INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO: APPLYING STYLE

Mike Duncan and Star Medzerian Vanguri
University of Houston-Downtown and Nova Southeastern University

While Part One of this collection presented a variety of conceptions of style that were both theoretically and pedagogically informed, the essays in Part Two concentrate more on how style can be presented as a central aspect of composition in the classroom. The diversity of methods and genres offered here again assume the centrality and importance of style, regardless of the nature or the disciplinary site of pedagogical presentation. In particular, however, teachers of composition, as well as those teaching technical writing, linguistics, literature, creative writing, nonfiction, and fiction will find much of interest in this second half of the collection, given the focus on assignments, example texts, techniques for stylistic analysis, assessment, and terminology that enables increased student conceptualization of style. Also, much like the collective argument formed by Part One, these eight essays, when read together, suggest strongly that these different pedagogical sites have, in common, the potential for a pedagogically profitable incursion by style due to its centrality to composition.

The first essay, "Style in Academic Writing" by Nora Bacon, argues for a pedagogy focused on stylistic variation, rather than that of mere clarity of concision. This pedagogy can teach students to make and appreciate stylistic choices in various genres of academic writing across the curriculum. Bacon debunks the commonly-held assumption that academic writing does not embody style, and also provides an historical account of the influence of the Plain Style on academic writing. She concludes her essay with the claim that teaching stylistic variation can allow students to develop rhetorical awareness of their stylistic choices, as well as that of others. Bacon's essay reflects Greer's emphasis on awareness in Part One, though her location of this awareness in academic writing places this essay more firmly within the demesnes of the classroom.

Zak Lancaster's "Tracking Interpersonal Style: The Use of Functional Language Analysis in College Writing Instruction" also argues for a stylistic approach, placing such approaches within the recent trend of rhetorical genre studies. He argues that systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and appraisal theory can bridge the global concept of genre, with local methods of analyzing

textual language patterns. Lancaster's skillful link between style, composition, and linguistics reminds us of the cross-disciplinary nature of style and the value in such interdisciplinary work.

The growing presence of multimodal texts in composition classes is also addressed here through the lens of style. In the third essay, "Multimodal Style and the Evolution of Digital Writing Pedagogy," Moe Folk calls for a production-centered style pedagogy. Accounting for the material dimensions of style within computer-mediated contexts, Folk presents three iterations of multimodal style—style as technical prowess, style as difference, and style as subservience. These three iterations are then examined in an analysis of a digital retelling of the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*. As editors, we would be remiss to not include an essay such as this one that addresses how style is, too, central to emerging mediums as well as existing ones.

Creative writing is yet another area where attention to rhetorical style can be highly beneficial. In "Voice, Transformed: The Potentialities of Style Pedagogy in the Teaching of Creative Nonfiction," Crystal Fodrey argues for a rhetorical approach to creative writing pedagogy that has as its core rhetorical style. Fodrey presents several iterations of style as it is discussed in creative nonfiction craft texts to illustrate the writer-centered, rather than audience-centered, stance that dominates these texts. She then presents a style-focused creative writing curriculum as a demonstration of how the two seemingly disparate disciplines' pedagogical approaches can work together. In addition to placing style in yet another academic context, Fodrey performs an important service by offering a middle ground between style-focused and audience-focused composition.

Luke Redington's "Fighting Styles: The Pedagogical Implications of Applying Contemporary Rhetorical Theory to the Persuasive Prose of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays" claims that effective writing style begins with "stylistically-aware" reading. Redington outlines a pedagogy that has students first read and identify stylistic elements in published prose before employing these techniques in their own writing. Redington stylistically analyzes the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays, as an example of his argument, to illustrate how their styles relate to their identities as women in eighteenth-century Great Britain. This analysis leads into a heuristic that further explains the analysis and can be adapted for other classroom contexts. Redington's ordering of awareness before enaction, again, stresses the imitative nature of effective composition instruction.

While much of the recent scholarship on style pedagogy is situated in composition courses, the parallel field of professional writing is another important context for style-focused approaches to writing. Jonathan Buehl's "Style and the Professional Writing Curriculum: Teaching Stylistic Fluency

through Science Writing" offers a stylistic approach to teaching science writing. In this chapter, he presents a curriculum for a professional writing course whose goal is to address the challenges of multiple audiences (expert, non-expert, general). Because workplace writing genres are tailored to audiences beyond the classroom, the audience expectations and stylistic conventions may be more varied than in composition courses. Buehl's curriculum seeks to make stylistic fluency transferable to these multiple contexts. This flexible fluency has long been a goal of composition, though it is not always, as it is in Redington's essay, characterized as style.

In "Toward a Pedagogy of Psychic Distance," Erik Ellis borrows the concept of "psychic distance" from creative writing to describe the "felt" metaphorical distance between reader and text. Ellis suggests that when students can internalize an awareness of psychic distance, they can become more audience-aware in their writing and more aware of the craft of their own and others' writing. Perhaps more importantly, the concept of psychic distance allows students to reconceptualize readers as an audience to be invoked, rather than directly addressed. While traditional rhetorical approaches to identification ask students to anticipate an audience's needs (which a student may or may not have access to), psychic distance makes students aware of how their language choices define roles for their readers. Ellis gives Ede and Lunsford's work on audience construction a stylistic turn toward ethos and awareness.

Star Medzerian Vanguri's "What Scoring Rubrics Teach Students (and Teachers) about Style" argues that while style is not explicitly taught in many composition classrooms, rubrics (which may be created departmentally and used by teachers with little modification) often contain a category for style and, therefore, communicate to students certain expectations for stylistic effectiveness that may be decontextualized from classroom teaching. From an analysis of scoring rubrics collected nationwide, Vanguri culls the conceptions of style that the rubrics communicate, and develops from them four evaluative criteria for style: readability, appropriateness, consistency, and correctness. By exploring style's relationship to grading, this chapter illustrates the ubiquity of style in our everyday practices as teachers of composition and the significance of the role it plays in defining "good" writing for students.