in the study, the question remains as to how often students choose to incorporate devices into the larger projects they take on in their

coursework. An even more compelling question is whether students would be able to identify stylistic devices in the readings they must complete.

There are yet also a number of questions related to the institution at which this study took place. In the short term, the overall presence of style in FYW at York College might be examined through analysis of FYW syllabi and rubrics. To delve into professor expectations and perceptions of style, I might survey or conduct interviews with faculty. A long-term project might be to analyze the stylistic changes in Writing or English majors' prose from their freshman to their senior years of college. Finally, Carillo brings up the issue of how style is being talked about in her writing center and in writing center handbooks. There remain unanswered questions about style in this context, such as: How do tutors and students talk about style? What do tutors and students mean when they say "style?" And is there anything getting "lost in translation" in tutor-tutee conversations about style? Plainly, these issues represent only in part the growing number of questions concerning stylistics and the revitalization of style pedagogy in modern composition.

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