THESIS

PERFORMANCE AND PEDAGOGY IN THE 21$^{ST}$ CENTURY:

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL COMPARISONS OF

COMPOSITION AND THE THEATRE

Submitted by

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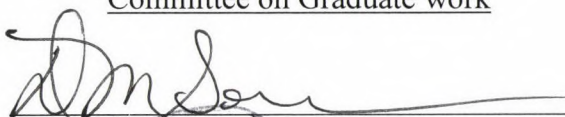Colorado State University

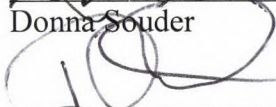Fort Collins, Colorado

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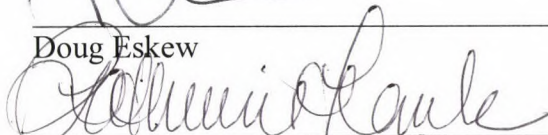COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY DOROTHY HEEDT-MOOSMAN ENTITLED PERFORMANCE AND PEDAGOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL COMPARISONS OF COMPOSITION AND THE THEATRE BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.
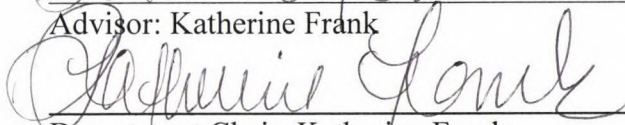
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

PERFORMANCE AND PEDAGOGY IN THE 21$^{ST}$ CENTURY: THEORETICAL AND

PRACTICAL COMPARISIONS OF COMPOSITION AND THE THEATRE


In this thesis, I explore the shared exigencies of composition studies and the

theatre as a method for addressing the problems inherent to first year composition

programs. More specifically, I consider those issues that arise in mid-to-open enrollment

institutions. I argue that composition instructors should use the practical approaches of

the theatre as a means to 1) improve instructor attitudes and teacher-student

communication; 2) embrace and effectively use technology, not as the defining

pedagogical tool but as a way to maintain the relevance for composition students; 3)

connect classroom practices to real-world purposes. I suggest that both composition

studies and the theatre are rooted in the process of translating thoughts and feelings into

*action*, resulting in effective communication to an audience. These aims are reflected by

Kenneth Burke, whose explorations of motives and human communication and

dramatism are applicable to composition pedagogy as well as connected to theatrical

principles.  I argue for an approach to teaching first year composition that would include

the use of Burke's pentad of human motives (with his inclusion of "attitude" as a sixth

element) as a means for *instructors* to assess and revise their motives and perspectives as

compositionists. I further contend that Burke's pentad serves as a means to guide *students* towards more effective methods of rhetorical analysis and composition.

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CHAPTER ONE


INTRODUCTION

*"Human conduct, being in the realm of action and end...is most directly*

*discussible in dramatistic terms...those that begin in theories of human action*

*rather than in theories of knowledge."*

-- Kenneth Burke[1]

*"All action on the stage must have an inner justification, be logical, coherent, and*

*real."*

--Konstantine Stanislavski[2]


As an instructor of first-year composition and an active member of the theatrical

community, I have noticed the ways in which the fields of theatre and composition

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[1] Kenneth Burke's ideas of literature, rhetoric and philosophy and are marked by an all-encompassing embrace of genres and theories. Thus, many look to him as for philosophical perspectives rather than specific methodology. In my study, I refer to his work in order to recognize the pervasiveness of drama in philosophy and society, embodied in his "pentad of dramatism," which he employs primarily to discuss issues of communication and human interactions. This is the primary focus of *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, in which he emphasizes the significance of cooperation in these relationships. While I do not intend to generalize the works of scholars in my review or the field of composition studies, the focus of my thesis is less a revelation of "new" methods and more an examination of existing factors and a call for those of us in the field of composition to (re)discover and own a sense of what he refers to as a "loyalty to the source of our being" (Burke, *Permanence and Change*).

[2] Konstantin Stanislavski is widely referred to as the "pioneer" of the theatre, and the creator of what is known as "method acting." He believed that the key to great performance, that which is not artificial, meant finding a way to access true emotions, and for Stanislavski this came down to a matter of motives. His book, *An Actor Prepares*, is one of the most influential texts in the history of performance theory.

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intersect in terms of the types of occupational and personal requirements.[3] Over the last few years, I have become more conscious of the manner in which I use my experiences in each realm to inform and enhance my work in the other, and I continue to see ways in which the worlds are intertwined. In both environments, technical, innovative, creative and critical faculties are in constant motion. Each realm is rooted in the process of translating the interpretation of thoughts and feelings into *action*: effective communication to an audience. The individuals who work in the classroom and the theatre are also faced with the consistent and often conflicting necessity of balancing the operations of authority within the fluid surroundings of artistic creation and collaboration.[4]

People who seek out careers or education or even activities which come under the heading of "English" or "theatre" usually do so in order to pursue an existing passion, rather than to sustain a sizable income. In academia, many departments have names which translate neatly into job-titles, *biologist, engineer, business manager*. The suffix for English is usually "major" or "minor," facilitating the misguided notion of eternal student-hood. In the theatre, if the word "career" is associated at all, it is often limited to a single aspect: acting, which is quickly replaced with "celebrity." In both respects, the expectations are unrealistic and marginally representative of the fields. At the same time, society perpetuates these views and as a result, sends a strikingly similar message to both spheres: the pursuit of one's passions will not always be met with praise or support.

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[3] While the definitions of first-year composition vary depending on department and program goals and expectations, I base my discussion on the two "scaffolded" model courses which are required across the disciplines as "General Education" or "core" courses for graduation.

[4] The term has two acceptable spellings. Generally, "theatre" refers to the art form as a whole; while the "theater" is most commonly used to refer to the physical space of the production. Though they are not consistently maintained among experts, I will adhere to these distinctions.

Constrained ambitions are also characteristics of our current economic situation, as support from families, friends and the government wanes in the arts and humanities. The effect is a generation cut off from access to and realization of their passions, and reading, writing and performance have long fought the dismissive titles akin to "entertainment;" mindless diversions from "real life."

Yet nothing could be further from the truth. I have found that the most powerful and relevant literature and performance is always rooted in a gritty reality; the expression of some "universal" theme or truth. What is more, the desire to express, to be heard and understood should never be undermined as a mere "hobby". Often, those who have limited access to the arts and education are likely to accept a role of silence in other aspects of their lives. Therefore, I include members of the theatre and Composition as collective audience for my argument, and emphasize their role in reaching and engaging those individuals who are most at risk for "falling through the cracks" because of a lack of support or encouragement. First-year composition instructors and members of community theatres are, together, gatekeepers of society, and I suggest that they should pay closer attention to one another and work together to make sure that people do not merely "pass through" the gates of art and education, but are able to reach the other side as confident and capable individuals – individuals at the beginning of a journey into lifelong, productive civic engagement.

*Justification for the Study*

Furthering the need for my study is the reality that instructors, especially those in first year programs, are often at risk of becoming "alienated" from the most fulfilling aspects of their vocation. There are at least two primary causes for this detachment, 1) a

developed antithetical perspective of the creative and critical elements of the writing processes, and 2) a subsequent perspective of students as a collection of persons existing "outside" of both realms. In other words, instructors view the phases of writing inherent to first year courses as a phase of futile struggle, rather than one of exploration and discovery. In order to begin the process of creating 21st century pedagogy, it is necessary for instructors to alter their perspectives and means of communication with students, in addition to refocusing on the purposes of composition and integrating reality into the classroom. To begin working towards these goals, I propose the use of theatrical methods as a sound model for analysis and application.

For example, Kathleen Blake Yancey[5] believes that "in helping create writing publics, we also foster the development of citizens…whose commitment to humanity is characterized by consistency and generosity as well as the ability to write for purposes that are unconstrained and audiences that are nearly unlimited" (321). Simply put, composition instructors help people find their voices so they can be heard and understood and as such, we should not force ourselves to deny or suppress the deeply human aspect of our profession. Therefore, I argue that we have an ethical responsibility to live in such a way that reflects the ideas and goals we impress upon our students.

Nevertheless, one of Yancey's primary concerns – one shared by many in the field – is that technological advances which have changed the way we think about "composition," have negatively affected the identity of English as a department. As a result, many aspects that ought to be "classified" under English are being absorbed by other departments, or created under new titles altogether. Yancey specifically refers to

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[5] Former President of the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

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"the increase of units called something other than English, like departments of communication and divisions of humanities" (302). In turn, many students who should be English majors are signing up in other departments (mass communications, and business are primary examples) because they do not see the relevance of English beyond basic "reading and writing," or perhaps because, as Yancey argues, "the major continues to be defined as *territorias literati*" (301).

Yancey's claim becomes even more significant if we consider that this definition is often applied by those within the field who are hesitant and even fearful of technological innovations; resistant to digital literacy. While many argue that this approach seeks to maintain their ground, it is too conventional for the demands of our current students whose lives are inundated with technology. In classrooms where instructors reject or resist innovative mediums of composition, they likewise risk alienating themselves from the generations of students who, in turn, see composition as something external and irrelevant, outside of their reality. This obviously limits the potential uses of technology as enhanced forms of composition and communication in the classroom, and furthers Yancey's suspicion that English departments "may have already become anachronistic" (302). Instructors who continue to resist these inevitable changes might not realize their contribution to the widespread "reduction." At the same time, however, if these attitudes can have such a dramatic affect, a *shift* in perspective could aid English departments in the preservation of the discipline and actually extend its reach into other programs, revealing the pervasiveness of English in and outside the walls of the institution.

Therefore, educators and artists must approach "new" mediums in ways that do not cripple their ability to create and communicate in their respective fields.[6] Even instructors who acknowledge the uses of technology as more sophisticated and varied means of composing must remember that majority of current students have grown up using them as everyday tools and are likely unaware of their powerful potential. In order to help students recognize, understand, and use rhetoric in ways that are relevant in the "real world", instructors have to "dive in" to the world of technology. We should familiarize ourselves with these "new" territories, and rather than see them as distractions or reductions of written discourse, embrace them as legitimate forms of communication and composition. The use of images, films, blogs, emails, power point presentations, and online social networking forums are only a few examples and are all legitimate genres for writing and analysis. If composition instructors can harness them in the classroom, we will not only expand the idea of intertextuality and the means of "conversation", but also meet 21st century goals of writing across the curriculum. In doing so, we will create relevant connections for our students and ourselves between "*how* we teach" and "*what* we teach" (Rose). In addition, taking ownership and learning to creatively utilize a variety of "communication modes" further justifies the joint titles of artist *and* educator.

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[6]In his modern introduction to *Permanence and Change*, Duncan explains that what Burke calls the "mysteries" concern the manner in which people of diverse "conditions of life, different classes and kinds of people become remote and strange to each other" and that, regardless of the extent of these differences, "there must be some way of transcending the separateness if social order is to be achieved" (xxxii-iii). In the appendix to *Permanence and Change,* Kenneth Burke argued that, "in a society as complicated as ours", there are certain individual "symbol-users" who are charged with "the normal priestly function of partly upholding and partly transcending the Mysteries of class" (276). *He short list of specific symbol users includes "educators" and "artists" (276).* The concerns of this thesis are with the joint responsibilities of artists and educators as "symbol-users", as well as the dissipation of the "mysteries" between them. I will narrow these further from the "educator" to the first-year composition instructor, and the "artist" to the director and the stage manager. Each works in the medium of human communication, and does so within their diverse "natural habitats" of the classroom and the theater where the creative and critical faculties of groups of individuals are always in operation.

*Structure of the Study*

In my first section, titled "Review of Literature," I quote former CCCC's President Kathleen Blake Yancey's 2004 keynote address, "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key," in which she addresses critical problems facing Composition and calls for a new 21st century pedagogy as a response.[7] This new approach, she argues, would incorporate optimum methods of the past and present and "revise" them to unify the disparate perceptions of the "real world" with the classroom and produce "thoughtful, informed, technologically adept writing publics" (308). Yancey suggests that "a new vocabulary, a new set of practices, and a new set of outcomes" are critical components of this new pedagogy and the achievement of its aims (308). The works of director William Ball, and stage manager Thomas Kelly, offer insights to the practical and theoretical aspects of working in the theatre. As foundation for my third section, titled, "Argument: Sharing the Keys in Arts and Education," I refer to several scholars whose works can be applied to both the stage and the classroom. Kenneth Burke offers what he refers to as a "dramatistic" approach to literature, and I apply this method to the act of teaching Composition and working in prominent roles in the theatre. As recently as October 13, 2009, debates on the challenges and roles of instructors in first year Composition are taking place on the Council of Writing Program Administrators'(WPA) listserv.[8] While the details of a particular debate between Carbone

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[7] Conference on College Composition and Communication.

[8] This discussion began with a response from Nick Carbone, a practicing Composition theorist and Director of New Media for Bedford/St. Martin's, to "The Decline of the English Department" on October 9, 2009. The original discussion evolved into a debate between Carbone and his admitted friend, Fred Kemp, who is an Associate Professor of English at Texas Tech University. In the days that followed, the conversation was retitled "Commas and Fred Kemp" who renamed it "Making FYC Work," what he referred to as "a more

and Kemp are detailed the Conclusion, they are worth mentioning here as they exemplify the ongoing relevance of issues related to first year composition. Finally, I propose that working dichotomies of collaboration and communication exist in the theatre and could provide useful models of teaching strategies in the classroom. My work in both areas have given me a commitment to the community in higher education and the performing arts and fostered a conviction that the two build and thrive upon one another, each offering specific knowledge and tools that can simultaneously empower and connect individuals on a higher level of awareness and self actualization.

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prosaic but less personal subject heading" on 13 October, 2009. A more detailed reference to this discussion is included in the Conclusion.

# CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*"These moments: they aren't all alike, nor are they equal. And how we value them is in part a function of how we understand them, how we connect them to other moments, how we anticipate the moments to come"*

--Kathleen Blake-Yancey

*"...moments of unity...are the very purpose and the reward of drama."*

--William Ball

In this thesis, I seek not only to emphasize the urgency of now and propose a response to Yancey's call, but I also address a corresponding, though less directly stated, appeal that has been "sounded" in the theatre. I find such a juxtaposition of the theatre and Composition worthy consideration for several reasons. To begin, through my experiences in both fields, I recognize that an effective response to one requires the same attention and tasks as the other. Therefore, I will extend my comparison of the theatre and the Composition classroom to examine the parallel shift from modern to postmodern ideas, as the historical dynamics are strikingly similar. If we regard the legitimacy of

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socio-economic factors in Composition, then we should acknowledge the congruence of these factors upon Composition and the theatre as well.

A primary concern in the contemporary world of Composition and the theatre involves a certain degree of reduction to the meanings of both fields. This has occurred in a kind of ironic combination of technological advances in congruence with economic downturn. What is more, instructors should not take a bipartisan approach to their work and ignore the very humanistic nature of the field. It is no secret that instructors of first year writing courses are often adjuncts, or temporary hires, and are situated at the lower level of the hierarchy in terms of status and economy. We can derive from these factors two conclusions: because first-year composition instructors are subject to a significant amount of grunt work, we can assume that there must be a motivation beyond financial gain. Indeed, composition instructors often find themselves pulled away from the fulfilling aspects of what Mike Rose calls "the vastly complex composing that faculty members engage in for a living and delve into for work and for play" (552).[9] In other words, it easy for us to get lost in the "drudgery of the work" and ignore a significant aspect of our *purpose*: beyond gainful employment, we must always be seeking engagement in a *human* experience through the communicative acts of reading, writing and teaching. [10] While there is obvious benefit to applying the workforce reality in class,

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[9] Mike Rose is a faculty member of the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. This quote is taken from his article, "The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University," originally published in *College English* 47.4 (April 1985).

[10] This is an aspect of pedagogical criticism, emphasized by Greg Myers in "Reality, Consensus, and Reform in the Rhetoric of Composition Teaching," originally published in *College English* 48.2 (February 1986). In discussing the works of Sterling Leonard, Kenneth Bruffee, and Peter Elbow, Myers points out consistent patterns of reference to "the drudgery of the work", and argues that a primary motivation for reform is reflected in a desire for "escape…a change in the conditions of the work, and a system that allows them to teach as well as just evaluate" (454-5). To give this matter the in-depth attention it deserves would

Greg Myers, professor of Rhetoric and Communication at Lancaster University warns us against approaching it as the "only" reality. While we might think we are helping students to avoid lower levels of the workforce through higher education, "the naturalness and inevitability of this connection as the one way of reaching out to the world outside of school" is troubling to Myers, and should be troublesome to anyone who values the discipline beyond the limitations of a workforce (446). Technology is, at times, similarly limited to its use as a tool of the workforce rather than as a creative medium of communication. As Yancey points out, technological advances have created a host of new communicative mediums, yet the critical and creative potential is often undermined by employer demands; the emphasis is on the ability to operate the program, rather than engage in the act of communication. So too is our situation in the classroom where innovative technology can overwhelm many instructors or create an atmosphere in which the students' writing process is reduced to the mere entering of static information into systems which the expect to think and analyze for them.

Yancey discusses these reductions and addresses the current state of Composition from a somewhat nostalgic perspective, wondering how we can approach a modern classroom "if we cannot go home again to the days when print was the sole medium" (Yancey 308). Her choice of words is poignant for a current generation of instructors whose professional and educational backgrounds have spanned across a technological revolution. She also pinpoints what may be a primary influence in what Shaughnessy

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result in the generalization of other important points critical to this thesis, however, the well-being of the instructor is relevant to any critic concerned with the human aspects of the discipline. In that sense, I argue that there is merit in finding ways to maintain collective and individual passions for engaging and teaching in the complex field of English amid the discouragement and exhaustion intrinsic to the work of those in first year programs.

identifies a tendency toward "gatekeeping." In the last few decades, we can see the same

issues of exclusivity and ownership happening within the realm of the theatre.

*Theatre: Current Conditions*

Yancey's fears, concerning instructors' willingness and ability to harness

technology while still maintaining a hands-on pedagogy, are similar to the worries

expressed by prominent author and stage manager, Thomas Kelly. Kelly believes that

new technologies in the theatre, though beneficial in many regards, could result in a loss

of what he considers the more "human aspects" of stage management and the theatrical

experience in general. He argues,

> As theater begins to rely more and more heavily on the computer chip and
> synthesized sound, theater may overwhelm and amaze audiences with the
> spectacle of technological innovation, but it runs the risk of not involving
> an audience emotionally, of not making them care. (Kelly 195)

In fact, many people in the theatre feel that the profession has veered from its origins.

The opposition argues that theatre has strayed from the more "gritty," meaningful

grounded artistic work of the theatre. Others point out that the current shift is actually a

repetition of a continuous cycle. Just as Yancey points the historical connections between

the current state of Composition theories and the writing public of the 19th century, the

current condition of theatre is also one that reflects an earlier generation of big spectacle

commercial ventures.[11] Because of the widespread consumption of spectacle, the more

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[11] In "The Economic Development of the 'New' Times Square and Its Impact on the Broadway Musical", Elizabeth L. Wollman chronicles a critical moment in the history of American theatre. What began as an effort to "clean up" the streets and image of NY and Times Square became, in the 1990s, a complete vision realized via a corporate-backed overhaul of Broadway. She describes how, Michael Eisner, the then CEO of Disney agreed to fund a complete renovation of the dilapidated New Amsterdam theater on 42nd street. To summarize, Broadway saw the (re)emergence of big, "technically spectacular" productions of *The Lion*

*King, Beauty and the Beast,* and most recently, *The Little Mermaid.* Yet the presence of Disney on Broadway sparked a series of more dramatic changes which have reached into mainstream theatre across America. The result is a much wider audience base; not only are more people attending productions, but

"human purposes" of theatre are somewhat missed, if not lost altogether, on mainstream audiences.[12] [13] Wollman argues that, while the "business synergy" of theatre and Disney may have bolstered awareness and revenue and interest in the mass population, it has arguably devalued the core of the theatre and made it more of a commercial venture than an art form.[14]

The post-modern theatrical scene is similar to the 19th century writing community in which the audience became more than consumers, but shapers of the product. Unlike Ball's idea of unity, which is rooted in human understanding and emotion, the "post-modern" theatrical experience is based on consumerism:

> Although Broadway is currently enjoying unprecedented financial growth, theatrical productions in New York city and across the country are evolving from creative forms of artistic expression into products developed by committee and suitable for synergistic appropriation by the entertainment conglomerates that produce and market them...Corporations might be helping the American theatre, then, but arguably not as much as theatre is helping corporations...As long as economics spin out of control, corporations offer recycled films and cartoons in the place of innovative musicals, and regional theaters are used as workshops for Broadway-bound ventures—rather than as sites for musicals and plays—the American theatre will continue to be compromised. (Wollman 462-63)

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regardless of *where* they live, people are more aware of what's happening on Broadway. In many ways, this reflects what Yancey calls the "series of newly imagined communities...that cross borders of all kinds—nation state, class, gender, ethnicity" that have emerged among writers as a result in the booming technological means of discourse (Yancey 301). While the economic benefits are obvious, Wollman is concerned that the corporate infusion has "also begun to adversely affect artistic expression in the American theatre as a whole" (Wollman 446).

[12] See Ball for an explanation of the "Traditional Forms and Predominant Elements" of theatre.

[13] I define the "higher purpose" of theatre as intrinsically linked to an almost literary form of relevant, *social* commentary.

[14] Not only is this an obviously limited compass but it has created a struggle for smaller theaters to retain both audiences and funds to produce developing and experimental work, as well as "known" dramatic works or "straight plays"; those which are more focused on social commentary. In addition, many are concerned that the flood of revivals and film adaptations might foster audiences who see live performance as unoriginal, superficial entertainment or a mere extension of Hollywood. As a result, contemporary theatrical communities have an increased responsibility to foster public awareness and appreciation of the value and multiplicity of theater, (thereby embodying the role of artist *and* educator).

Elinor Fuchs discusses the changing atmosphere of the theatre in the historical context of the Reagan era, in which she examines evolution (or a recurring cycle) of "market principles" in the theatre in NY and explains the manner in which commercialism emerged.[15] Unlike the directly commercial elements of "Disney-fied" Broadway productions, Fuch's identifies performances in which consumerism is introduced via removal of the fourth wall, and points to her experience as an audience member of specific productions in which she was "invited" to share in the action on stage, whether through the vicarious consumption of materials on stage, or in a more explicit manner in which the audience literally participates in the fiction, creating a "meta-theatrical" experience.[16] The audience adapts to a "new relation to the theatre" removed from the traditional place in the house whereby they are transformed, in some cases literally, into to the production.[17] Fuchs explains how, through these productions in particular, she was trained as a "shopper" to look for the consumable goods in every scene. "This revision of the spectator's relationship to theater matches will with research in market studies concluding that consumers regard objects, experiences, and even places as possessions that can be claimed as part of their "extended selves" (139). And while

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[15] Elinor Fuchs is a renowned theatre critic and an Adjunct Professor of Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism at the Yale School of Drama. Her 1996 *The Death of the Character: Perspectives on Theater after Modernism* is concerned with the condition of theatre in the 20th century. Here, I reference her chapter titled "Theater as Shopping" (pp 128-144).

[16] In theatrical terms, the "fourth wall" is actually an imaginary dividing space between the actors and the audience. In a traditional venue, it is the space at the front of the stage, but can be created in any space where a performance takes place. To "break the fourth wall" is to obstruct the illusion of a "real" moment happening onstage. In cases of "experimental theatre", the wall is intentionally broken as part of the atmosphere of the production. Though they will not be expanded upon here, considerations of "the fourth wall" are critical to discussions of the interrelationships of audience and actor.

[17] Traditionally, the "house" refers to the place in the theater where the audience sits.

members of the theatrical community might be in awe and appreciation of the audience "boom," most theatrical professionals also recognize the need to bring attention back to the higher artistic purposes often missed by this new, enthusiastic public. Increased attendance has created a larger, more diverse generation of audiences; what it has not done is help to maintain the integrity of the art form.

*Composition: Current Scholarship*

Technology has expanded our means of communication, but, at the same time, it has also left composition instructors in a precarious position: we are better able to reach a diverse group of students through these new mediums, yet we live in constant fear that innovative methods, together with the problems associated with open enrollment, will take away from the quality of instruction, and, at worst, may be claimed or absorbed by other departments, programs, or specialty fields.[18] Though most Composition theory suggests that fear of oppression is student-driven, I argue that it is crucial that we recognize our own inadequacies and fears of oppression as instructors. In fact, nearly twenty-five years before Yancey sounded her call for a 21st century pedagogy, Freire argued for a "problem-posing" education, one that he argued would motivate students to recognize their oppression in society and work together to take action to subvert it. Freire might have been talking about students, but I suggest that his call is similar to Yancey's – and should be answered by students and teachers alike. As Freire states, "an act is oppressive only when it prevents people from being more fully human" (42). In this

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[18] For example, many composition classrooms utilize multiple forms of media as texts and as a means for creating arguments and for incorporating presentational aspects to projects. We can see similar practices employed in Departments of Mass Communications and Business, though many do not distinguish the pedagogical objectives that govern the use of these mediums.

respect, composition instructors are particularly called to action, as writing is entrenched in human expression and civic discourse. So is, I suggest, the theatre.

Freire identifies key elements which must be in place in order for students to be truly freed, though he does not identify a specific oppressor (46). In this sense, Freire's claims are even more relevant to first-year composition classrooms at community colleges and open enrollment universities that are comprised of students from a wide-range of socio-economic backgrounds, as each will find themselves in a different system of oppression. Freire believes that it is the instructor's responsibility to "awaken" the students to their situations, and in order to do this, artists and educators alike must not consider themselves to be superior to students, but must be motivated to communicate and work in "solidarity" with them. Therefore, I argue, it is necessary for 21st century instructors to begin with their attitude towards the students. While Freire tells us to act in "solidarity" with our students, instructors do not always need to the spirit of shared oppression. Rather, this solidarity is related to our role as "gatekeepers" in that, regardless of our current status in the field, we must be able to identify with the types of concerns and struggles our students have in and outside the classroom and be willing to adapt our strategies to accommodate those needs for communication in a variety of genres for diverse audiences.

The desire to create strategies to increase our ability to communicate is not limited to the classroom. In many of his theoretical works, Burke explores what he argues to be the four "basic motives arising in human communication, which are "Guilt, Redemption, Hierarchy and Victimage." In the latter two particularly, Burke ponders "our depressing need for sharing in the violence and hatred we visit upon ourselves and

each other."[19] Through their attempts to "relinquish control" or act "in solidarity" with one another, people often find themselves actively perpetuating oppression. When guiding individuals through the processes of human communication, it is easy for "educators and artists" to become "accidental" oppressor, as the work being produced is close to the emotions of the creators.

While Burke draws heavily on Greek tragedy and religion as examples of these types of intentions, evidence of such seemingly "dramatic" forces in the classroom is precisely what Paulo Freire addresses in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire, through detailed explanation, reveals the systems of oppression in education. Freire argues in the context of his experiences as an impoverished student and teacher outside of Brazil to emphasize education as a means of liberating the people, guiding them towards critical consciousness, a necessary component in the greater "quest for human completion." (31).

Of course, the pedagogical quest for "human completeness" is an often unreachable ideal. We begin to see the problems that occur in when ideals are put into practice, and examples of such "teacher-student contradictions" are laid out in Mina Shaughnessy's article "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing." Shaughnessy was an early supporter of open admissions and used her experiences as an instructor of basic writing at CUNY's City College to support a proposal that there is a significant correlation between student performance and the emotional and practical responses of the composition instructor. She identifies these responses and their potential causes in the form of four individual phases. While her model is based on basic writing courses of the

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[19] Duncan frames discusses these issues in the modern introduction to Burke's early text, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* in reference to Burke's *Rhetoric of Religion*.

1960s and 1970s, her model can easily be extended to current first-year composition classes, as the demographic of students and their struggles are arguably similar.

In the first phase, Shaughnessy acknowledges one of the greatest challenges that face an instructor of Composition. She presents an example of an instructor who, having just read the "first batch of essays," realizes that "the students are so alarmingly and incredibly behind any students he has taught before that the idea of their ever learning to write…seems utterly pretentious." In this phase, the instructor succumbs to the frustration and disappointment and decides that the students "will never 'make it' in college unless someone radically lowers the standards" (Shaughnessy 312). Ultimately, Shaughnessy challenges instructors to "dive in" and "become student of new disciplines and of [the instructors'] students themselves in order to perceive both their difficulties and their incipient excellence" (Shaughnessy 317). While this is approach would translate well into the pedagogy of any teacher, it is particularly important for instructors of first-year composition. As "gatekeepers", we are aware of the simple truth that our students will not always—or even sometimes—reflect the foundations of what we admire most about our field: insightful reading, writing and articulation. In fact, we are challenged with teaching students who enter our classrooms below what we would consider to be basic levels of proficiency in all three areas.

While Shaughnessy frames the students as valuable works in progress, the problem remains that not all *instructors* move successfully beyond the initial and most difficult phase. Recalling the earlier comparison of Composition to a "human" act, Shaughnessy's claim that these phases originate from an emotional response furthers the nature of the investment required for a composition instructor. Therefore, I argue that a

heightened and consistent awareness of the manner in which teachers react to their students. This kind of initial passion must be instilled in the students, but if instructors are not cautious and reflective, the driving force can be derailed to the point that emotions of fear and frustration dominate the classroom.

Like Shaughnessy, Greg Myers connects the source of his concerns with issues of social constructions to his "teaching of basic writing at Queens College…and the challenges of Open Admissions at CUNY" (Myers 453). In "Reality, Consensus, and reform in the Rhetoric of Composition Teaching," Myers grapples with the difficulties that arise when notions of collaborative learning in the classroom are put into practice.[20] He argues that consensus, as it has been approached in the past, limits the perception of reality and requires that students conform to an agreed upon standard, whether it is in the terminology, standard conventions or language use, or the actual subject matter of the classroom. In terms of the composition classroom, Myers is concerned with the ways instructors of the past have approached collaboration and consensus in the classroom, and how "what we might think is free and progressive thought may be another way of perpetuating a system we want to change" (440). This point becomes even more significant when we consider the fact that many instructors of first-year composition are at the beginning of their college teaching careers. Myers approaches collaboration as an ideal that is much more attractive and effective in theory than in practice and reveals how

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[20] In "Reality, Consensus and Reform in the Rhetoric of Composition Teaching," Myers builds upon "the detailed and practical suggestions of Peter Elbow and Kenneth Bruffee and on their discussion of their works with other teachers". He finds that "the recurrence of these ideas as new ideas suggests that those of us who want to change the way writing is taught tend to overlook the efforts and the lessons of earlier reformers" (437).

the use of collaboration in the classroom often constitutes a pitfall for many well-meaning instructors.

While Myers believes scholars like Bruffee and Leonard are on the right track by rejecting conformity to acknowledge the diversity of the classroom, the rational and subsequent means of seeking out a "common ground" ultimately betray the goals of uniting students and instead, cycle back around to the continuation of conformity. In a classroom where membership is part of the goal, and terminology (and therefore communication) is limited, inevitably, some voices will become (or remain) reticent. Attempts to democratize a classroom often result (though not necessarily a conscious intention of the instructor) in an atmosphere that is merely politicized; in which communication becomes exclusive, class distinctions are perpetuated through exclusive communication and terminology, and the goal of consensus evolves into a collective awareness that the majority rules. In addition, the instructor becomes a kind of accidental dictator who, by participating and facilitating activities of group work—regardless of the initial ideas—can become "fierce enforcers of conformity" (Myers 442).

Myers continues: "if conflict is part of the system, and is necessary to change the system, then consensus, within the system as it is, must mean that some interests have been suppressed or excluded" (440). These concerns with the approach to reality in the classroom are related, he suggests, to our classification of reality. While teaching the "real world" value of Composition is necessary, Myers finds that the trend is to contextualize reality in terms of the workforce, thereby reducing the field to one which trains students to meet "demands of employers" (445). He writes that "By treating the 'real world' as the bedrock of our teaching, we perpetuate the idea that reality is

something outside us and beyond our efforts to change it" (445). Nevertheless, if we are to take the advice of Freire and work in solidarity with our students and help them to reach a level of critical consciousness that Burke claims is necessary, the suggestion that teachers view themselves as beings outside of a "real human being" is troubling to say the least.[21] Myers argues that "world outside of school" is not a strange and distant reality from which teachers are somehow magically removed (446).

So, how do we meet these complex demands as teachers, "real" human beings, and members a civic society? First, Burke suggests that we cannot work under the assumption that people "communicate by a neutral vocabulary" (162); we must expand and reconsider the ways in which we communicate our purposes to our students. As rhetoricians, we stand behind Burke's assertions that all words are "weighted," yet we often fail to translate this belief into our practice as instructors of composition. We ask students to deconstruct the meanings of a given text, we acknowledge their capacity to interpret language and symbols around them, and therefore must consider ourselves as a "text" up for interpretation on a daily basis. In dramatistic terms, we must consider ourselves as part of the "scene," the background or situation in which the students are simultaneously situated and observing. Myers, echoing Burke's philosophy, believes that we need to apply the same understanding of socially constructed realities to teachers as we do to students, and that we must consider how our individual realities shape our

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[21] Myers critiques Elbow's use of "real human beings" in his text *Writing With Power*. Elbow offers advice to students regarding the expectation they have—or should have—of their instructors. He explains to students that teachers "are not good at telling you what your writing feels like to a real human being, at taking your words seriously as messages directed to them, at praising you, or perhaps even at noticing you. Get these things elsewhere" (Elbow, qtd in Myers, 454).

methods. We do not need to "correct" ourselves, but instead we should "revise" ourselves.

Martin Puchner, who utilizes Burke's philosophies to discuss issues of performance theory in "Theater, Philosophy and the Limits of Performance," references Burke's pentad to tell us that an emphasis on human motives "is indeed what we should expect from a philosophical methodology derived from the theater, which is an art form that depends on live human performers" (51). [22] I argue that those of us in the discipline of Composition should also consider writing to be an art form (rather than a quantitative set of skills or what Breuch calls "content to be mastered"), and therefore recognize ourselves *and* our students as "live human performers" who are "acting" through the agency of Composition with a specific purpose, and argument, in mind. [23] While this may seem to be an obvious point, evidence suggests a frequent detachment from the human elements of the craft and brings us to the discussion of reduction. Therefore, in the spirit of Kenneth Burke, I propose a more concerted "dramatistic" approach to first-year composition.

*Composition and Theatre: Common Ground*

Puchner addresses the fact that the comparison between composition and theatre has long been debated by rhetoricians and philosophers. In reference to Burke, Puchner

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[22] Martin Puchner is the H. Gordon Garbedian Professor of English and Comparative Literature and co-chair of the Theatre Ph.D. program at Columbia University. Like Burke, he is concerned with the relationships between the theatre and philosophy, and in "Theater, Philosophy and the Limits of Performance" Puchner uses Burke to explore performance studies because "he more than anyone developed a form of theatrical philosophy and gave it a name: 'dramatism'" (44). Here, I reference Puchner for his framing of Burke's philosophies in terms of the "mutual distrust between theatre and philosophy, a distrust that has been reified by the standard histories of both disciplines" as well as his condensation of the means by which to effectively approach Burke in criticism (41).

[23] Breuch is an associate professor in the Department of Rhetoric at the University of Minnesota.

acknowledges that "even and especially for this most theatrical of philosophers, it seems, there is no easy fusion of theater and theory" (41). Yet when considering motives, we are dealing with an intersection foundational to "good" writing and performance. Puchner goes on to clarify that Burke's dramatistic approaches are not a close study of the discipline itself, but are "concerned with the origin of drama," and its prevalence in society. Ultimately, Burke "propose[s] to take *ritual drama* as the Ur-form, the 'hub,' with all other aspects of *human* action treated as spokes radiating from this hub" (Burke, qtd. in Puchner, 44). While many scholars criticize the wide-ranging scope of Burke's philosophies, the interrelationships of human motives to actions and communication are difficult to deny. In that respect, the most valued of Burke's "tools" in their application across disciplines are his "pentad" of human motives, also referred to as the "dramatistic terms": act, scene, agent, agency and purpose. Burke maintains that "any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind* of answers to these five questions: what was done (act) when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency) and why (purpose)" (Burke 411). In particular, instructors of composition should take note of the most obvious connection: the basic "journalistic" questions we ask of students in the process of constructing an argument.

The same is true of the theatre, and any good director knows that the base of any performance is rooted a solid motivation. In terms of Composition pedagogy, Burke uses the word *purpose*, and in writing courses, instructors draw from a host of terms: *argument, claim, point, objective* and *intention* to name a few. The meaning serves as the same foundation in the theatre as well. In William Ball devotes an entire chapter to importance "wants," which he refers to as "the golden key…the sine qua non—or

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'without which nothing' —of the art of theatre."[24] Ball says "wants are what the waking individual is never without. Wants are perpetual. Wants cause action. Wants create conflict. Wants are the very energy of human life" (76). In essence, whether they are students or actors, engaged in writing or live performance, composition instructors and director share the purpose of guiding individuals towards a "more meaningful and appropriate choice of objectives" (81).

Given these foundational principles of motives and audience, we can move beyond this comparison of technical terms into a more transcendental realm of expression; the communication and human relationships at the core of writing and performance. Audience is obviously a constant consideration of anyone involved in the theatre, and its "presence" in the classroom is imperative to many scholars in Composition studies who, like Burke, emphasize the importance of human communication. Lee-Ann Breuch is one such scholar who argues that "the assumption that writing is public...incorporates the idea that meaning is made through our interactions." [25] Furthermore, "emphasizing the public nature of writing reminds us that beyond writing correctly, writers must work toward communicating their message to an audience" (111). Breuch therefore argues for the use of a real world audience in the composition classroom in order to help students become "more aware of their interactions with others" (111).

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[24] It is important to clarify that Ball does not argue for the singular use of this term, and in fact emphasizes the necessity of expressing the idea in as many ways as possible. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

[25] In "Post-Process Pedagogy: A Philosophical Exercise," Breuch explores post-process beliefs that writing is public, interpretive and situated. She emphasizes the importance of an audience as a literal presence, a means of providing the critical response necessary for rhetorical discourse.

While these success of these types of goals are more difficult to measure in a writing course than those which focus on the conventions of language and correctness, Breuch represents a belief widely held among current theorists who believe that "writing is an activity—an interaction with others—rather than content to be mastered" (Breuch 113). Similarly, the theatre serves as a vehicle for the creation of meaning *and* the communities of individuals who are unified in experiencing it. Ball argues that "belief power is pervasive in a theatre, and belief power is tremendously compelling" (8). He remarks on the simultaneous experience of the actor and the audience, and contends that audience members "come to the theater to exercise [their] *system of belief*" (9).[26] Ball describes the feelings of an individual audience member after he has experienced a performance, and suggests

> ...the reason his spirit is so renewed and enthusiastic is that his belief systems have been awakened and exhilarated. During the course of the performance he contributed so much of his belief that new aspects of his identity have been awakened. (9)

For Ball, the moment of unity in the theater is one which occurs in the last seven minutes, four of which are spent building up to the final three minutes of complete unity. He shows us by outlining a play in three acts; in the first, the audience is in the early phases of being "drawn into the belief that the actors really mean what they are saying" (10). In the second act, the audience "relinquishes more control" until, by the third act, "his belief draws him further under the spell, and without any noticeable transition...he believes that he and the actor are one" (10). These phases ultimately prepare the audience for what Ball refers to as "a period of partially unconscious experience" in which the self is surrendered to the experience, judgment is suspended and, in the final moments of the

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[26] Ball's emphasis.

performance, the audience member is "in a state of awe at something outside himself" (11). Ball explains,

> This transcendence into unity is the mark of a work of art in the theatre. The more prolonged the moment of unified belief, the more powerful the work of art; what happened was that an audience of, let us say, a thousand spectators was more or less simultaneously drawn into a state of unity consciousness. (12)

Though it is arguable that, as such, "live" theatrical performances are fixed in time, Ball and others in the field of theatre would argue that the effect of this shared experience is a transcendence in which live "moments" are immortalized, embodied in the lives performers and the audience. As Ball observes, humans desire "moments of unity, in which the audience and the actors are one…are the very purpose of drama" (12). Similarly, Yancey's discussions of circulation and technology, in this sense, emphasize the transcendental power of Composition in the current ways that "literacy is created across spaces, across time" (298).

Combining the practical and theoretical forces of theatre with those of Composition pedagogy can foster a greater sense of security in for those of us in the field while further developing ourselves as individuals prepared to meet the challenges presented in the 21st Century. In fact, though technology has helped to create a much larger audience for both Composition and theatre, each "takes its share of the spotlight at a cost" (Wollman 462). Faced with this new readership, members of the theatrical and writing communities have similarly mixed feelings. Wollman and Fuchs' concerns regarding the current situation of theatre are comparable to Yancey's concerns with the boom in circulation of texts. Yancey expresses the awe and excitement, but remains concerned as to the harnessing of these "texts." In a sense, we are concerned with the effect of having these texts in the "wrong hands." In the field of Composition and the

theatre, we should not approach our craft as "tower guards." At the same time, however, technology has created an overwhelming sense of ownership outside the discipline, and the result is a broad sense of ownership that is based on consumption rather than cultivation, and subsequently, a boom of widely accepted (even lauded) texts which arguably lack artistic and intellectual integrity.

Yancey characterizes what she calls the "tectonic" shifts occurring in and around the composition classroom and finds the most significant of these involve a dramatic increase in the expansion and creation of a variety of new composition genres and their interrelationships, running parallel to the evolution of a "new writing public." Yancey argues that these "tremors" are just cause for a widespread change in the theory and practice of first-year composition instructors, calling for a new "21st century pedagogy." Ironically, this is a poignant issue for current composition instructors who, because of the economic crisis, work for Departments or institutions that are scrambling to recruit and retain students, and are either using or seeking funds to incorporate new technologies. Innovative teaching methods and student resources are attractive—and therefore necessary—to a generation of students who might otherwise deem certain courses to be irrelevant to their lives outside of the institution.

Moreover, Yancey addresses the somewhat ironic issue of sustainability that has emerged, since many of these forms developed outside academia, as she notes that "never before has the proliferation of writings outside the academy so counterpointed the compositions inside" (298). While it is exciting to see these new genres as well as a generation of writers engaged in so many new forms of composition, we are met with the challenge of harnessing and reclaiming them as such within our academic discipline. In

that respect, we often find our attempts to be inclusive in conflict with our objective to teach powerful rhetorical discourse. Because "this moment" is enveloped in a host of varied systems of public exchange, one challenge for composition instructors involves navigating without marginalizing certain voices in the classroom. For example, instructors might acknowledge and examine blogging as an important form of social discourse, but might inadvertently oppress their students by the *manner* in which they privilege other forms as academic writing. The answer is certainly not a "free-for-all" in the sense that we should consider text messaging or blogging to be scholarly writing. We could, however, subvert the problem of diminishing certain ways in which students exchange ideas by shifting our pedagogical perspective to one that requires students to critically analyze the methods they use to communicate in different discourse communities. Simply put, instructors need to bridge the gap between the real world and the classroom by asking students to think about how they speak and write, and when and where, thereby revealing the way they are already engaged in the rhetorical process of navigating through various and changing forms of communication. The result, I argue, could be what Yancey refers to as "newly imagined writing communities…that cross borders of all kinds—nation state, class, gender and ethnicity" (301). Yancey points out that, as instructors, we are also engaged in "communication modes assuming digital literacy" (307). She argues that,

> we *already* inhabit a model of communication practices incorporating
> multiple genres related to each other, those multiple genres remediated
> across contexts of time and space, linked one to the next, circulating
> across and around rhetorical situations both inside and outside school.
> (308) [27]

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[27] Yancey's emphasis.

At the risk of becoming irrelevant and detached from their students, many instructors continue to shy away from utilizing what they perceive to be new and unusual ways of reading and writing in their classrooms. However, Yancey's observation presents an empowering revelation. By examining their own daily practices, instructors will discover that they are already positioned in the gap between classroom and the world outside, and are therefore equipped to show students the connections. In essence, composition instructors should not only teach, but serves as examples of critical analysis and digital literacy.

# CHAPTER THREE


# THE ARGUMENT


*"In the mimesis of the practical the distinction between acting and play-acting; between real and make-believe, becomes obliterated."*

--Kenneth Burke[28]


*"Create your own method. Don't depend slavishly on mine. Make up something that will work for you! But keep breaking traditions, I beg you."*

--Konstantin Stanislavski


In the theater and in English programs, there is a common perception that tracks which lead to professionally recognized careers are marginal. The message that pursuits in these fields are extracurricular is prevalent in society. Yet we should realize that we are not reducing our field to a set of "skills" by emphasizing professional legitimacy. Likewise, a firm grasp of reality is also necessary in the theater. Alan Osburn, a theatre teacher and the Producing Artistic Director of The Fine Arts Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, believes that in art as in education "there has to be a business sense involved, there has to

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[28] From his text, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose.*

be a reality." He argues, that in "any art form…the bottom line is 'are you doing this as a hobby or are you doing this for a career?'…and [as a director and teacher] I've incorporate this as a career aspect" (Osburn).

In addition to encouraging ownership and self respect in his students, Osburn, like many teachers, does embrace the dual responsibility of preparing students for work in the real world. Directors (and teachers of actors and directors, as these professions often overlap) must not perpetuate the belief that their production is an isolated experience in approaching it as a mere stepping-stone to "bigger and better" opportunities. By the same token, directors must not allow themselves to indulge an atmosphere of "this is it", as if their production will be one of a few worthwhile encounters with the theater. To really cultivate the talents and abilities of individuals and to ensure a continued interest and engagement in the theater, the director must learn to approach the process as an end as well as means to other ends.

Indeed, few people would argue that artists and educators are engaged in the process of *creating* reality in an organic "meaning making" sense. In both fields, we teach students how to manage their lives, to think for themselves, to continually ask the ultimate "what's my motivation," and to consider their places in the world. Moreover, we want them to consider their relationship to "the audience," which is ever present and ever changing. And as they learn to ask these questions, we teach them to chart out their own course of action toward achieving their purposes. In this sense, our goals are very transcendental, and if we do not lose sight of this "Super Objective," we will find ways to justify our purposes to "outside disciplines" in order to sustain our professional positions, while avoiding the "reduction" of our work in the classroom to vocational training. And

Mike Rose tells us, "if the skills designation proves to be resistant to change, then we must insist that writing is a very unique skill, not really a tool but an ability fundamental to academic inquiry, an ability whose development is not fixed but ongoing"(566). These comparisons are in line with Yancey's goal to create "a curriculum in composition that prepare[s] students to become members of the writing public and to negotiate life" (306).[29]

*Common Language: Common Goals*

What Yancey does for Composition studies, Osburn does for the theatre. He emphasizes not only the importance, but the responsibility of the director [instructor] to carefully consider the manner in which they communicate to each actor [student]. He explains that, in the rehearsal process, the text is dismantled and extensive time and concentration are devoted to individual segments, scenes or moments, and the intense focus and repetition can be exhausting and stressful. As in the early stages of writing in the composition classroom, creative and emotional energy is high at this stage, and the intensity of the atmosphere can fluctuate quickly. While the multiple "artists" in the room may be working towards a greater overarching objective, each "student" is working from a slightly different vantage point, and this often results in communication gaps. A variety of misunderstandings are therefore inevitable, and in order to circumvent a more detrimental effect of crushing the spirit of an actor, the director must be prepared to, as Osburn puts it, "say it a different way." In the composition classroom, there are as many potential misunderstandings as there are students. Therefore, instructors must take more ownership of their terms and ideas throughout the writing process, which extends from

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[29] Yancey interprets Elizabeth Daly's "Expanding the Concept of Literacy" in this passage.

the question of "argument" into all aspects of our teaching. We must be sure that our students know exactly what we mean when we say "invention," "arrangement," "style," or "delivery," beyond recitation of prescribed definitions. Repeated use of the same terms is good for consistency, but I argue that we have to begin and be prepared with more extensive working definitions.

I argue that instructors should engage students in the process of creating working definitions of the terms and ideas specific to "academic discourse" throughout the semester, which would involve not a singular system of common terms, but a complex list of terms which, when taken in the proper context, ultimately "mean the same thing."[30] In this sense, we would be adopting an approach similar to Burke's "dramatistic treatment" of terms, which he argued, reduces the subject synoptically while still permitting us to appreciate its scope and complexity" (417). A deeper understanding of the complexity inherent to communication will require instructors to reconsider our own language, to discern how we define the words we use every day, and make the process of understanding and owning the meaning a more focused part of our curriculum.

Guarding the towers of knowledge implies that knowledge lies outside the self, and this type of separation is not conducive to the art of rhetoric and drama. Instructors, like directors, must be immersed in the language, symbolism, social attitudes of and about the discipline in order to effectively teach composition. Directors ask questions of their text in order to determine themes and concepts of the performance. As educators *and* artists, instructors of composition must also ask "What vision are we trying to

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[30] Regarding "academic discourse", I primarily refer to the terms and concepts such as "argument", "critical analysis," "synthesis" and "evidence," those associated with reading and writing essays and research-based papers. I would also include the vocabulary and ideas associated with the writing processes, such as "revision," "thesis," and "purpose."

reveal?" Our individual answers are revealed in the way we teach and also in the way we relate to our students. The latter of these is arguably most important, as it reveals our practical abilities as teacher. We should not limit our students' identities to a summary of their struggles or success. Instead, I suggest we embrace Lunsford's triad definition of "rhetoric" as "the art, practice and study of communication."[31] From this perspective, even the "drudgery" of our work can reveal to us the fears, needs and social stratification of our students, in short, creating a more human connection. In the end, composition instructors should be confident and willing to employ our own rhetorical skills with more multiplicity.

Speaking on the transposable nature of his dramatistic terms, Burke explains that "If you reduce the terms of any one of them, you will find them branching out again, for no one of them is enough" (416). Indeed, composition instructors must take this precise stance in the most essential goal of communicating and teaching the canons of rhetoric. Part of the 21st century pedagogy will require instructors to actively engage students in "consider[ing] not only a variety of texts and means of communication, but also "what the best medium and the best delivery for such a communication might be" (Yancey 311). In order to teach our students to effectively communicate in this manner, we must become better translators ourselves.

In Composition classrooms, we encourage the use of multiple perspectives in research and analysis as part of the development of critical consciousness. These different "ways of seeing" must therefore be reflected in our actions and our vocabulary. Rose reminds us that what we often call "illiteracy" is actually a matter of cultural

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[31] See Michael E. Eidenmuller's website *American Rhetoric* at
http://americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricdefinitions.htm

unfamiliarity that "students lack knowledge of the achievements of a tradition and are not at home with the ways we academics write about them" (560). Instructors should be able to navigate in and out of different terms and ideas as a testament to the complex nature of language and discourse, but also as a means of communicating "across the board" of students in the class. If we are concerned with effective communication and an awareness of audience needs, then the importance of effectively communicating objectives to an audience of students should not be undermined.

*Common Practices: Common Goals*

Whether they are dealing in the "moment," as in a play or semester, or an entire career, directors and instructors must be able to justify every choice they make along the way. Even though consistent ownership of assignments and purposes is critical at all levels of capacity in education and guidance, I argue that it is especially important in first-year composition courses where many instructors are just beginning, often as GTAs or adjuncts. As a director, William Ball explains that, "when I started directing…all my thoughts were arbitrary" (111). An unfortunate reality is equitable to the theatre and composition for individual directors and instructors who do not advance beyond this level. What the theatre can offer, however, is a solid system for establishing and adhering to a clear set of purposes in the composition classroom.

The phrase "playing the objective" is used to explain that the performer should, at all times, be "acting" with a purpose, whether that is an individual moment or the entire production.[32] I argue that instructors should always be "playing the objective" in the classroom and should strive to maintain a strong sense of connectivity – a "through line"

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[32] These concepts are derived, in part, from Stanislavski, who also used the term "super objective."

– in every classroom action.[33] Maintaining a through line in a composition classroom will also require a new kind of scrutiny to one's own practices, as instructors should be able to justify each "action" in a "unit" – an assignment in a class period, for example to a "super-objective." For a potential higher order goal, I refer back to Yancey, who asks us to see "composition education as a gateway" and "enlarge our focus to include *both* moments, gatekeeping and gateway"(306).[34] I respond by adding that, in order to scrutinize our practices and, simultaneously, justify our actions in any assignment, composition instructors must take student needs into consideration alongside the course objectives.

While Ball actually uses the term "composition" to refer to the "mechanical" aspects of the blocking on stage, he adds the concept of "picturization" to address the "aspect of blocking that intensifies the story-telling values" and literally deals with the relationship between the movement or placement of the body or the words "so that even a deaf person could follow the action clearly by watching the movements, the positions, and the gestures" (110). Certainly, in an actual composition classroom, we can employ these ideas in a similar fashion when discussing the writing process – or the "blocking" our students will do as they "tell" their stories. Though I do not seek to adopt or adapt "emphasizing the public nature of writing reminds us that beyond writing correctly, writers must work toward communicating their message to an audience" (111). Breuch

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[33] Stanislavski used the terms "through line"—though it appears in some texts as a single word: "throughline," I maintain Stanislavski's use—to identify the way a character's individual objectives are connected to overarching purpose[s], what he called the "super objective." In Composition, I use the term in a similar manner to describe and explain the manner in which course objectives and classroom practices should be linked together.

[34] Emphasis is Yancey's.

"new" terminology here, I do suggest that these concepts can be employed effectively in the composition classroom to reinforce the student learning outcomes.[35]

In playing the objective, then, an instructor should consider the incorporation of course objectives and student needs into every aspect of the class. Among the issues common to first year students is their accountability in terms of attendance and tardiness, close-reading, and note-taking skills. While many instructors would add to this list; all instructors can identify with some of these issues. In my experiences as a former student and current instructor in an open enrollment institution, I have observed that these issues are sometimes perpetuated because it is considered a "given" that students enter college classrooms with an awareness of what it means to be a college student, at least in the manner that instructors would define the title. We therefore take certain tasks for granted along the way and assume that students will, for example, take notes or slow down in their reading to look up an unfamiliar term. In other instances, I believe these issues are merely added to the list of frustrations inherent to teaching first year courses, and are not always regarded as considered to be within the instructors' control.

To illustrate, I combine the above mentioned "student needs" to the course objectives of developing critical analysis and encouraging collaboration. An instructor who adopts "both moments" as Yancey suggested and is "playing the objective" could create a string of assignments all connected to the course objectives by beginning with a single text, perhaps an argumentative essay. The super-objective in this sense is the need for students to read closely, identify and analyze the argument presented in the essay. There are many ways to create effective "units", or individual assignments whose

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[35] Those of particular significance here might include critical analysis of various genres, communication across disciplines, research and civic discourse.

objectives would work towards the guiding principles of collaboration and critical analysis.[36]

In terms of objectives, there is another "meta-approach" that can be derived from the theatre, as it could provide a solid structure for creating an effective through line for a semester, as well as a foundation for practical assignments. Ball identifies the "three elements" that exist "at the heart of every moment…on stage. These are: "1. An ongoing want, 2. A receiver, 3. A desired response from the receiver" (80). In the theater, the receiver refers to a specific person, though this may or may not be a person who is actually on stage. Ball's text includes a sample chart that provides examples of their practical application, such as "I want…to AWAKEN [verb] my father's [receiver's] enthusiasm [desired response]" (Ball 79). I argue that Composition instructors could combine elements of Burke's pentad with Ball's "System of Wants" in order to teach argumentative writing. For example, a student could begin to draft an argumentative research paper by "filling in the blanks." Such an exercise might look something like this:

I want…to PERSUADE (verb) the members of my community (receiver) to drive hybrid

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[36] I offer the following "system" as an example: 1) Students are assigned to read an argumentative essay and instructed to underline any unfamiliar terms, look up their definitions as they read and write the most relevant definition in the margins. 2) The next class period begins with a *brief* quiz over terms the instructor has chosen, based on his/her assessment of what is most critical to the meaning of the text and what is most likely to be "unfamiliar" (which are often interrelated). The students are permitted to use their text during the quiz, and if they have followed the instructions, they are prepared to meet the immediate objective of successfully completing the quiz. In addition, they have conducted a close reading, and are already engaged in the process of analyzing the text. The quiz should take no longer than 5 minutes. This emphasizes the importance of every moment of class-time, putting more at stake for students who arrive late. 3) When students have completed the quiz, they are instructed to turn it in (while the instructor does not need to take home every assignment to "grade", it is important that all work should be utilized or acknowledged in some relevant way. If students to not see the relevance or the necessity, they are less invested. Activities such as these could also serve as "units" of an overarching system of value, such as participation or professionalism points). 3) Answers to the quiz should be discussed in class, and should serve as the foundation for in-depth conversation regarding the assigned reading. The students who were prepared for the quiz are also prepared for (and likely more confident to participate in) discussion of the text.

vehicles (desired response) by showing <u>evidence of the connection between global</u> <u>warming and popular non-hybrid cars</u> (agency) in order to <u>take local action to improve</u> <u>the environment</u> (purpose).

In addition to the creation of effective assignments, playing the objective requires the consideration of a real world context for critical analysis and rhetorical strategies, and individual needs of a diverse population of students who must all pass through the "gates" of first-year composition courses. In order to establish a more global through line, we should consider ways to address Yancey's concerns that "what we teach and what we test can be so different from what our students know as writing" (Yancey 298). If we believe that communication and its modes are important, than those in the field of composition and theater alike must find a way to simultaneously hold to the core purposes of the discipline while opening themselves up to becoming channels that effectively harness the multiple forms that continue to emerge. For instance, if composition instructors model this practice of "playing the objective," we decide what is included in our "production" – what technology we will use. We have the ultimate power of making it work, and we achieve this goal through variations of group and paired discussions, one-on-one conferences, small and large group interactions with the instructor, and a host of written exchanges.

*Teaching as Performance*

The final element of theatrical practice is one that already exists in the classroom, and I suggest that a more concentrated ownership of audience in the classroom could create an even stronger connection to the real world. Yancey wonders "if we believe that writing is social, shouldn't the system of circulation—the paths that writing takes—

extend beyond and around the single path from student to teacher?"(311). I would say yes, and I would create a path which leads to the stage, or the front of the classroom. As instructors, we are technically performing on a daily basis, and just as we should consider students as *our* audience, we must also view them as each others' audience. If we are to incorporate "reality" into the classroom, this involves identifying and utilizing a real, *live* audience: an audience of peers.

I find the greatest misuse of audience in what we normally consider to be the peer review process. What should be an active engagement between a speaker and an audience digresses into students 'grading' each others' drafts in isolation. In such scenarios, the students exchange drafts then read and respond in silence to a series of pre-written peer review questions. The result is often an increased sense of paranoia about the student's own work, and as they wonder what the other student is writing, they begin to realize and recall errors or problems in their work and become distracted from the paper in front of them. Or, they feel a lack of confidence in making revision suggestions (or believe they will be taken as insults) and instead resort to editing. The instructor, too, is isolated by this practice, as he or she is also reading and responding in silence. Of course, we know that this does not reflect the kind of active communication we think of when we consider "public discourse." I believe that, too often, peer review is seen as 1) an activity which must be executed in this manner 2) an activity which only takes place only when there is a "completed" draft to review.

To better engage our students in the process of peer review, the theatrical technique of improvisation could be directly employed.[37] Students would be asked to

consider their audience, and in an improvisational activity, they could be asked to write character sketches of key members of their target audience, which would include questions that would be important to each character regarding different issues, or the issue that a student is already writing about. The students could then be assigned to present their arguments to the class or group and address the questions of each "character" in their audience. Yancey tells us that, "given the oral communication context of peer review our teaching requires that students participate in mixed communication modes" (307). I would extend and connect the definition of "peer review" to one of performance which involves one student – or group of students – *speaking their written work* to another student – or group of students – and that this type of activity be consistently integrated to the classroom throughout the semester.

William Ball reminds directors that "an actor is a hero. All acting is praiseworthy if for no other reason than the actor has the courage to walk from the wings to the center of the stage" (176). In the classroom, we have the opportunity to engage our students in the "courageous" act of performance which has the potential to build their confidence and further their awareness of the revision process. And we have a host of material to work with, as every phase of the writing process is worthy of performance. There are many ways to incorporate performance into everyday activities, and reading work aloud is a good place to start. The students can alternate between pairs and small groups, and occasionally present for the entire class. Small groups can be paired off and serve as

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[37] This is a technique used by many directors in order to engage actors in the "offstage life of the characters in the play, and to awaken the actor's sense of the historical period, the nationality, the customs and mores of the world of the play" (Ball 116). This technique usually involves a series of activities in which actors role play and make up their own dialogue and actions based on what they know of their character and their objectives.

audiences for each other, listening and responding, or reading aloud the each others' work. I have also found that, in playing the objective, a quick presentation of a writing prompt, revision of a thesis statement, a paraphrase exercise are easily integrated into a system of assignments. I suggest that, not only does performance make global and local issues immediately obvious to the writer, the process of discussing revision moves much faster and farther when instructors follow this model for peer review. In fact, students often leave, after only a single class period, with a complete revision of a section of their work. This progress is possible when they are engaged in a process that demands thinking, speaking, and revising – simultaneously.

Establishing performance as everyday in the classroom also helps to ease fears when the stakes are higher, which could be in another class or in the students' lives outside of school, and it fosters a sense of trust among the members of the classroom. In many ways, constant engagement in a "classroom performance" is like jumping into a swimming pool as opposed to slowly lowering oneself into the water, inch by inch. One method may seem more comfortable, but the other results in our students' instant immersion in and accountability for their writing process. Essentially, there is less for students to fear, because they conquer the product in small doses on a regular basis. Knowing that they will have to present for their peers also makes students more accountable for their work, and in most cases, leads them to regard their work with more pride and ownership. They take more risks in offering revision suggestions, and many find it easier to receive them.[38] Certainly, there will always be suggestions for revision,

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[38] Of course, there will always be students who do not wish to participate, or who are afraid of public speaking. As far as the latter is concerned, I have found that by mixing up the "performance reviews" among pairs and small groups allows for some students to work their way up to reading or presenting for

but the presence of an audience demands a final product. This is the kind of reality that we should prepare our students for; the confidence to create and execute a successful written "performance" and an awareness of the moments in which such performance will matter in all aspects of their lives. Many people are drawn to the theater because of the sense of camaraderie that comes from the shared process of intense work and the shared fears. We have the same stress in Composition classes; this should be the place where we also build camaraderie and prepare students to perform for the rest of the world. Through the incorporation of these practices, we help students to "complete the task *and* move closer to the bigger picture of writing" (Yancey 313).

*Common Strategies: Common Goals*

We have discussed the importance of guiding students towards a "critical consciousness" and the constructive uses of collaboration and communication in the classroom. It is important that instructors do not forget that their classrooms may be the students' first encounter with critical analysis, and might, for many current first-year composition students, constitute the first "legitimate" encounter with reading and writing. We have to set a tone in which students feel safe to take risks and venture out into these uncertain territories. Failure to do so can result in the perpetuation of a cycle of fear and mistrust and a general hesitancy towards expression. One challenge specific to instructors of first-year composition is the balance between creating an environment in which students are comfortable to perform their work while avoiding an atmosphere in which a correct interpretation is the primary goal.

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the larger groups. I argue that the more they present for each other, the more they are genuinely become an "audience of peers." As for the former, I do not believe anyone would attempt to propose a fool-proof system of successfully reaching and engaging every student, and that these issues are no more significant than in any other method of peer review.

Throughout the duration of a production, the rehearsal process is a time of intense engagement in critical analysis, emotional energy, experimentation, and learning. Ball suggests that "The acting process is sacred, and in the rehearsal room the acting process is being born" (62). The same is true of the writing process in a Composition classroom. The successful incorporation of performance review into a classroom depends almost entirely on the instructor, and here we can take our cues from directors, who are also responsible for the creation of this atmosphere in the rehearsal hall. While actors are obviously in the "business" of performing, every director possesses the potential to make actors feel apprehensive, embarrassed and ultimately defeated.

Ball tells us that "the artist is a person whose business in life is to praise," and believes that this is also the job of the director (46). I believe this is true of the "educator" as well. Since we are always revising and improving, the importance of praising students can be overemphasized. I do not mean to suggest that instructors abandon "criticism", or that they reward half-hearted attempts or incomplete work. But when a student takes the risk to express themselves on paper, and especially when that student presents their work to an audience, we must recognize that praise will encourage the student to take more risks, to present their work with more confidence. If we maintain high standards of quality, we should also establish and maintain ways to let students know they are on the right track on a daily basis. Ball makes a point of ending every rehearsal with positive comments, saying "praise whatever is there. Whatever is there is praiseworthy" (46).

In terms of methods for grading drafts, I find Ball's interactions with designers to be an appropriate model. He writes that we should always "...begin discussions with a description of the general beauty. Leave discussion of mechanical details until a later

time" (97). His point here is, of course, that discussion of how to effectively execute the design; conversations about the types of hardware or practicality are certainly necessary. But to focus primarily on these details in the initial phases sends the message that the beauty—that is, the concept behind the design, however grandiose or weak—is irrelevant, a given, or both. Instructors who believe they are doing a disservice to students by not addressing all mechanical issues of a rough draft forget two things: there will be time to address these issues later, these issues can wait, but the "moments" of creativity—of brilliance—cannot. We want their ideas; we want to see evidence that they are *developing* critical consciousnesses, and it is therefore important to begin with "general beauty." If we send a message that a draft is weak on the very first try by focusing on issues which are editorial, or only on the aspects that are not working, how can we expect students to have any hope for a second draft?

In terms of taking risks, Ball has adopted the phrase "Fail Big!" and argues that the "failure is the threshold of knowledge" (45). While many might find the use of the word "failure" in the classroom to be too extreme, I believe the spirit of the idea is clear enough regardless of the term. Students of first-year composition classes should take their work seriously, and they will if they see this behavior modeled by their instructors. At the same time, however, we have to instill the idea that we are engage in experimentation, that students *should* take risks in their writing. On that note, the instructor should approach all such "risks" and writings in "the spirit of helpfulness". A performance for a live audience who has paid for their tickets is not necessarily part of our curriculum first-year composition, yet we are engaged constantly in the process, and while we ultimately

require a final product, we have the benefit of determining our own measure of success based on the journey of each individual student. [39]

In the theatre, it has been my experience that, despite the stress that comes with opening a show, there is also a tremendous relief that comes with finally performing for an audience. For all the important work that is done in the rehearsal process, the final weeks and days can be especially grueling, and it becomes difficult at times to feel any passion for the show or the performance. William Ball assures directors that there will never be enough time, and the truth is that having one more week of rehearsal would drain the energy of the production. Nothing reveals the problems of a production like a first run through on stage, or a performance for a test audience. Likewise there are always problems that somehow fix themselves in the immediacy of live performance. The presence of an audience readjusts and sharpens everyone's focus on their super-objectives. In the theater, the audience is the embodiment of purpose.

Though we emphasize process over product in the classroom, in the real world, there is always an expectation of work in a "final" product form. To incorporate a final performance will therefore send a message to students that they should always write with a purpose: to communicate their ideas to an actual audience. I argue that the intense work that is done over the course of a semester, for the emotional energy, the wracking of brains and the numerous revisions warrants a culminating event. I find it somewhat anti-climactic to have students merely "turn in" a final draft or portfolio, and I have observed and felt the same energy of opening night stirring in the classroom on the day that "final

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[39] William Ball makes a point of "projecting" a "measure of success" in every production so that, regardless of the audience response or reviews, "the actor may make an evaluation of his work on the basis of the degree of his self enhancement" (103).

papers" are due. For that reason, I believe instructors should also integrate a "final performance" in the last days of their semester in the form of presentations, which should include segments of written work and multi-media elements such as images, video, web pages, and similar.[40]

And since the semester will include several mini-performances, such a climax seems only natural. In addition, the camaraderie which is established through performance reviews is amplified in the final performance. Students who have been working together and engaging in each others' processes and revisions are generally supportive and even excited to witness the "final product". In that sense, group projects also translate well into presentations. Ultimately, performance in the classroom helps students to "think about how these practices help prepare them to become members of a writing public" (Yancey 311). Performance encourages collaboration, illustrates the process of revision, and creates daily opportunities for praise and applause, and all of these should be in-line with the goals of 21st century pedagogy.

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[40] See Appendix A

CHAPTER FOUR


CONCLUSION


*"What will come out of this will be something new."*

--Nick Carbone[41]

*"Our roots may be in the one-room, isolated schoolhouse, but our future certainly isn't."*

--Fred Kemp


While the trickle down effect seems to ensure an eternal state of struggle for community theatre, debates among Composition theorists remain heated up as concerns over higher education are accentuated by economic crisis.[42] A primary concern involves the quality of instruction possible in first-year programs of English Departments where GTAs and adjuncts populate the teaching pool.[43] An original discussion debate Nick Carbone, a practicing Composition theorist Fred Kemp, an Associate Professor of

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[41] This quote was taken from a post to the WPA listserv in response to "The Decline of the English Department" on October 9, 2009.

[42] Reports from the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that that the national unemployment rate in America has been on a steady incline in the US for the last several years. As of October, 2009 the unemployment rate is at 9.8%, up from 5.5 % in 2004. Although the cost of tuition is rising in colleges across the country, the threat of unemployment emphasizes higher education as a means to access and maintain a job.

[43] Nick Carbone's original discussion

English at Texas Tech University remarks on "The Decline of the English Department," arguing that "we will never put the 'resources' into first-year composition [sic] that ensure the professionalism we would like in our teaching staff" (para 1). Nevertheless, Kemp sees the necessity of altering the current systems to address what he calls the fading "myth of Automatic Teacher Proficiency." [44] The automatic response to the kinds of challenges first-year programs face have, as a result, are been realized in the streamlining of certain practices in order to establish and maintain a basic standard of competence among instructors.[45] The logic behind this approach is sound, but while many instructors are able to better frame their approach and focus on the students because of such standards, others find stringent policies and mandated instructional practices to be too restrictive for their own pedagogical comfort.

While the challenges of teaching 21st century Composition are certainly worthy of financial compensation and professional recognition, I do not agree with those who suggest that money will ensure high quality or ability. My observations as a member of many production staffs and as a former board member to a professional and community theatre company have proved to me what I know to be true in Composition classrooms: that money does not suddenly create proficiency or professionalism. Neither does a financial investment in technology ensure the quality of the work. Like the theatre, Composition remains a human craft, an art form that can never be replaced or trumped by sophisticated equipment.

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[44] Kemp is an associate professor of English at Texas Tech University. This quote was taken from Kemp's post to the WPA list serve in response to "The Decline of the English Department" on the 9th of October 2009.

[45] Syllabi, calendars, major assignments and textbooks are among the course materials likely to be mandated.

Yet, I contend that the same creativity and proficiency that is demanded of instructors should also constitute the resources which provide them with the individual ability to not only recognize the need for a system, but to employ it in such a way as to maintain individual practices within the given structure. And is it not somewhat unrealistic and self-serving to perceive a position in teaching at any level to be a mere platform for personal agendas detached from the higher-order course objectives? IN response to his admitted friend, Fred Kemp, Nick Carbone argues this point and proposes that first-year composition courses should (re)adjust their focus back on the students. He reminds us that the most significant aspect of composition instruction should be "students writing a lot and getting a lot of feedback on their writing, students giving a lot of feedback to other writers, students reflecting on their own learning and self-assessing, students keeping portfolios and sharing writing" (Carbon para 8). In a sense, by adhering to a more efficient system, instructors are setting an example of a dramatistic approach; seeking the effective delivery of specific objectives through the agencies of creativity and communication.

Composition instructors, like members of the theatrical community, have a responsibility to protect individuals from a society that inadvertently shuns the pursuit of higher goals in the arts and education (writing and performance). Kemp argues that instructors should "think of "first-year composition students" as a competitive culture worthy of our emotional commitment, and protection" (Kemp para 6).[46] In this regard, we share in our students' circumstances, as even the most professional and proficient leaders are, at the gatekeeping level, are looked down on from the "Ivory Tower." Instructors

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[46] Posted on the thread "Commas and Fred Kemp" on the WPA List Serve, 12 October 2009.

must not perpetuate a cycle of cynicism and defeat by discouraging students or allowing them to slip through the cracks because of a perceived deficiency, but instead, teach them to walk independently through any gates with confidence. In fact, Myers believes that "If we see that schools can be both places of liberation and places of oppression, then we have to ask how we are using what limited power over people's lives we do have" (449).

I challenge members of the theatre and Composition to ask themselves, "why am I here"? If the answer is significant financial gain, if the answer is conditioned on an ideal student demographic, if the answer relates to the expectation of rewards in the form of praise and applause from a "captive audience," then I contend you are in the wrong profession. If, however, you are concerned with the well being and intellectual development of your students, what Kemp refers to as "fragile creatures," then it is time to reassess our approaches to be sure that our classroom performance is in line with our pedagogical objectives.[47] In *Dramatism and Development*, Burke suggested that, in retrospect, he wished he had made his pentad into a hexad, with the addition of "attitude." It seems that, given the current discussions happening in composition studies; the inclusion or adjustment of attitude would likewise be a worthy addition to a dramatistic approach to teaching.

Those who work in the theatre or in Composition know the truth behind the phrase "expect the unexpected". Yet it is somewhat ironic that, as Composition instructors in open enrollment universities and first year composition, we often take an approach that suggests we can control the factors that have influenced our students up to the point that they enter our classroom. Our actions should never suggest an underlying

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[47] See "Making the FYC Work."

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desire to streamline our students to a social or academic ideal. What we must do instead is recognize our control over whether or not we punish our students in the choices we make as their instructors.

*Future Implications*

Recognizing the intersections of theatre and Composition has revealed to me why I have always been "at home" in the classroom and on (or behind) the stage; these are the places where I believe I am most engaged in a human experience. As my experiences in stage management have advanced in congruence with my transition into composition instructor, I realize that I am now in a position to influence others and affect their experiences on a more significant level in both fields. Artists and educators must never approach their work as merely a job. I find that there are few reasons to distinguish among the titles I have mentioned, as I see myself and others acting in every role, every day. It is important for me as an artist, educator and student to uncover new ways to unite forces and sustain the argument that art and education are necessary to the purposeful existence of individuals and society. [48] If future social patterns continue show such marginal support of these disciplines, we will be forced to make binary oppositions of our critical and creative faculties, thereby separating ourselves *from* ourselves.

Therefore, I feel a responsibility to further my studies in a more theoretical sense, In terms of theoretical intersections, I am interested in further explorations of the work and potential interrelationships of Kenneth Burke and Konstantin Stanislavski who took

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[48] Ball's classifies the critical "left brain" and the intuitive "right brain" and the internal struggle to unite the faculties to the ends of effective action and performance. He believes the purpose of drama are "art, consciousness, belief and unity" are largely reflective of George Campbell's "four ends of discourse… to enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passion, and influence the will" and his proposal that "rhetoric must address al the mind's faculties—the understanding, the imagination, the passions, and the will—to achieve persuasion"

their explorations and work in the art of human sentiment seriously, and sought to motivate others do the same.

Like Composition instructors, directors and stage managers have the power to empower, and many directors and stage managers, the have the potential to deviate into Tower Guards by limiting their means of communication. The concentrated use of a production as a teaching opportunity is less probable as individuals move up the professional and commercial hierarchy of theaters. Yet many are halted from moving up in the theatrical world precisely because they lack the knowledge and awareness that can only be gained through a range of theatrical experiences. It is critical that smaller professional companies and community theaters recognize their position as role models and educators and seek more direct ways to "play the objective" and ensure that every theatrical experience serves a purpose beyond entertainment and diversion.

There are significant problems specific to stage management is reflective of those in Composition. While professionals like Tom Kelly consider effective communication as essential to effective stage management, it is a largely empirical field, and many who are considered "professionals" do not necessarily hold vocational or academic certification. Thus, one poor example can perpetuate a cycle of bad habits and practices that stage managers will carry with them into other theaters. Stage managers can be ineffective and detrimental to both the production and the vocation if they 1) fail to understand the rhetorical requirements of their job and 2) realize that they are also teachers who serve as examples of their profession.

The present economic crises and the overwhelming changes in technology could, if not harnessed, threaten to reduce standards of quality and identity in the theatre and

Composition. Whether behind the curtain or in front of the class, artists and educators can become more effective in their respective fields through the acknowledgment of common goals and the sharing of knowledge and practical resources across these disciplines. A partial list of the potential studies is provided below.

1. The inclusion of dramatic works—contemporary straight plays in particular— and a focus on the conventions of dialogue and action could enhance the scope of texts and foster a better understanding of civic discourse and the conventions of argument in the Composition classroom. The works of such playwrights as Tony Kushner, Suzan-Lori Parks, and David Lindsay-Abaire, are a few examples whose works are paradigms of civic discourse.

2. To build on the previous point, higher level literature studies could also include more dramatic works in the context of civic discourse and argument.

3. The career aspect of Composition and the theatre must be emphasized to students and individuals working in community theatres. Even in community theaters where the work is taken seriously (as opposed to a hobby) the productions are often treated as "practice" or mere "preparation" alone. Instructors and directors in particular are in an influential position to legitimize pursuit of both fields in the professional world to their students and performers. This must become a more concerted goal in both disciplines, and may require a "top down" approach in which career building education must be part of the training of instructors and directors. In Composition, this could become a required component of graduate program objectives. These theaters could organize and host workshops as required components of directing.

4. While this study has focused on the ways that Composition instructors could benefit from theatrical practices, it would be to the advantage of theatrical communities to have a more widespread recognition of the communication skills necessary for all positions, but directors and stage managers in particular.

5. I also argue that community theaters have the greatest power in making every performance a true learning experience in which all members are actively engaged in the process of close reading and discussions of the meaning of the play. Therefore, it might behoove directors to embrace the idea of returning to "table."[49] Like composition instructors, directors should guide and encourage analysis of the text, explain and discuss the "wants" in detail *throughout* the rehearsal process. Individuals involved in a production should not be critically engaged only with the aspect of the production that is written on their contract (if there is a contract). Instead, community theaters should recognize that it behooves individuals artistically and vocationally—if there needs to be a distinction—to be aware of the "bigger picture" of the production.

I contend that the recognition of shared exigencies between the two disciplines will result in a beneficial relationship in which each is equally informed and enhanced by the other.

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[49] In the theatre, the initial phase of the rehearsal process is referred to as "tablework," in which the director and the performers literally sit at a table and analyze the text.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

DAILY OUTLINES: "PLAYING THE OBJECTIVE"

101 Daily Outline

**Objectives:**

1. Analysis of rhetorical strategies

2. Encouraging close-reading (note-taking in particular)

3. Accountability for completing assigned readings.

**Homework Due:**    Rhetorical précis of William Raspberry's "Poverty and the Father Factor" and a copy of the article you have chosen to analyze for Major Writing Project II.

**Tonight's Homework:** In *Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies,* read David R. Francis' "Why the New Jobs Go to Immigrants" (237-239). Review *Choices* Chapter 3: "Choices about Structure"32-50. Be prepared for a quiz and discussion on Tuesday.

I.    Writing Prompt: Watch five-minute documentary: *The Face of Poverty*

a. As you watch the film, make notes on the issues that are addressed and the manner in which the creators use the three appeals.

b. After the film, use your notes and take five minutes to write about your response to at least one of the

issues addressed in the documentary and Raspberry's article. Post on your blog.

II.      Quiz/Discussion: You may use your books for the quiz to reference any notes you have taken.

     a.   Discussion of answers to the quiz.

     b.   **Open Questions-**

         i.   What the occasion and purpose of each work?

         ii.   How does each utilize the appeals?

         iii.   Is one more effective than the other in convincing you of their argument? How?

     c.   **Guided Discussion-**Rhetorical Choices:

         i.   Compare the use of drum beats and face paint in the film to Raspberry's repeated references to tribal culture.

         ii.   Compare the use of black/white as a contrast in the film to the focus on African American Culture in Raspberry's article.

III.      In-Class Activity:

     a.   Peer-review of rhetorical précis. Work in your groups, and using the criteria on Blackboard, critique each others' précis and discuss revision suggestions. Complete a revision in class.

b. During Revisions: I will come around to discuss/approve the article you have chosen for Major Writing Project II.

**IV.** Performance: Read your revised rhetorical précis aloud to the class.

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**Vocabulary Quiz 5 "Poverty and the Father Factor"**

**Decide which best represents the definition/context of Raspberry's article.**

**1. William Raspberry is:**

A. A Knight Professor of the Practice of Journalism and Public Policy Studies at Duke University's Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy.

B. A retired Journalist for *The Washington Post.*

C. Won the Capital Press Club's "Journalist of the Year" award for his coverage of the 1965 Watts riot in Los Angeles.

D. All of the Above

**2.** "The **phenomenon** obviously does not apply to all black families, nor is it *restricted* to black families."

A. The significant trend obviously does not apply to all black families, nor is it *restricted* to black families.

B. The odd circumstances obviously do not apply to all black families, nor is it *restricted* to black families.

C. The interesting occurrence obviously does not apply to all black families, nor is it *restricted* to black families.

D. All of the Above

**3.** "There's nothing **inherently** racial about the trend, of course."

A. The trend is not rooted in racism.

B. There is something unsurprisingly racial about the trend.

C. The trend is naturally racial.

D. All of the Above

**4.** "Isn't it worthwhile to spend more time and resources helping young people to understand the economic **implications** of single parenthood before they become single parents?"

A. understand the monetary repercussions of single parenthood

B. understand the financial consequences of single parenthood

C. understand the costs associated with single parenthood

D. All of the above

**5.** "…there is no village to raise the children…no **collective** community effort to ensure that most black children will grow up capable of succeeding in the 21$^{st}$ century.":

A. … there is no combined community effort…

B. …there is no single community effort…

C. …there is no separate community effort…

D. None of the above

# APPENDIX II

## ASSIGNMENT: INCORPORATING MULTI-MEDIA AND PERFORMANCE

**ENG 099**

**Project II: Community Writing Project Performance Component**

**Final draft due**: Thursday, October 22nd.

**WRITING TASK**: Analyze an argumentative article.

**Project:** In conjunction with the final draft of your Project II: Community Writing, you will give a 3-5 minute presentation of your paper for a live audience of your peers. This will take place on Thursday, October 22, the same day that the final draft is due.

**Required Components:**

> **Argument:** Remember that, unlike your instructor, your audience will not have your final paper to read, therefore, you must convince us of the relevance of your community project, its causes and potential solutions without your paper in hand. In order to do this, you will incorporate other forms of:

> **Media:** For this presentation, you will not simply read your paper aloud. You will create additional forms of media for your argument, which can include a short skit, handouts, flyers, or posters and you can utilize the projector screen to present short films or audio files (three minute maximum, does not count towards your presentation time) or a power-point presentation. If you have other ideas about your presentation, discuss them with me prior to Tuesday, October 20th.

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**Rehearsal:** On Tuesday, October 20th, you will work on your presentations and rehearse with your group members, who will time your presentation and offer feedback.