MULTIGENRE RHETORIC: WHERE GENRE THEORY AND

FEMINIST COMPOSITION THEORY MEET

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Joel Conway

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THESIS ABSTRACT

MULTIGENRE RHETORIC: WHERE GENRE THEORY AND

FEMINIST COMPOSITION THEORY MEET

Joel Conway

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My purpose is to argue that multigenre rhetoric could be used as a pedagogical supplement to expository writing, which is taught as the norm in freshman composition. The history and development of genre theory and feminist composition theory are explored. By juxtaposing these two theories, a rationale is provided for introducing multigenre rhetoric as a viable pedagogy in the composition classroom.

The pedagogical benefits of multigenre rhetoric are explored in relation to genre theory and feminist composition theory, linking the two theories with a progressive, alternative rhetoric. Multigenre rhetoric is explicated by showing how it is currently being used in English classrooms. Since to date multigenre rhetoric has not been researched in freshman composition, the proposition is made to implement it in freshman composition and to perform empirical research.

Style Manual Used:
Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York:
Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Computer Software Used:
Microsoft Word (Office XP edition)

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INTRODUCTION

Diverse Discourse

In her article "Discourse and Diversity: Experimental Writing within the Academy," Lillian Bridwell-Bowles calls for a "view of language and the creation of texts—one that takes into account gender, race, class, sexual preference, and a host of issues that are implied by these and other cultural differences" (294). She challenges innovation in freshman composition, which has remained silent about any new rhetoric, that is, any rhetoric that challenges the standard expository norm by favoring dialogic approach over hierarchical structure, negotiation over expository argument or persuasion, and multiple understandings over a typical thesis. What Bridwell-Bowles presents as a new writing approach she eventually terms "diverse discourse." The diverse discourse that she imagines, though not stating its exact composition, would be one that "contains emotion,…closes the gap between subject and object,…[and] does something 'with' and not 'to' the reader" (297). Such a discourse would include exploring personal voice and "nonlinear patterns of organization" (297).

Diverse discourse can and has taken many forms. By definition, a discourse that is diverse will be one that is open to change and difference, one that does not approach each given situation by using an identical format. Exploring individual approaches to individual situations, genre theorists, such as Stephen Doheny-Farina and Carolyn Miller, have promoted the idea of *kairos* when deciding how to compose for any given situation.

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Their research of genre development and use shows a relationship between the type of presentation used (the genre) and the effect of that presentation. Variables, such as culture and gender, are central to each individual situation, requiring a particular—perhaps unique—action to be accomplished by means of a particular—perhaps unique—genre. And while freshman composition courses usually try to provide experience in a mode, perhaps modes, of writing that will best help students throughout all of college, many students do not see the relationship between all the courses. Instead, as Doheny-Farina puts it, they see "boundaries (obstacles?) between courses" (295). Agreeing with Doheny-Farina, Lucile McCarthy points out that "[t]he contexts for writing may be so different from one classroom to another, the ways of speaking in them so diverse, the social meanings of writing and the interaction patterns so different, that the courses may be for the student writer like so many foreign countries" (260). Confusion enters the student's mind when she is unclear about how to proceed *in the best way* to fulfill vastly different assignments from different courses. The protocol for the majority of students is to use what they have been taught (this usually means relying on the approaches taught in their freshman composition courses), whether that type of writing fits easily or awkwardly with the assignment.

The validity of the academic essay is not something I question; higher education requires understanding and proficiency in the standard norm of writing. So rather than question the benefits of the standard academic essay, I look at genre theory as a tool that lays the foundation for students to understand the idea of *kairos*, that is, to understand how each situation is different and should be approached rhetorically in the most beneficial way. Multigenre writing assignments—academic essays composed in many

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genres, portraying a variety of voices, and written in nonlinear style—are effective for

freshman composition because they require new college students to explore what makes

them unique: culture, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, world knowledge. Students must

make this self-exploration because genres, as will be discussed in Chapter One, are

created out of social necessity. Thus, when students write in genres that represent

themselves, they must undergo deep introspection. Deep introspection leads to the

development of a strong, individual voice; multigenre rhetoric provides an avenue for

individual voice to be explored and heard, an avenue where students can effectively

institute the notion of *kairos*. That is, students can use a creative means of writing that is

cognitively and affectively in tune with their surrounding academic community and their

own background to effectively approach a given task, without being bound by the

dominant writing mode. If, through multigenre rhetoric, students are given a solid

foundation to view composition as a means to create—a means to explore—variant

modes of writing, their limitations will not hinge on exact genres or forms of writing that

they have learned. Rather, their knowledge of genre theory and its continual

development will lead them to explore deeply the construct of present knowledge. For

each situation at hand, they will be able to adapt their delivery or develop a new delivery

that will appropriately address any given situation while expressing strong, individual

voice.

       Richard Freed and Glenn Broadhead address the issue of the relationship between

the writer and society this way:

              Whatever the reason for new inquiries into discourse communities and a

              writer's relationship to them, it seems clear that we need to know a great

deal more about them, about what characterizes them and how they

function. We need to know how they condition and influence not only the

written products composed within them but the behaviors, attitudes, and

strategies that ultimately produce those products, which in turn define the

communities themselves. For both overtly and tacitly, these communities

establish paradigms that discoursers adhere to or, often at their risk, depart

from….The paradigms reign like prelates and governments reign: they set

an agenda and attempt to guarantee its meeting, often rewarding those who

do and discouraging those who don't. (156)

Thus, to better fulfill the needs of society (the community—in the students' case, the

classroom), delivery of input must be done in a way that best meets the given situation

that different parts of society present. According to Freed and Broadhead, established

paradigms require certain modes of writing, and students or professionals breaking those

modes often do so to their own detriment. Yet, since each community (classroom or

course) is different in its needs, students must be adaptable to different demands from

different communities. For a student to produce personal narration in a situation that

calls for academic prose, the "prelates and governments" of that community would not be

rewarding toward the student. In order to set a foundation for multigenre rhetoric, then, I

explore genre theory in relation to *kairos*; that is, I explore genre theory as a way of

viewing opportunity as it is presented by different modes and aspects of society, both

within and beyond the academic setting.

In Chapter One, I give a working definition of genre theory and then examine

genre theory in light of the idea of *kairos*, drawing on the scholarship of Doheny-Farina

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and Miller. After establishing the relationship between *kairos* and genre, I explore

Gunther Kress's explanation of genre as social process as it relates to Miller's definition

of genre as social action and how genres are continually developing and being created.

Finally, I explore dominant genres, the ones of power that are traditionally accepted as

norms, as obstacles for multigenre rhetoric.

Bridwell-Bowles, in defining diverse discourse, would also term it loosely as

alternative or feminist discourse. Exploration of such types of discourse—the use of

genres other than expository prose in academic settings—then has naturally been

explored within the confines of feminist theory, especially feminist composition theory.

Expressing reason to explore new and different types of discourse, Elizabeth Flynn states:

> Feminist research and theory emphasize that males and females differ in
>
> their developmental processes and in their interactions with others. They
>
> emphasize, as well, that these differences are a result of an imbalance in
>
> the social order, of the dominance of men over women. They argue that
>
> men have chronicled our historical narratives and defined our fields of
>
> inquiry. Women's perspectives have been suppressed, silenced,
>
> marginalized, written out of what counts as authoritative knowledge.
>
> Difference is erased in a desire to universalize. Men become the standard
>
> against which women are judged. (245)

So, the writing that women would naturally compose is seen as atypical of the norm. The

thesis-driven, argumentative, persuasive, hierarchical expository essay is essentially

male-created and has been seen as the correct way to write in academia. Because of such

a construct, many women (along with minorities and any who are not part of—or at least

those who do not write as part of—the dominant class) have in effect been silenced or forced to assimilate to the male-normative discourse in order to succeed.

With the rise of feminist theory, though, exploration that seeks to identify the self as individual and worthy of being heard has been undertaken. For example, Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* and Mary Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing* not only show the importance of the non-dominant voice, but "challenge and subvert conventional western conceptions of the self" (Lunsford and Ede 260). Voice has played a primary role in the conventional conception of the self. I explore the role of women's voice as it has developed from patriarchal oppression to feminist expression. Diverse discourse, I argue, is not a replacement or a tool to marginalize or silence what is now the male-dominant, expository style of writing. Rather, it is an alternative—not a subsidiary or secondary tool—means of conveying information, one that does not necessarily depend upon hierarchical form, overt persuasion, or other male-dominant characteristics.

In Chapter Two, I develop the basis for the rise of diverse discourse by looking at feminist composition theory. I explore Flynn's call for a furtherance of understanding and developing of feminist pedagogical approaches and how that call is answered by the composition community. In particular I explore dialogic writing in comparison to hierarchical writing and forms of feminist argument and persuasion. I center my discussion of feminist argument and persuasion on Catherine Lamb's idea of negotiation and mediation. From Lamb's idea of negotiation and mediation, I develop the idea of a diverse discourse that is academic both cognitively and affectively. Within the concept of negotiation and mediation, I explore what Lamb calls "monologic argument." Monologic argument is then juxtaposed to Terry Zawacki's explication of the personal

essay, in particular focusing on the importance of individual voice. I close Chapter Two by highlighting the trend in composition to follow the preset dominant writing styles and how those trends must be overcome in order to offer a diverse discourse that is beneficial to all students, regardless of background or gender.

In my concluding chapter, I define multigenre rhetoric according to how it is presently being used in advanced college writing classes by Tom Romano and Julie Jung. Using aspects of Romano and Jung's definition, I describe my own vision of multigenre rhetoric in relation to freshman composition. In doing so, I present multigenre rhetoric as the link between genre theory and feminist composition theory. That is, multigenre rhetoric encompasses the essence of genre theory in that it allows for the development of *kairos* by the individual student rhetor, who relies on her defining characteristics to produce an essay composed of multiple genres and voices that are intellectually and emotionally relevant to academic situations and her own life. Multigenre rhetoric also encompasses the narrative devices that, according to Zawacki, are intrinsic in feminist composition theory. Drawing from Lamb's development of negotiation and mediation, I explore how multigenre rhetoric delays decision making since it does not have a typical, expository-type thesis and how it allows the reader and writer to engage in a type of dialogic discourse. I expound on the relationship between multigenre rhetoric and atypical argument and persuasion, again highlighting the similarities between multigenre rhetoric and negotiation and mediation. Finally, I make a call for further research to be done with multigenre rhetoric in freshman composition classes.

CHAPTER ONE

Genre Theory

We need a new language curriculum and a new use of language in the

curriculum, not just a better educational technology to reproduce the

traditional genres of school literacy. In reality, fixed classifications of

genre may even mean that teachers lose sight of where the real power lies.

Those who are really innovative and really powerful are those who break

conventions, not those who reproduce them.

—Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis "Introduction: How a Genre

Approach to Literacy Can Transform the Way Writing Is Taught"

As a basis for any genre theory discussion, a working definition of genre must be

elaborated upon. As Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway state, "the new term 'genre' has

been able to connect a recognition of regularities in discourse types with a broader social

and cultural understanding of language in use" (1). Adding to this definition, Carolyn

Miller says that "genre must be centred not on the substance or form of discourse but on

the action it is used to accomplish" ("Genre" 24). The understanding, then, is that

language's origin is with action which is taking place in social processes. As these

processes become regulated, spoken and written genres expressing these processes

become accepted as normal. Different factors, of course, affect what processes become

regular actions and thus accepted as, eventually, conventional genres. In the 1970s, when *process* pedagogy was burgeoning with endorsement from composition scholars, import was being given to how and why a text was constructed. In speaking about the 1970s ideas of invention, audience, occasion, and *kairos*, Freedman and Medway say, "[S]tudents were encouraged to think as much about the demands of the *occasion* of their writing as about the textual characteristics of some general, unspecified or universal 'good writing'" (4). The demand was being made of students to look at the needs as they existed and then to produce an acceptable discourse that would satisfy those needs. Thus, approaches other than the standard, product-driven ones were being explored. Genre study became instrumental in relation to the idea of knowledge being socially constructed in response to needs; that is, different genres became instrumental to situations and to the delivery of knowledge in particular situations.

Imperative to understanding genre theory is an understanding that writers cannot be separated from *kairos*, and it is this relationship that authenticates the need for multigenre writing. Composing in different genres is a primary way of fulfilling *kairos* in that genres are intrinsic to the actions used to successfully meet different social situations. Exploration of *kairos* and the development of Gunther Kress's and Miller's views of genre as social process and action lead to an understanding of how genres do fulfill *kairos* since they are continually being developed and refined, along with new genres being created, all in an effort to meet social needs. In opposition to the development of these socially-needed genres is the dominance of ingrained genres of power. These genres of power must be overcome to allow for the proper fulfillment of *kairos* and for the institution of a diverse discourse that is founded in multigenre writing.

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In the context of writing situations, James Kinneavy defines *kairos* as the "proper measure" and "right timing" (85). Stephen Doheny-Farina says that "we must study composing within its situational contexts if we are to better understand it both within and beyond the academy" (293). Intrinsic to composition is the need to fulfill the demands of multiple contexts, such as to inform and persuade, within one piece of writing. Yet, these multiple contexts almost always rely on each other in order to fulfill some ultimate goal. Along with multiple contexts, a rhetor must consider complex communities when producing a piece of writing. Doheny-Farina continues, "According to Joseph Harris, we should not assume such clear distinctions between communities….[A] more complex way of looking at individuals in discourse communities is to see writers influenced by the perceived demands of multiple communities wherever they write and speak" (295-296). In other words, communities are interrelated and diverse, and as such, they require more than a singular approach to fulfill the needs of the recipients. *Kairos* requires the successful rhetor to meet the multiple demands of both the context and the community. The use of multiple genres naturally lends toward satisfying varying demands; thus, a holistic approach to satisfying varying demands would be to combine genres within one piece of writing.

Harris makes appropriate classroom application when he says, "[W]hat we see in the classroom, then, are not two coherent and competing discourses but many overlapping and conflicting ones" (19). The two competing discourses he refers to—the *two* discourses that are not really there—are those of the students and teacher. The students are not wholly outside of the academic/classroom community as the teacher is not wholly inside the academic/classroom community. Instead of trying to get students to

see a classroom community as a brand new rhetorical zone, Harris says the teacher should "offer [students] the chance to reflect critically on those discourses—of home, school, work, the media, and the like—to which they already belong" (19). If students are allowed to do this, they will be able to "*reposition* themselves in relation to several continuous and conflicting discourses" (19). And in so doing, they will be able to successfully negotiate the demands that the diverse, overlapping discourses of the classroom (and later society in general) puts on them.

What often happens, though, is that the teacher does not offer the students the opportunity to reflect on and use the discourses they are familiar with along with those they have been introduced to at school. This lack of integration between the known and the learned leads students to rely on what they believe is expected of them; that is, they tend, as Doheny-Farina says, to "rely on a seemingly academic notion of what writing of substance should sound like" (297). This is done in both the academic and work settings. Students and workers alike do not achieve higher levels of critical thinking because they are afraid to go outside the confines of what is considered the norm. *Kairos*, using the information at hand to come up with the most logical, persuasive, and rhetorical approach, is not considered. For the worker, this causes a problem because most work-related writing favors efficiency and a final product over exploration and the development of experimental processes. And for the student, problems arise when a foundation is not properly set for the ability to deviate from norms in order to produce the most satisfying results. Since environments, organizations, communities, contexts, etc. change and evolve, teachers must offer diverse rhetorical training to their students. Doheny-Farina says, "[T]he primary issue involves our ability to prepare our students to

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deal with these changing environments….[I]t is our duty to make students aware that they will face such factors" (306-307).

Continuing to build on the concept of being rhetorically prepared for alternative environments, Carolyn Miller presents the views of Lloyd Bitzer and Richard Vatz. Bitzer's view is that "[e]ach rhetorical situation presents a different sort of opportunity, a different *kairos*….[T]hus a *kairos* presents itself at a distinct point in time, manifesting its own requirements and making demands on the rhetor, which the rhetor must discern in order to succeed" ("*Kairos*" 312). In contrast to Bitzer's idea that the situation remains independent from the rhetor, Miller presents Vatz's view that "any moment in time has a *kairos*, a unique potential that a rhetor can grasp and make something of, defining (at least in part) the terms for his or her success" (312). Miller's own view of *kairos* is a combination of the objective (Bitzer) and subjective (Vatz) views of *kairos*. Miller contends that each moment in time offers an opportunity that must be seized upon by the creative, critical-thinking rhetor in order to successfully accomplish a task, whether that task be assigned or imaginatively created. Miller analogizes her idea by referring to the original Greek meaning of *kairos*, that of a "penetrable opening, an aperture" (Onians 345). Miller says that a literal "opening can be constructed as well as discovered" (313).

An understanding of *kairos* as presented by Doheny-Farina, Harris, and Miller ultimately means that students must be prepared to accept the challenges of diverse environments, fulfilling communal needs of the persons who are in those environments. Those needs will vary depending on the situational context and the audience itself. In fact, an adept worker or student will be able to create an opportunity to explore and develop new ideas in new constructs by taking advantage of the subjective view of

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kairos. Being able to understand that a diverse approach is necessary begins by being able to critically analyze the situation at hand in order to develop the most appropriate rhetorical method of proceeding. For this rhetorical method to be sound, a better understanding of how language is viewed and predominantly used in different environments and by different cultures must be gained.

Gunther Kress outlines, in his article "Genre as Social Process," three approaches of thinking about language: topically, psychologically, and culturally. A topical understanding of language is one that realizes mainly grammatical rules—when to write a noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, and so on. This type of language understanding is, as Kress aptly puts it, "formal and sterile" (23). To understand language as a psychological phenomenon means to see it as uniquely human in that human brains are what create and recreate language. This view of language approaches education as a means to develop the mind and is seen as more important today than a topical view of language which focuses on correct grammar. While being the dominant view of language, the psychological view emphasizes "the structure, regularity, generality of forms and, in some cases their universality—arguing that all human languages are essentially the same" (23). This view of language is not denied, but negotiated with by a cultural view of language as presented in genre theory.

A cultural view of language emphasizes cultural and social issues as they relate to the creation and presentation of language and texts. Kress says that genre theory "assumes that whatever is psychological is common to all human beings, therefore to all cultures" (23). In other words, language as developed in the brain is universal, the same to all humans. What is interesting and relevant to a new understanding of language,

though, are the "factors which make languages different" (23). These factors, if not in the individual makeup of the human mind, must be from cultural and social tendencies and influences. Genre theory proposes that language should be understood as it fits in with culture and society. The realization of the differences intrinsic to language means an emphasis must be put on understanding "what language is doing and being made to do by people in specific situations in order to make particular meanings" (23).

Kress's understanding and definition of genre complements Carolyn Miller's hallmark essay, "Genre as Social Action." Miller believes "that a theoretically sound definition of genre must be centred not on the substance or form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (24). Her foundation for this argument is as follows:

> The semiotic framework provides a way to characterize the principles used
> to classify discourse, according to whether the defining principle is based
> in rhetorical substance (semantics), form (syntactics), or the rhetorical
> action the discourse performs (pragmatics). A classifying principle based
> in rhetorical action seems most clearly to reflect rhetorical practice….And
> if genre represents action, it must involve situation and motive, because
> human action, whether symbolic or otherwise, is interpretable only against
> a context of situation and through the attributing of motives. (24)

Miller later argues that action encompasses substance and form, that what is said and how it is said is inclusive of the action itself. Situations provide opportunities for different types of actions to take place, sparked on by motive. Some of these actions will be pragmatic while others will be less than fruitful. Successful genres will eventually evolve

or transition over time and be seen as the most pragmatic responses to particular situations. Thus, genres form because of social needs.

Miller's view is endorsed by Kress, who believes that the underlying reasoning of any text originates with the social pressures that instigate the text being composed. Concerning a text, Kress would ask, "Who produced it? For whom was it produced? In what context, and under what constraints was it produced?" (26) The practicality of Kress's argument is simple: texts are constructed for particular purposes; these purposes are interrelated to the creator of the text and the recipient of the text. All of these factors must necessarily be considered because different texts (also different types of language) result from different situations. Conceding that language is indeed seen as psychologically universal, there must be some causable explanation for difference. That difference is explained through the already existing and ever-changing factors that influence language and texts: culture and society. Thus, different cultures and societies—even different situations or demands within the same culture or society— require certain types of speech and certain types of final written products.

The written product is seen as different from the speech act; Kress says that "writing is much more, and something quite other than, the mere transcription of speech" (25). When recurring situations "are accompanied by language, of whatever kind, the regularity of the situation will give rise to regularities in the texts which are produced in that situation" (27). Thus, speech and writing develop into a similar type of recurring form, a genre. Understanding that genres are not static, as will be developed more below, Kress says that "generic form is never totally fixed, but is always in the process of change" (28). Thus, the written form can be seen as "much more" than speech in that

change (development) can be and often is instigated in writing before speech. What is

affectionately "toyed" with at the level of writing can become persuasive in both

traditional and nontraditional ways and can become exclusively a written genre, that is, a

genre free from and unrelated to speech. Kress cites as an example of a nontraditional

yet persuasive written genre the local election pamphlet (25-27). While such genres can

be (but by no means must they be) exclusively written, they are created as the direct need

of the society that embodies them. They are "natural" even if odd (whether too formal or

informal) because of the demand for such a creation by a particular situation.

Written genres are the means to unification because of their lasting, seemingly

permanent quality. That is, written genres are recorded, seen on paper as correct or

incorrect and empowering to those who can successfully negotiate in the "correct"

manner. If a variety of new and experimental written genres are not explored to see their

benefits to the writer and recipient, "the powerful genres of the dominant cultural

group(s) will be taught in an unreflecting fashion as if they were a politically, socially

and ideologically neutral set of forms, as a kind of universal commonsense" (Kress,

"Genre" 30). This means that non-dominant groups will suffer as they attempt to

conform to means of written discourse that are subversive to their cultural upbringing

and/or surroundings. It also means that society's influences—especially as society

changes by the passage of time, globalization, and other influences—will not be

successfully initiated into the way written discourse is presented.

Since genres arise out of the demand to fill social needs, they are not static. As

Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson state, "A genre does not consist merely of a

series of acts in which certain rhetorical forms recur….Instead, a genre is composed of a

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constellation of recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic" (21). Miller

contends that what makes up this internal dynamic are "substantive, stylistic, and

situational characteristics" ("Genre" 24). These characteristics, as they are seen together,

make up a pragmatic response to the demands of a situation. Since all of these

characteristics are dependent upon society's makeup, that is, as society changes, so do

these characteristics, the pragmatic response will change dependent on society's needs.

Thus, genre, as Miller calls it, is "fully rhetorical, a point of connection between intention

and effect, an aspect of social action" (25).

As a fully rhetorical device, genre should not be understood as a finite system of

classification. Miller says that "the set of genres is an open class, with new members

evolving, old ones decaying" (25). She further clarifies her definition of genre by saying,

> In sum, what I am proposing so far is that in rhetoric the term 'genre' be
>
> limited to a particular type of discourse classification, a classification
>
> based in rhetorical practice and consequently open rather than closed and
>
> organized around situated actions (that is pragmatic, rather than syntactic
>
> or semantic)….This approach insists that the '*de facto*' genres, the types
>
> we have names for in everyday language, tell us something theoretically
>
> important about discourse. (27)

Miller goes on to list ever-changing means of discourse that are encountered everyday,

"such as the letter of recommendation, the user manual, the progress report, the ransom

note, the lecture," (27) and more. Understanding why (the motive) these genres are used

in society and how they have changed over the course of mankind's development leads to

a better understanding of current society and what will be needed to appropriately and pragmatically address new situations as they arise.

Miller's beliefs about the adaptability and progressiveness of genre are in agreement with Mikhail Bakhtin's. Bakhtin's essay, "The Problem of Speech Genres," focuses on genre as part of what Miller would call rhetorical substance or semantics, which is encompassed as part of action, along with form or syntactics. Bakhtin says that "we speak in diverse genres without suspecting that they exist" and that we master these speech genres "fluently long before we begin to study grammar" (78). Reasoning how generic forms of speech are "flexible, plastic, and free" (79), Bakhtin says,

> We know our native language—its lexical composition and grammatical structure—not from dictionaries and grammars but from concrete utterances that we hear and that we ourselves reproduce in live speech communication with people around us. We assimilate forms of language only in forms of utterances and in conjunction with these forms. The forms of utterances, that is, speech genres, enter our experience and our consciousness together, and in close connection with one another. (78)

Speech genres, then, are founded as a learned aspect of the society that surrounds the speaker. Formal learning is not necessary to understand the differing speech genres, which are a constituent of Miller's idea of social action. And speakers assimilate as society or aspects of society introduce variants to language. As a speaker hears and becomes accustomed to a new utterance, that utterance becomes part of the speaker's experience and consciousness and becomes a means by which the speaker can

communicate with others or have viable discourse in a new, meaningful, and pragmatic speech genre.

Genres, spoken and written, need to be common in order to be successful—at least to a degree. Kress says that genres can be successful "only out of a productive knowledge of relevant cultural and social factors, of their most common convergences in social situations, and of their linguistic production and realisation in specific textual forms" ("Genre" 31). And Bakhtin argues that "genres must be fully mastered to be used creatively" (80). The commonality of genres, though, will vary depending on the individual student's cultural and social makeup. What is common for a class or an instructor is not necessarily common for the individual student writer. The student must thus be given enough authority to determine which genres are common to her individually and which genres she is a master of. What is important is that the students understand the genre they are speaking or writing as it relates to society. That the genres used be the "*most* common convergences in social situations" (italics mine) would hinder creativity and the ability to look at a situation from different points of view. It would also go against a correct representation of society; that is, society is an ever-changing, forward-moving phenomenon, and as genres are seen as social process and action, they too must be progressive and ever-changing.

So if, as Kress, Miller, and Bakhtin promote, genres are open and changing to fulfill society's needs and situations, then the idea or "concept of *inter*play and *inter*action" needs to be addressed. That is, "[i]f genres respond to contexts, they also shape such contexts" (Freedman and Medway 10). This means that genres are socially involved as developmental to changing culture. As society requires new, pragmatically

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sound genres for newly developing situations, so too do genres affect what society requires. This idea of interplay and interaction relates to Miller's ("*Kairos*") combining of Bitzer's objective and Vatz's subjective views of *kairos*. As the objective view demands, the rhetor must take advantage of given, perhaps limited situations (what society offers). The subjective view, though, enables the rhetor to create opportunities, to infuse society with a new and progressive means of approaching recurring situations and accomplishing repetitive tasks.

An example of how interplay and interaction between genre and situational demands works is seen in Carol Berkenkotter, Thomas Huckin, and John Ackerman's case study of a graduate student in the rhetoric department at Carnegie Mellon. They published their findings in the aptly titled article "Social Context and Socially Constructed Texts: The Initiation of a Graduate Student into a Writing Research Community." Berkenkotter et al. say, "As language users travel from one community context to another…they must master new ways of speaking, reading, and writing, ways that are appropriate within each community" (193). The researchers tracked Nate, a skilled adult writer with a background in English studies and teaching, as he entered a research community. Nate's background "had not included training in the genres of social science expository writing that were the preferred form of academic discourse in many of his courses" (199). Nate's writing mixed generic features of his educational and professional background with those of the research norm he was learning at Carnegie Mellon. While Nate did make "the transition from *composition teacher* to *composition researcher*" (211), he did not completely assimilate to his new role. Berkenkotter et al. explain, "Rather, [Nate] brought bits and pieces of his experience as writing teacher to his

new role as an apprentice researcher" (212). In effect, Nate created a new genre from two existing ones: his background writing knowledge and the research writing knowledge he was being instructed in.

As Nate continues researching and writing as a graduate student, he affects the scientific research paper genre in small ways, altering how others view that particular genre because of the input he has given. If he becomes a professor and begins to publish frequently for his academic field, the genre he has altered (even minutely) becomes influential to a degree to new researchers who are interested in his particular field. These new researchers will, of course, have their own backgrounds and styles of writing that will interact with what they are being taught formally and learning from reading one's, such as Nate's, research articles. This system of interplay and interaction is perpetuated to greater and lesser degrees depending on the individual and his particular influence. Freedman and Medway say that "genres can be reshaped by those who use them—in major ways, by exceptionally powerful or forceful individuals, and in small ways presumably, by the incremental adaptations of routine users" (10). While the exceptional individual may be able to reshape a genre to a greater extent, the genre itself must be the primary focus of consideration when determining the breadth and depth of the extent in which it may be changed.

An alternative spectrum of genres is adverse to and fights against change. Nate's scientific research paper has long belonged to one of the genres that resists altering its fundamental characteristics. Even though Nate was able to successfully include his personal background in the way he constructed his own scientific research papers, the change must be seen as miniscule because of the genre in which Nate was working. In

scientific research writing and certain other indoctrinated academic and professional

areas (in many colleges and universities this includes the expository essay in freshman

composition), genre functions "primarily as a means of resisting change. Because of

their association with precedent and proper procedure, and their solid existence as social

fact, genres may be ideal symbolically charged landmarks over which to mount a not-an-

inch-further last-ditch defence of the status quo, under the banner of 'This is how it is

done'" (Freedman and Medway14).

Traditionally, it has been believed that "full access to, and control of, literacy is

essential to full participation in all aspects of social life" (Kress, "Genre" 29). This

means that freedom of choice is dependent "on access to the most powerful forms of

writing, the most powerful genres in one's own society" (29). Therefore, genre theory

pushes for "equal access to the cultural and social resources and benefits of this kind of

society" (28). Genre theory widens "the range of choices and possibilities, and

[provides] freedom that comes from the possibility of choosing, rather than leaving

people locked into particular situations" (29). The ability to benefit from genre, rather

than be subjected to continued oppression because of any social factor, is a benefit of

genre theory. Yet, fear and adverse effects of the traditional, dominant discourses—those

genres that are ingrained by the status quo—are difficult to eradicate completely.

J.R. Martin, in speaking about scientific discourse, a discourse that can be seen as

one belonging to—that is, written and read by—the dominant faction in higher education,

says, "If you can't write like this, you can't be part of this process. If you can't read this

text, you won't even know what is going on" (119). Martin, in his essay "A Contextual

Theory of Language," refers to Michael Halliday, who wrote a paper called "Syntax and

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the Consumer." In this paper, Halliday explains "that the kind of linguistics you devise depends on what you're trying to do with it" (119). Martin goes on to term Halliday's idea as "systematic functional linguistics" (119). Systematic functional linguistics "challenges the kinds of writing usually taught in school, suggesting that there is more to writing than story writing and that a broader range of types of writing, reflecting the needs of both schools and the community, needs to be introduced" (119). In other words, genres such as the scientific research paper and freshman composition's expository essay need to be looked at in view of the functionality of such a linguistic mode of information delivery. Is that type of genre beneficial to the writer and the reader, and if so, to what degree? Who are being excluded from participation because of such a dominant-type discourse, and would modification or adaptation allow traditionally subverted ones to be included in the discourse?

Martin believes that even the most rigorous and exclusive genres are adaptable. He says that "adaptation illustrates one fundamental property of all semiotic systems, namely, the fact that they are dynamic open systems—for purposes of survival they have a built-in ability to adapt to their environment and so evolve" (122). Again and again, adaptation and evolution are at the forefront of genre theory. Considering the progressiveness of genre theory, it "goes beyond the process pedagogies which stress 'natural' learning through 'doing' writing." And, in effect, it attempts "to create a new pedagogical space" (Cope and Kalantzis 1). This new pedagogical space has exploration, adaptation, evolution, and change as the primary ingredients to strengthen language and discourse. Because of its "radicalness," genre theory experiences hostility from those discourses that are not interested in change, evolution, adaptation, or exploration. These

discourses are not interested in change because they are the discourses of power, the discourses that endorse patriarchal authority, that are male-normative. For patriarchal discourses to be accepting of change would mean altering or negotiating with the ideologies that they inherently promote. These ideologies have become almost blindly accepted as *the* unequivocal norms in academic composition as if they are intrinsic to each individual rhetor.

The particular discourses that are dominant, ones of power, are both disruptive to genre theory as a means of adaptability and new presentation of information as well as possibly disruptive to new, burgeoning genres because of new genres' susceptibility to influence from traditionally dominant voices. To allow dominant influences to interfere with or hinder the learning and using of nontraditional genres in the classroom is a force that genre and feminist scholars—along with progressive, younger teachers—have been struggling with for years. As genre theory blooms and becomes more integrated into curriculums, though, the battle will be to keep dominant influences from creeping into nonstandard genres, subverting the progress because of the assumption "that the discourses of power are intrinsically more worthwhile than other discourses" (Cope and Kalantzis 17). The fear is well stated by Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, "[G]enre literacy could develop a tendency to restore a hidden curriculum whose linguistic and pedagogical presuppositions amount to a reconstituted cultural deficit model" (17). To prevent this from happening, intrinsic pedagogical reasoning must be seen in a diverse discourse that incorporates genre theory while encouraging individual student voice and discouraging norms that are associated with the discourses of power.

In Chapter Three, I explicate how multigenre rhetoric, which is founded in genre theory, is composed of inherent pedagogical tools that prevent a "reconstituted cultural deficit model"—a hybrid patriarchal-ideology-endorsing rhetoric—from developing. As a diverse discourse, multigenre rhetoric adheres to feminist pedagogies, such as narration, promotion of individual voice, dialogic reasoning, negotiation, and atypical arguments, within the construct of genre theory. Understanding the development and pedagogies of feminist composition theory creates the necessary foundation for introducing multigenre rhetoric as a diverse discourse that is not susceptible to being converted into a discourse of power that promotes the "male" voice and ideologies. Rather, multigenre rhetoric mixes the functionality of genre theory as it allows for *kairos* with feminist pedagogies in a way that allows individual voices of both genders and all cultures to be heard as unique and forceful.

CHAPTER TWO

Feminist Composition Theory

Is it possible to challenge the traditional academic hierarchy which

privileges expository prose by rejecting the distinction between personal

writing and expository writing? By showing that genre boundaries

themselves are as questionable as gender boundaries and that all writing is

a means of creating a self, not for expressing a self that already exists? If I

situate myself in the context of other voices, if I write about experiences

and feelings, if I choose not to get to the point, it's not because I am a

woman, but rather because I want to discover the possibilities of

representing a gendered self in writing.

> —Terry Zawacki, "Recomposing as a Woman—An Essay in
>
> Different Voices"

Diverse approaches are not being taught in freshman composition, which both

limits students' cognitive/epistemic preparation and potentially disadvantages non-

paradigmatic writers. Monologic (hierarchical, thesis-driven) forms of writing are the

norm while the personal essay and other forms of narrative writing are not given impetus.

As will be discussed in this chapter, monologic writing endorses male ideologies and

voice while narrative writing endorses female ideologies and voice. What would happen,

though, if a variety of genres representing monologic and narrative forms were combined, along with a variety of voices? Would student rhetors find their own unique, confident voice (or voices) and be able to communicate that voice in a pragmatic way? Multigenre writing is a compilation and negotiation of differing voices and multiple genres. The success of this type of writing, when contending against freshman composition's domineering traditional form—the academic, expository essay—will mean the creation of not simply a woman's voice or a woman's form in the academic setting, but multiple voices and multiple forms created from a consideration of all the voices and writings involved. Since variable voices and forms have stemmed from exploration by feminist writers, an exploration of voice and form through the lens of feminist composition theory provides an understanding for the multiple possibilities of voice and form.

The foundation for multigenre rhetoric that has been laid in Chapter One hinges on the relationship of writers to *kairos*. Writers—student, professional, recreational— must adapt their writing to fulfill the demands of individual situations. But, at the same time, the writer must be true to her own voice. Anne Cranny-Francis addresses the issue of voice and dominance and how women writers have found their voice in writing when she discusses genre in relation to gender. The dominant text, influenced by centuries of male thought process (and, connectively, the male voice), is seen, according to Cranny-Francis, as a composite of attempted change. She says,

> [A]ll texts are generic; they are all constructed and read in relation to usually one dominant accepted literary (or non-literary) category. They may diverge from the conservative functioning of that genre, perhaps through a mixing of different genres in the one text, but they nevertheless

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can be identified and made meaning of by their relationship(s) with one or
more genres. (92)

Thus, the dominant genre is influential, perhaps subconsciously or at least not overtly,
even to those writers who are trying to break the norm. A mixing of genres (or the use of
nonstandard genres) on its own does not destroy the "dominant accepted literary
category." Writers must find their own distinguished voice as the beginning point to
overcoming the dominant faction of society.

In particular, Cranny-Francis highlights the evolution of the romantic novel; yet,
her formula for the construction of the "universal text"—one that is male created yet
hypothetically seen as the "for-all" text—holds true to other types of writing. The
romantics tried to disguise the conventionality of their writings. In doing so, their
writings were seen as more natural than those that were overtly generic, clearly belong to
a specified genre. Thus, an attempt to hide genre in an attempt to be natural or authentic
was made. These genre-hidden writings came to be seen as "universal" because of their
less apparent commitment to a certain genre. Cranny-Francis claims that these texts that
were attempting to hide their genre, in a way, appealed to a so-called universal society
since it was not easy to depict what audience they were appealing to. She then relates
how these romantic novels still enforced a specific ideology. She says,

> [T]hese 'universal' texts—or readings of texts—enacted a set of values,
> attitudes and beliefs which could be precisely discursively located. Their
> ideological function is as part of the reconstruction of that set of
> discourses: to position readers as compliant subjects of those discourses
> and so to (re)produce the dominant social/ideological formation. (94)

The ideology that the romantics encouraged and reproduced, even while they were attempting to write without genre, was one full of male values, attitudes, and beliefs. While they removed certain conventional aspects of the generic romantic novel, they were unwilling or unable to break the ideological trend.

Thus, universal texts got in the way of women who were trying to "write texts which told their own specific story, not the patriarchal story told by these 'universal' texts and their (compliant) readings" (94). The conventions of the universal texts were molded in such a way that women could not get away from the restrictions placed on producing similar-like texts that would be feminist. In order to overcome, Cranny-Francis says that "feminist writers had to remake genres in which they wrote. Genres which had been constructed and continually reconstructed to enact patriarchal ideology— patriarchal ways of thinking and acting—had to be modified to enact a different, feminist discourse" (95).

Because women were changing and reconstructing patriarchal ways (what most believed to be universal ways), many felt disappointed with the change. They felt that the text produced was unsuccessful. As Cranny-Francis puts it, "In other words, their expectation of a (patriarchal) happy ending [was] so strong that they [were not] able to accept the feminist positioning entreated in the text. Changing the genre might mean that you lose a few readers—but it may give voice to others who might not otherwise have the possibility of a voice" (95). The texts that women were creating, sticking to a particular genre but telling it from woman's voice, giving the feminist story, clearly "showed that the story told by conventional texts in that genre [was] also a specific story, told from a particular perspective, a patriarchal one" (96). When readers felt disappointed or the

feminist stories "failed," this highlighted the way the conventional texts were written and read, that is, in a male-oriented way. The patriarchal stories were seen as actually "not about 'universal' human endeavour" (97) as they had claimed to be. The universal texts were thus put in their true light; they were seen as working against women and other minorities who were not part of the dominant discourse group.

Kairos, as it fits in with genre theory and each individual writer, requires not only approaching each situation openly in regards to syntactics, but also in regards to semantics. As a sublevel of semantics, voice must be considered as the primary or beginning point for change to be made. Once the individual (female, minority, minimalized, or silenced) voice is realized, the physical adaptation of writing will be more easily developed. As feminist writers have expressed their voice, they have realized that the "universal" forms of writing do not always fit their voice. So, they have begun to search for and develop new and exciting ways to express their voices physically in writing, breaking away from the dominant voice as well as breaking away from the dominant form.

To understand what approach women writers have taken to begin overcoming the dominant (patriarchal) type of writing, an understanding of the foundation of women's writing is needed. In "Composing as a Woman," Elizabeth Flynn states, "Feminist research and theory emphasize that males and females differ in their developmental processes and in their interactions with others" (245). Flynn enlarges upon this statement by looking at three areas of development: relational capacities, morality, and intellect. An overview of these three areas of development will set a basis for understanding the

reasons why men and women seem to inherently write differently. Thus, the

development of a feminist (alternative or diverse) discourse is seen as inevitable for

women (and those who do not write well in relation to patriarchal norms) to naturally and

fully express themselves in writing.

In her book *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Nancy Chodorow distinguishes the

relational differences in men and women. These differences stem from the first

relationship accessible to both boys and girls, that of their relationship with their mother.

Flynn comments that "[b]ecause all children identify first with their mother, a girl's

gender and gender role identification processes are continuous with her earliest

identifications whereas a boy's are not" (246). That is, the boy breaks off the initial

relationship he has with his mother because he does not fully identify with her. The girl,

though, is able to continue building on the relationship she has begun with her mother,

continuing to put forth "affective relationships to others" (Chodorow 176) because of the

emotional reinforcement she receives from the relationship with her mother. The boy,

however, "tends to deny identification with and relationship to his mother and reject what

he takes to be the feminine world" (176); that is, he rejects emotions in lieu of a cognitive

understanding of the world, one where emotions are not impetus. The end result is that,

even (or especially) as adults, "[f]eminine identification processes are relational, whereas

masculine identification processes tend to deny relationship" (176).

Building on the work of Chodorow, Carol Gilligan comments on the moral

differences between men and women in her book *In a Different Voice*. She says, "[For

women,] the moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than competing

rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative

rather than formal and abstract" (19). A contextual and narrative mode of thinking and writing is one that allows affective relationships to develop, that is, one that brings emotions into the writing. Conversely, the "formal and abstract" mode of thinking is contextualized by men when they develop their moral understanding as related to "rights and rules" (19). This, in turn, is related to cognitive and hierarchical thinking and writing. What is considered the "male approach" to writing, then, is developed from an argument-driven, right-or-wrong stance in opposition to the "female approach" which is seen as negotiation with the topic in a more informal, dialogic way.

Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule explore intellectual development in *Women's Ways of Knowing*. They expand William Perry's 1970 study of intellectual development which focuses exclusively on men at Harvard University. In expanding Perry's study, they highlight an inequity in the way human experience is viewed; that is, human experience in regards to intellectual development had been seen primarily by its relationship to men. Belenky et al. state, "The mental processes that are involved in considering the abstract and the impersonal have been labeled 'thinking' and are attributed primarily to men, while those that deal with the personal and interpersonal fall under the rubric of 'emotions' and are largely relegated to women" (7). Yet, there must be some kind of equal ground, some way of mixing the mental processes that have been historically constituted to only men or women. The fear of mixing these mental processes is stated by Belenky et al. when they say, "Historically, it has been assumed that the development of women's intellectual potential would inhibit the development of their emotional capacities and that the development of men's emotional range would impair intellectual functioning" (7). But following and building

on the work of Chodorow and Gilligan, Belenky et al. believe that women's voices, along with their perspectives and values, can have an impact on academic disciplines in a way that "new conclusions can be drawn and new directions forged that have implications for the lives of both men and women" (8-9). Thus, an alternative, intellectual view of academic writing, one that encourages women's voices, is not exclusive of men; rather, it is an avenue of approach that should be accepted as pointedly beneficial for expression in a different voice. This different voice adds to the "male" voice and initiates a multi-voiced approach to writing which articulates differing points of view with the inclusion of those overlooked by a singular (male) voice.

Flynn continues "Composing as a Woman" by looking at student writings from the viewpoint of relational capacities and moral and intellectual development. While her analysis of student essays does not fit seamlessly into the foundational information discussed above, Flynn does find that on the whole "[t]he narratives of the female students are stories of interaction, of connection, or of frustrated connection. The narratives of the male students are stories of achievement, of separation, or of frustrated achievement" (247-248). She thus synthesizes "not to assume that males and females use language in identical ways or represent the world in a similar fashion. And if their writing strategies and patterns of representation do differ, then ignoring those differences almost certainly means a suppression of women's separate ways of thinking and writing" (251). Flynn agrees with Belenky et al. in that she pushes for a furtherance of understanding and developing pedagogical approaches that will empower women without insisting upon unquestioning assimilation.

Exploring a possibly empowering pedagogical stance, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede enunciate two distinct types of collaborative writing. One is hierarchical—being driven by someone outside of the immediate collaborative group or by a senior leader of the group. Concerning hierarchical collaboration, they say, "The activity of finding this information or solving this problem is closely tied to the realization of a particular end product. This mode of collaborative writing is, we would argue, typically conservative. It is also, need we say, a predominantly masculine mode of discourse" (257). The other mode of collaborative writing is dialogic. This "mode is loosely structured, and the roles enacted within it are fluid; one 'person' may occupy multiple and shifting roles as the project progresses….Those who participate in dialogic collaboration generally value the creative tension inherent in multivoiced and multivalent ventures" (257). While the topic of Lunsford and Ede's dialogic discourse is centered on collaborative writing, the idea of one person fulfilling many roles lends itself to a type of writing that could be constructed by one person and still be termed dialogic by a proper exploration of voice and point of view.

Lunsford and Ede successfully set up what could be deemed binary opposites in the terms "hierarchical" and "dialogic" in that one is representative of masculine writing while the other is representative of feminine writing. The hierarchical (masculine) approach, which is driven by the end product, "is perceived as efficient and productive if sometimes unsatisfying" (259). As the dominant approach, it is viewed "as 'the way things are'" (259). The approach in opposition to hierarchical writing is a dialogic one. The dialogic approach is creative, fluid, and multivoiced and "represents the possibility

of subverting traditional phallogocentric, subject-centered discourse—for a rhetoric…in a new key" (259-260).

Concerning a new type of rhetoric, one that praises a dialogic approach in favor of a hierarchical one, that is, one that is driven by the end product, Cynthia Caywood and Gillian Overing comment on the academic norm for writing. They say, "The model of writing as a product is inherently authoritarian" (xii). The result is that certain types of language and discourse are deemed more important and valued over others: expository essay over exploratory; argumentative essay over autobiographical; thesis-driven essay over organic exploration; the impersonal, rational voice over the intimate, subjective one (xii). The favored, authoritarian models are inherently male and reflect hierarchical form. The subjugated models are inherently female and reflect dialogic form. A diverse discourse that caters to the needs and tendencies of feminine composition theory, then, will be one that is prepared to approach situations in less-than-assured ways. That is, by following a dialogic approach, a diverse discourse will not be intimidated to be at first unsure, unclear, or multi-positioned. Instead, by being so, it will allow creativity and the foundational elements that are deemed inherently feminine to be heard.

Another pedagogical approach to diverse writing has to do with removing argument from the composition classroom and by extension from the composition essay. Susan Jarratt, in her essay "Feminism and Composition: The Case for Conflict," says, "Some feminists vigorously reject argument on the grounds that it is a kind of violence, an instrument specific to patriarchal discourse and unsuitable for women trying to reshape thought and experience by changing forms of language use" (263). Sally Gearhart is one of those feminists; she believes that "any intent to persuade is an act of

violence" (195). Gearhart goes so far as to say that "the difference between a persuasive metaphor and a violent artillery attack is obscure and certainly one of degree rather than kind" (197). Expounding on and attempting to tone down Gearhart's radical view of persuasion, Jarratt says, "Gearhart suggests a shift from a speaker-oriented delivery of truth to a more peaceful context for communication" (265). In this "peaceful context," differences are expressed without anyone seeking to inform or persuade another. While this approach is seemingly too difficult to fulfill, a more careful reading of Gearhart exposes her desire to exchange male-oriented persuasion with "a dialogic context for exchange of ideas" (Jarratt 265). Contending on who is in the classroom (or to be more specific to written rhetoric—who is grading or interacting with the paper), Gearhart's model will be hard pressed to endure as a mode of writing that does not seek to persuade in any way. Jarratt points out that while avoiding argument leads a classroom to avoid conflict, it also leaves those who will not argue "insufficiently prepared to negotiate the oppressive discourses of racism, sexism, and classism [that surface] in the composition classroom" (264). So, instead of a peaceful context that does not acknowledge or identify with persuasion, what must be found is a type of rhetoric that uses atypical persuasion, that is, a persuasion that is founded not on hierarchical reasoning, but on dialogic expression.

Jarratt proposes the ideas of Peter Elbow and Donald Murray as expressionist writers who put forth theories of "nurture rather than act as authority figures" (266). In their classrooms, students share as a community of writers who read like writers. When readers are taught that no reaction is wrong, to never quarrel with someone else's reaction, and both the writer and the reader are always right and always wrong (Elbow

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95, 100, 106), "[t]he reader intuitively fills in the spaces because of an unspoken empathy with writers and their texts. Although conflict is anticipated, it usually occurs because of a lack of clarity in the message" (Jarratt 267). In other words, argument is led up to but not followed through with; instead, it is left for the reader to infer as she will, right or wrong—it does not essentially matter. This type of student-centered approach displaces authority and typical male-driven argument or persuasion, achieving a feminist goal.

Another approach would be to follow Joyce Trebilcot's idea of "nonconflict." This approach is one where women meet together "in nonhierarchical and noncompetitive communication situations[;] they tell stories—past, present, and future— and plan action" (Jarratt 272). The downfall of Trebilcot's idea is that for "nonconflict" to take place, there must be no males present. When males are part of the group, Trebilcot says, "In these contexts I find that it is usually most effective to operate according to patriarchal ideas of knowledge and truth" (3). A more functional mode of "nonconflict" would be one where all students could participate because, as Jarratt aptly puts it, "persuasion of some kind must be going on in the space between telling stories— necessarily different stories—and planning action, even in a group of like-minded people" (272-273). Through these stories, then, another form of feminine persuasion is being conducted, one that downplays the authoritative aspects and pitfalls of argument.

Catherine Lamb, in "Beyond Argument in Feminist Composition," presents the idea of negotiation and mediation as a means of enlarging the sphere of feminist composition as it applies to argument. She believes negotiation and mediation "are consistent with the emphasis on cooperation, collaboration, shared leadership, and integration of the cognitive and affective" (281). Lamb views argument not as an end,

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but as a means. She elaborates, "The end—a resolution of conflict that is fair to both sides—is possible even in the apparent one-sidedness of written communication" (281). That is, if the writer fulfills her responsibility—to negotiate and mediate her own creation—both (or all) sides of an argument will be fairly represented. As an example of authorial responsibility, Lamb refers to Elizabeth Flynn's "Composing 'Composing as a Woman': A Perspective on Research." Lamb says that Flynn's reviewing her own essay emphasizes "the open-ended, provisional nature of Flynn's thinking—another quality that has come to be associated with (and prized in) feminist composition" (282).

Lamb juxtaposes negotiation and mediation with what she calls "monologic argument." Monologic argument is what students have been taught from an early age; it encompasses hierarchical (anti-dialogical) modes of writing. The problem with most students who have not explored diverse discourse is that they "have uncritically assumed there is no other way to write" (283). Lamb says that monologic argument is, in essence, "the ability to affect what happens to someone else" ("Less Distance" 100). Yet, what negotiation and mediation does is empowering to feminist and minority writers because it views power "not as a quality to exercise on others, but as something which can energize, enabling competence and thus reducing hierarchy" ("Beyond Argument" 285). This idea is analogized by Hannah Arendt, who in *The Human Condition*, explains that the power of the classical Greek *polis* or city-state came from the people "acting and speaking together" (198), not from physical boundaries or the *polis* itself. Lamb says that such a power is limitless and fleeting in that "[i]t 'springs up' when people act together and disappears when they separate" (285).

So not only must the creator of a text use negotiation and mediation, but the reader must as well. Using Arendt's above-mentioned notion of power, Lamb believes that negotiation and mediation "result in a paradoxical situation where the distance between writer and audience is lessened (as they explore the dimensions of the conflict together)" (287). The only way such distance can be lessened, though, is if students are taught to negotiate, to interact, with what they read. To do this to the proper degree, students must read as writers; that is, they must anticipate situations as they are occurring in the text and be open to more than one eventuality for those situations. In the composition classroom, a mediator may negotiate between writer and reader as to what is expected, and in doing so, each side should "come up with as many options as possible in the process of arriving at a solution" (289). In this way, the dialogic aspect of this atypical persuasion can be progressive.

Monologic argument is still necessary for being as clear as possible about a certain conflict; yet, "even at its best, [monologic argument] inevitably separates itself very quickly from [shared power] because of its subject/object, I/it orientation" (Lamb, "Beyond Argument" 286). Some monologic writing may still be necessary inside of negotiation and mediation; that is, monologic writing may need to be used to arrive at what needs to be negotiated or mediated to find a common ground. Therefore, Lamb rejects Caywood and Overing's "judgment that 'writing as a product is inherently authoritarian'" (290). Monologic writing—a male-driven discourse—can have its place among such a diverse discourse as negotiation and mediation. But its place must be within the diverse discourse, part of the means, not the end.

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Lamb says, "When we practice and teach monologic argument as an end, we are teaching students that conflict can be removed by an effort that is fundamentally one-sided" (288). This, in turn, fights against the efforts of feminist composition theory and dialogic approach. Teaching monologic writing as an end reestablishes the dominant writing norms, those of having a thesis-driven, argumentative essay. The advantages of negotiation and mediation are that they are cooperative approaches that encourage problem-solving in an indirect way. They are also collaborative in that both parties (the writer and reader) use the process to identify interests and outcomes. And, finally, they are a structured form of conflict resolution. As such, "in both negotiation and mediation…the goal has changed: it is no longer to win but to arrive at the solution in a just way that is acceptable to both sides" (288); that is, the goal is to convince or persuade without arguing.

In relation to freshman composition, monologic writing has been expressed predominantly in the generic expository essay form. Keith Fort, in "Form, Authority, and the Critical Essay," considers the relational consequences of continuing to write in the same generic form. He says, "[W]e cannot have attitudes towards reality that cannot be expressed in available forms" (174). Fort's meaning is that if the only form of expression is the standard critical expository essay, then expression will be limited by the attitudes, ideologies, and rationales that are embodied by that particular genre. Fort goes on to say that the standard form of academic writing, such as is seen in freshman composition courses, "conditions students to think in terms of authority and hierarchy" (178). Thus, freshman composition classes are forums for endorsing male viewpoints and means of communication through taught male voice and argumentation. Even when a feminist

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approach is taken in such a course, it will be difficult to remove the dominant

characteristics from student writing if the form is left unaltered.

Terry Zawacki, in "Recomposing as a Woman—An Essay in Different Voices,"

discusses the personal essay as a form of writing that is in opposition to the traditional

academic essay, especially in relation to voice. She says that "the personal essay does

not rely on positions staked out in advance, on straight arrangements and tightly

connected points leading to a single conclusion" (315). Thus, the personal essay is able

to negotiate with its topic in a way that does not directly engage argument and allows

room for multiple viewpoints and a variety of possible solutions. Expounding on the

dialogic advantages of the personal essay, Zawacki says, "Differences can be cultivated

in the personal essay—there is room to talk and room to listen" (315). She does not,

though, give ultimate or sole regard to the personal essay. It is simply one alternative to

the traditional form, one that many women are able to use as a foundation for broadening

their understanding of their own voice because of the feminist characteristics of the

personal essay. Zawacki goes on to suggest that an effort be made to find more

alternatives to the traditional academic discourse in freshman composition courses.

Speaking about what is a "natural" or "authentic" woman's voice, Zawacki

realizes that "[t]here are dangers…in saying that certain forms of writing might somehow

represent women's ways of constructing knowledge better than other forms" (316).

Women, Zawacki contends, suffer from being subjected to the idea that they can only

write from "the perspective of their own personal experience, whereas men can transcend

narrow self-interests and 'write' the world" (316). This idea has caused many women to

view the personal essay on its own as unfulfilling because of the negative connotations

associated with it. The gender identity of women, though, must come under scrutiny if

their voices are to be heard, especially since there is a cultural insistence that the

prevailing mode of discourse in the academy is rational argument (316). Women must,

then, put their voices forth in a different form than the traditional academic one if their

voices are to be heard and seen as equal to men and at the same time legitimately

academic. In order to find a middle ground, that is, a form that is not disloyal to

women's personal voice and one that seeks to be "academic," Mary Belenky et al.

suggest that women integrate knowledge that they feel is intuitively and "personally

important with knowledge they [learn] from others" (134). By negotiating with voice in

such a way, women (and all who want to share their personal voice in an academic

setting) will be able to advance their voices in a way that Belenky et al. say weaves

"together strands of rational and emotive thought" (134). Thus, there is a melding of

what is seen as inherently masculine (rational/hierarchical) with what is seen as

inherently feminine (emotive/dialogical).

     The idea of melding these two types of writing leads Zawacki to ask, "If we

privilege other ways of knowing and representing the world, what new forms will

emerge?" (316) Zawacki analogizes an answer to her own question. She says,

> Instead of writing I have spent the afternoon digging compost into a small
>
> area of the garden I've reserved for tomatoes. The compost comes from a
>
> pile which lies about three feet into the woods behind one of the shady
>
> perennial beds. The pile starts with leaves and grass clippings, and to that
>
> I add peelings, cores and seeds, coffee grounds, wood ash, even shredded
>
> newspapers. Last year plants I couldn't identify but which looked like

tomatoes grew up in a patch of sun on the edge of the compost pile. Small

yellow-spotted beetles ate all but one, which grew until its large ungainly

stalk flopped over onto the hostas in the flower bed. Finally I decided to

pull it out. Tiny potatoes scattered around me; the potato peelings had

rooted in the compost. (316)

What does happen when the "compost pile" is seriously given attention? If different

voices are listened to within the same setting, what will be produced? Zawacki's

compost pile produced hybrid tomato-like vegetables with potato roots which were nearly

all destroyed by aggressive yellow-spotted beetles. The surviving hybrid, though, turned

out to be interesting, developed by all the "ingredients," and "eatable." Whatever is

produced by a compilation and negotiation of differing voices and experimental writings

will have to contend against the dominant traditional form, that of the academic,

expository essay. Endurance of a new form (or forms), though, will equal the creation of

not simply a woman's form or a woman's voice in the academic setting, but multiple

forms and multiple voices created from a consideration of all the voices and writings

involved.

Getting all voices involved in such a "compost pile" is not an easy task. Zawacki

says, "Men have decided upon the conventions and have established the values which

will prevail" (317). Attempting to overcome these conventions, Jane Tompkins, in

"Pedagogy of the Distressed," tries to "break down the barrier between public discourse

and private feeling, between knowledge and experience" (658). When she is able to do

so, she gets her students to feel a personal connection with a professional job or topic

they are composing for. Thus, Tompkins's students' writing is done both professionally

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(or academically) and personally, a melding for many writers in her feminist theory courses of cognitive rationalization and emotional feelings. Such an approach is considered by Olivia Frey as "the adversary method" (524) because it forces students to go against traditional writing methods. Yet, such a method, such a bold standing up against the traditionally indoctrinated norm of academic writing, is not conducive or feasible for those who do not have the authority that well-known feminist theorists have. The average student, especially the new college student, will be much more conservative when conflicting with or attempting to negotiate with academic writing.

Even amongst women teachers, the trend is to follow the indoctrinated patriarchal norms. Varying voices have had difficulty being accepted as fresh and "right" when presented in the same academic setting that has for so many years been seen as the conventional forum for patriarchal voice and ideology. Pat Sullivan relates how a female student of hers was having difficulty writing in a patriarchal voice. Instead of writing in the accepted form, she was giving multiple viewpoints and incorporating a variety of voices in her writing; that is, the student was negotiating and mediating among different voices without putting forth any final conclusions. Sullivan, admittedly not "hearing" the student's discourse, helped the student change her writing until it was presented in a more academically acceptable voice and put forth more definite conclusions. Only later did Sullivan realize that she approached the situation in a way that silenced the true voice that the woman writer was trying to effectively use (Zawacki 318).

Sullivan realized from this event that there is no "right" way to approach writing, only ways of composing as individuals, males and females. Teachers of writing must be willing to ask and meditate on what Zawacki asks, that is, "If we as women (or we as

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men) listen with the expectation of discovering differences, what differences will appear? (318) Using another gardening analogy, Zawacki follows this question by stating that she wants to see how her garden would grow if she used the "voices" (the plowing and planting techniques) of her mother and father, one sporadic and one straight-lined. How would those work not in separate areas of the garden, but how would they work if used together?

In Chapter One, I elaborated on Carolyn Miller's and Gunther Kress's views of how genres are developed because of social necessity. Thus, when differing cultures and societies interact, language is deeply affected, altered. When language is thus altered, change becomes manifest by a continuous using of certain distinctions which eventually results in the acceptance of a new spoken or written genre. If diverse discourse is to be a means in which the non-dominant group excels or a means of liberation from a patriarchal, limited writing society, then the foundation of that diverse discourse must be steeped in genre theory; that is, it must get its beginning from varying cultures and societies as they are influential enough to create genres. From those genres will evolve pragmatic types of writing that take into account semantics and syntactics, such as multiple voices, dialogic approaches, atypical persuasion, and differing physical forms.

CHAPTER THREE

Multigenre Rhetoric

A multigenre paper arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes by language, images, and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author's. The trick is to make such a paper hang together.

> —Tom Romano *Blending Genres, Altering Styles: Writing*
>
> *Multigenre Papers*

My first exposure to multigenre writing came during an undergraduate methods class in English education. One of the assigned readings was Tom Romano's *Writing with Passion: Life Stories, Multiple Genres*. In this book Romano devotes only two chapters to multigenre, but those two chapters fascinated me, and I chose to write my final "essay" as a multigenre piece. Earlier that semester, my 23-year-old cousin, who had long struggled with depression, committed suicide. I had attempted to explore and write about my feelings, which were a mixture of uncertainty, anger, and grief, but had

been largely unsuccessful. All I had actually been able to get on paper was a poem of remembrance that was set out at the funeral parlor. When I finished writing the multigenre paper, though, I had a piece of writing that explored two distinct yet connected facets that I believe had impeded my ability to properly understand and cope with my cousin's death; that is, I had a piece that explored the cognitive side of his life and death (ecstasy and bipolar disorder) and one that explored the emotional side (from many points of view). Through the use of multiple genres, I came to agree with Romano, who says, "Each genre offers me ways of seeing and understanding that others do not" (*Writing* 109). My personal experience with multigenre instilled the belief in me that genres can be used in writing not only as creative, emotional outlets, but as "cognitive instruments for making sense of the world" (Newkirk, *More Than Stories* 5). The use of different genres creates a dialogic experience, as will be discussed below, where the writer as mediator is able to intellectually and emotionally involve the readers, allowing each individual reader to negotiate with the writing, deciding what meaning(s) to take away.

Romano believes that a multigenre writing is "a complex, multilayered, multivoiced blend of genres, each revealing information about [a] topic, each self-contained, making a point of its own, unconnected to other genres by conventional transitional devices" (*Blending Genre* 4). The way different genres are incorporated in the same writing is by the use of crots—with crots often being separated by white spaces. Winston Weathers, in *An Alternate Style: Options in Composition*, describes the crot as "an obsolete word meaning 'bit' or 'fragment'" (14). Each crot consists of a separate genre or subgenre, normally taking up one page within a multigenre paper. For example,

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three possible crots in a multigenre paper about the need to increase school funding in a poverty-stricken district could be a handwritten letter to a congressman from a student (lack of funds equals no computer to type the letter), a discussion in dialogue format between two legislators with opposing views on the subject that incorporates actual discussion from a senate meeting, and a mock denial letter to a graduating senior from a university that cites poor computer skills as one of the reasons for denial. Each of these hypothetical crots makes meaning on its own; that is, each individual crot has what Weathers calls "a certain integrity" that allows it to stand on its own, and because the crots are separated by white space, rapid transitions from one point of view to another are possible in a way that "is similar to a slide show" (14-15). When put together, the series of crots becomes the whole multigenre paper, providing as many genres, voices, and points of view as the writer deems necessary. In order for the paper to be cohesive and have unity, the individual, generic crots must be bound by some commonality; that commonality is negotiable, but can be things such as topic, theme, or content. In the hypothetical topic above, the three crots are bound by a mixture of topic, theme, and content.

An important factor of crot creation is that students learn how to do synthesis and analysis within the same work. Students synthesize by putting together distinct and different genres that are bound by some commonality. When students look at the same experience from multiple viewpoints or explore the cognitive and emotional elements of a situation (as will be discussed more below), they are able to put together different yet related crots which eventually comprise the whole writing. At the same time that the students are building up to a complete piece of writing, they are analyzing the individual

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crots as separate, meaning-making units as well as analyzing all the crots together to evaluate their effectiveness (unity and cohesiveness) as a complete work. This analysis for meaning making and effectiveness is, in turn, reinforcing synthesis since it is a means of insuring the solidity and forcefulness of the written piece. In Romano's terms, "The act of synthesis is the act of analysis is the act of synthesis" (*Writing* 95).

In order to understand the basic premise of multigenre rhetoric, Romano introduces Jerome Bruner's term *paradigmatic*—which can be viewed as a synonym to Catherine Lamb's earlier-mentioned *monologic argument*—to refer to the type of expository writing that "is concerned with reportage, facts, analysis, chronology, and logic" (*Blending Genre* 22). Examples of such writing are found in text books, academic essays, and biographies; after junior high, schools are devoted to teaching paradigmatic thinking and almost exclusively require students to write paradigmatically. While paradigmatic thinking is prevalent and "indispensable" (22), narrative thinking—a tool favored by feminist rhetoricians—is another tool that can be used to develop and relay cognition (all the while delaying finality). Romano says, "Instead of explaining or analyzing as paradigmatic knowing does, narrative knowing renders experience or phenomenon. Narrative knowing shows" (22). As an alternative to paradigmatic seeing and reporting, narrative writing avoids "telling readers what to think" by "showing them with such indelible detail that they go beyond understanding what they have read to experiencing it" (23). It is by experiencing a piece of writing that the reader comes to understand what is cognitively being said even if it is not outlined in a paradigmatic structure. Too, the writer is better able to understand her subject cognitively by exploring the topic from multiple viewpoints and recording the information in a way that allows the

reader to undergo experience. Romano shows the relationship of the two (narrative and paradigmatic) types of thinking when he says, "I often have to tell a story in detail— render it fully—in order to know what it means, in order to come to a paradigmatic thinking about it" (23).

Lamb says that monologic argument is necessary, even in a diverse discourse such as negotiation and mediation, especially "at the early stages of resolving a conflict" ("Beyond Argument" 286). That is, monologic argument plays its part as a means to arriving at the end. Similarly, paradigmatic writing is a beneficial and sometimes necessary part of multigenre rhetoric. It serves a role within the multigenre construct, perhaps as a biographical or analytical crot or introduction to the piece. In this way paradigmatic thinking and writing plays a joint role with narrative thinking and writing in the development of multigenre rhetoric. Because hierarchical (paradigmatic) thinking and writing is not privileged, multigenre rhetoric should be viewed as a rhetoric that promotes a feminist-type or atypical form of argument and persuasion.

Elaborating on how multigenre rhetoric employs atypical argument and persuasion, Julie Jung, in *Revisionary Rhetoric, Feminist Pedagogy, and Multigenre Texts*, considers "the multigenre text as an example of an inherently disruptive and therefore potentially revisionary written form, a kind of writing that brings together previously divided genres within the frame of a single academic essay" (xiii). Jung calls such a collection of genres an "academic" essay because argument and persuasion are being constructed, but in a feminist style. The feminist style of argument and persuasion is one that again enforces Lamb's idea of negotiation and mediation in that, as Jung claims, "juxtaposing genres within a single text disrupts readers and delays meaning

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making….[In turn, this delays] clarification of meaning so that differences can be heard, explored, and understood" (3). The different voices and viewpoints given credence in multigenre rhetoric allow several (if not many) explanations or ideas to carry force. By exploring multiple voices and viewpoints, the writer plays the dual role of mediator in that she is able to analyze and synthesize approaches and issues in a way that allows development of multiple answers. This type of argument and persuasion is atypical to the academic norm, hierarchical presentation of analysis that focuses on one "right" answer. Thus, the readers of multigenre rhetoric are able to negotiate the meaning of the work as a whole since they are given many options in different voices, viewpoints, and genres in the various crots.

Jung expounds the benefits of her feminist approach to argument and persuasion saying that she seeks "ways in which delaying consensus might actually foster understanding among participants within communities where conflicts exist and where participants believe in the need to give voice to the differences that create them" (7). While Jung has successfully used multigenre rhetoric to give voice and explore conflicts non-combatively in her upper-level English and feminist classes, she has not implemented multigenre rhetoric in freshman composition. Jung does believe, though, that the need to give voice and delay consensus is just as viable at the freshman composition level and that it is a mistake to solely privilege clarity and connection—that which is praised in typical expository writing in entry-level composition courses. Always privileging clarity and connection leads students to believe "that when they cannot relate to or connect with something they read, they can simply skip it, ignore it, forget about it, and move on" (11). Students, thinking thus, will not challenge themselves to become

critical thinkers or writers; instead, they will take the avenue of least resistance, writing about safe topics that they understand enough to put forth (what they think to be) a logical, clear, and connected argument.

The disconnections that appear in most freshman composition essays provide avenues for deeper critical thinking. When there is conceivably no "right" answer, students who thoroughly explore multiple possibilities before coming to any conclusion (if they come to a conclusion at all) logically explore the question more deeply, mediating their own experience. In doing so, they develop a keener understanding of the topic they are researching and how that topic is interrelated to other topics. Deeper understanding of a topic and realization of its interrelatedness with other topics is the beginning of a dialogic approach to writing. Disconnections also provide opportunities to explore voice and viewpoint and develop audience. Analyzing a subject (such as the effects of the drug ecstasy) from various personas and points of view (such as a doctor and a user) leads to better cognitive and emotional understanding of the subject. Voice and viewpoint exploration also continue dialogic development in that if sequenced properly, the voices carry on a "conversation" amongst themselves and resonate with the reader. By developing more insight and deeper thinking, the audience becomes more in tune with the writing, feeling connection because of having a much better chance of being able to relate to some part of the disconnections that are being explored. And in this way, the audience enters the dialogic discourse, negotiating with the possibilities that the writer, as mediator, presents.

A subjective view of *kairos* in relation to "inevitable disconnections" (Jung 11) that students will encounter when writing means taking the most logical, creative, and

effective rhetorical approach to the writing situation while understanding the importance of critical thinking, voice, and audience as they are used to develop a dialogic approach. Thus, the idea of having freshmen revise seeming contradictions when they have disconnected from their own writing instead of exploring these disconnections sends the early academic message that new writers should conform to and always write in the standard, so-called universal style (10-11). Jung believes that using multigenre rhetoric in composition classes advocates that "texts should be written in a way that works against universalizing tendencies" (10) and prepares students to be able to adapt to the inevitable disconnections that will be abundant in academia and beyond.

Multigenre rhetoric, while adhering to a dialogic approach, inherently works against universalizing tendencies in that it entwines the cognitive and emotional; Romano says that multigenre writing demands students to "meld the cognitive with the emotional" (*Blending Genre* 24). Juxtaposing narrative thinking (what is commonly considered emotional writing) with paradigmatic thinking (what is commonly considered intellectual or cognitive writing) leads to an evenly balanced and fully rhetorical type of writing where an alternative, intellectual, and academic rhetoric is produced that incorporates the standards of masculine and feminine writing. Romano wants "students with more conventional analytical minds to expand their cognitive repertoire and rhetorical skills by gaining further experience with narrative thinking" (56). It is by devaluing narrative thinking—which should not be seen as merely affective thinking, but as an extension of, or a means to developing, cognitive thinking—that students who use such thinking to explore and negotiate with the world are penalized. The open-endedness of multigenre

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rhetoric demands analytical-oriented students to struggle cognitively to think in ways that enhance and deepen their intellectual and emotional growth (56-57).

The reverse is also true; that is, students with more conventional narrative minds need to expand their cognitive repertoire and rhetorical skills by gaining further experience with analytical or paradigmatic thinking. That is why multigenre rhetoric should not be seen as a replacement for the conventional expository essay or as a replacement for teaching purely analytical skills, but should be seen as an alternative tool for instruction and preparation. In fact, inclusion of such paradigmatic thinking as (perhaps) mandatory expository crots may be a necessity in freshman composition so that students do not start to view multigenre rhetoric as merely "fun" writing. Jung highlights well the fear of unconventional or exploratory writing when she says, "Anything that smacks of fun or pleasure is bound to be devalued in academic contexts, sites where rigor is synonymous with drudgery, and everything else is, well, cute" (xvi). Yet, while allowing room for "fun" and creativity, multigenre rhetoric is developing cognitive understanding in writers and readers through nonstandard rhetorical tools.

Exploring how intellect is involved in multigenre rhetoric, Jung comments on a "feminist ethos founded not on mastery but on…a willingness to go *in search of*" (25). This type of feminist ethos is one that relies on the attempt to combine personal (narrative) and academic (paradigmatic) writing. In a similar sense, Douglas Hesse uses the term "narrativizing" (36) when referring to how academic, article-type essays employ "their author's experiences, ideas, readings, and so on" (37). For example, Nancy Mairs, in "In Search of 'In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens': Alice Walker," attempts to "read" Alice Walker. The desire to read Walker correctly causes self-questioning by Mairs.

Mairs says, "I was—and am—intractably white and thus, possibly by my very nature, incapable of accurately reading a black writer" (631). Mairs has to let go of her desire to master Alice Walker; instead, she lets "Alice Walker teach [her] how to read Alice Walker" (632). In so doing, Mairs identifies the wide range of discursive strategies Walker uses, including challenging "composition pedagogies that stress conventional notions of 'focus' and 'development'" (Jung 26). (Walker's essay has no identifiable thesis statement and relies on many one-sentence paragraphs.) After going in search of these discursive strategies in order to "find" Walker, Mairs uses similar strategies in her own essay. The purely paradigmatic thinking mode is obscured so as to include narrative thinking in a way that promotes cognitive understanding by employing and validating "many of the cognitive modes—indirection, associative reasoning, anecdotal development, reliance on folk wisdom and intuition—which patriarchal critics have traditionally devalued by ascribing them to women and other primitive thinkers" (632).

If student writers go "in search of" varying discursive strategies that are employed by the texts they read, they will be able to negotiate and mirror narrative-based techniques that employ cognition. Concerning the unnatural mix of what is read and what is written in school, Romano says, "In four years of high school English and as an English major in college, although I *read* plenty of fiction, poetry, and exploratory essays, I did not write those genres" (*Blending Genre* 22). Romano wrote what others wrote: exposition. Yet, students understand the cognitive value of the various genres they read; that is, they are taught to analyze and deconstruct poetry and fiction. They also receive an emotional stimulation from reading narrative writing; that is, they *feel* Emily Dickinson and Harriet Beecher Stowe. In effect, paradigmatic understanding of narrative

writing combines two benefits: cognitive and emotional experience. Romano clarifies

this view as it relates to writing when he says, "More than I am interested in reflecting on

or abstracting from experience, I am interested in rendering it so that readers live the

page" (24). Such a rendering "penetrates" experience (Newkirk, *Performance* 95) or gets

the reader intellectually and emotionally involved. And when an experience has been

penetrated, that is, when readers live the page or live the told experience, "it is often

solely up to the readers to reflect upon meaning and make abstractions" (Romano 24).

Thus, multigenre rhetoric involves what can be seen as a dialogic approach to experience,

one that intellectually and emotionally involves the reader and allows her to decide what

meaning(s) to take away.

A facet of multigenre rhetoric that helps to penetrate experience, to get the reader

to live the page, is what Weathers calls Grammar B. While Grammar A is standard

academic writing, is conservative and follows the traditional rules of style, Grammar B

develops from the vernacular and breaks the standard rules of sentence structure, syntax,

spelling, voice, and form "as a means of communicating powerfully" (Romano, *Writing*

75). Grammar B is not a haphazard way of writing that requires little effort or attention

to detail; rather, it is a sophisticated style that has been around for a long time, and most

students have read and been affected by skilled writers (Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolfe,

Gertrude Stein, Mark Twain) who use Grammar B resourcefully. Weathers describes the

validity of this alternative to standard grammatical rules when he says,

> [Grammar B] is a mature and alternate (*not* experimental) style used by
>
> competent writers and offering students of writing a well-tested set of
>
> options that, added to the traditional grammar of style, will give them a

much more flexible voice, a much greater communication capacity, a

much greater opportunity to put into effective language all the things they

have to say. (8)

Weathers goes on to say that even students who are still learning to write in the standard

style deserve to be introduced to this powerful alternative. Weathers' belief that students

should be introduced to Grammar B while they are still attempting to perfect Grammar A

agrees with Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of speech genres. Bakhtin says that we

master speech genres "fluently long before we begin to study grammar" (78). A natural

understanding of speech genres means students have a natural inclination toward

Grammar B since it is rooted in the vernacular. Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis agree that

"there can be no fixed language facts, only language and dialect variation that is relative

to different cultural needs and interests" (5). The promotion of a never-to-be-broken

standard grammar is a construct that encourages "cultural universality" (4), fostering

patriarchy while denying individual voice.

Before students can feel comfortable enough employing an alternate style to

modify and expand genres, they must be given a basis for genre development. One such

basis for genre development is the Martin/Rothery curriculum cycle, which involves

modeling, joint negotiation, and independent construction. In the modeling stage of

Martin/Rothery's curriculum cycle, "the social purpose, text structure and language

features of the genre are investigated" (Callaghan 181). Students are in an

observe/question-asking mode as they see examples of texts that fulfill certain purposes

by writing in a particular genre, such as seeing how a poem fulfills its social purpose

(perhaps to motivate response or express feelings) and the varying types of structure and language features that poems can employ.

The joint negotiation stage of the curriculum cycle involves students writing in a particular genre, usually constructing a text as a class or in groups. The teacher plays an instrumental role again in this stage as she listens to what group members are saying, negotiates with their ideas, and transforms what they tell her into a generic writing (182). The production of a type of poem, for example, is created by students' understanding of the poem genre as it relates to a specific social purpose, as it meets generic requirements, and as it has been modeled to them. Through discussion, research, and practice writing, for example, students can create—with the teacher facilitating—a Petrarchan sonnet.

Without the developmental modeling and joint negotiation stages, the independent construction stage will be met with confusion and resistance. In this stage, students use their growing knowledge of genre to create their own text. The steps of the independent construction stage include preparation, drafting, conferencing, editing, and evaluating. If students have a good understanding of the practiced genre and seem confident working with it, a final and worthwhile step to this stage is to have the "students explore the possibilities of the genre by working creatively within and beyond it" (182). That is, through proper scaffolding, students should be able to think beyond the specific genre they are writing in, imagining and creating new possibilities. Perhaps students combine the structure requirements of a sonnet with the subject requirements of a haiku, creating a new subgenre. Or perhaps students, with enough scaffolding and practice, mix genres (cooking directions written as a lyric poem or a biography written as a list), seeing how their modifications affect the communication process (182).

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Whereas the Martin/Rothery curriculum cycle teaches genres as something to be replicated, and then if the student is successful, she may explore the creative possibilities of genre work, Callaghan et al. proposes a process-based orientation to genre as a basis for genre development. This process "argues for a more flexible concept that views genre not as an end product, but as the process that produces text types—a dynamic interaction of social participants and appropriate generic resources" (192). Callaghan et al. present five processes that are regularly used to fulfill social action: describe, explain, instruct, argue, and narrate. These processes become the core of discussions that lead to understanding the products such processes can create. The products that can be constructed through these processes are negotiable, fluid, and changing as social demands change. Thus, this process-based orientation to genre does not focus on the teaching of individual genres, but on ways to construct genres through specific demands of culture and society. The necessity of such development is made clear when Callaghan et al. explain that students must be able to thoroughly think through post-primary-school "essay" questions in order to produce what is expected of them: multigenre texts (193). That is, questions that are naturally asked in secondary school and college regularly require a combination of description, explanation, instruction, argument, and narration.

With technology more readily available in composition classrooms, Callaghan et al.'s five processes have unlimited possibilities to create products that are more than just written. Gunther Kress explores "multimodal" texts and messages in the light of needing a theory which deals adequately with the processes of integrating composition into the world of technology ("English" 83). Kress backs this need by saying that the "single, exclusive and intensive focus on written language" is being questioned by many within

the composition field because of technology (85). And Jody Shipka, in "A Multimodal Task-Based Framework for Composing," gives impetus to the visual, saying that "combination, juxtaposition, and *even three-dimensional layering* of words and visuals…provides us with still other ways of imagining the work students might produce for the composition course" (278). Shipka also points forward to the incorporation of "textures, sounds, scents, and even tastes" (278) being part of the burgeoning multimodal world of composition.

While the future is full of exciting multimodal exploration in the field of composition, what I am interested in at present is for written multigenre texts to be incorporated into freshman composition. My vision of multigenre writing is one that combines pedagogical aspects of the feminist composition rhetoricians, such as negotiation and mediation, atypical argument, and dialogic approach, with the fluidity and progressiveness of genre as advocated by genre theorists. I believe this combination will lead to the discovery of strong, individual voice and the application of the idea of *kairos*, where students take advantage of the rhetorical tools they learn to create "essays" that answer writing prompts in the most effective ways.

Besides introducing the idea of using different genres in a composition classroom and writing in those different genres, instrumental in developing my vision of multigenre rhetoric in the freshman composition classroom is the use of Weathers' and Romano's crot. The crot embodies the essence of my idea of multigenre rhetoric in that it makes meaning on its own while at the same time contributes to the overall development of the entire writing. Within the crot, students are able to explore the different genres and subgenres they already know and ones they are developing, creating individual texts that

are self-sufficient and meaningful. These texts allow students to explore not only

multiple genres, but multiple voices and scenarios, expanding and developing genres by

using rhetorical tools such as Grammar B. Thus, the student mediates what is presented

in her paper and negotiates between individual crots (crot arrangement, for example, may

juxtapose two opposing views of the same subject in different genres), and this creates a

dialogic experience within the paper. Reader and writer benefit from the use of crots in

that each is able to draw her own conclusion after negotiating with the crots, and in this

way, atypical persuasion is accomplished.

The other primary rhetorical tool that I envision multigenre rhetoric using is

narrative thinking and writing, used to combine the personal and the academic. As

mentioned earlier, Douglas Hesse uses the term "narrativizing" (36) when referring to

how academic writing includes personal experience. And while some argumentative

writing may include personal experience as evidence to support a specific thesis or make

a specific point, multigenre rhetoric focuses on narrative thinking as a means of exploring

emotion and intellect, allowing the reader to come to her own conclusion. The reader is

not simply presented personal experience along with data and facts in order to lead her to

a stated or implied best solution. Rather, the reader is presented with narrative writing,

through such constructions as personal experiences or character sketches, from multiple

viewpoints and voices in order to allow her to interact or negotiate with the information

given. While she is persuaded, she is done so in a dialogic way and entirely by her own

negotiation of the material presented.

CONCLUSION

Further Research

In "Novelty in Academic Writing," David Kaufer and Cheryl Geisler argue that "freshmen composition…[has] remained silent about newness as a rhetorical standard, as a hallmark of literacy in a post-industrial, professional age" (309). This silence, they say, is not justified on an "intellectual or pragmatic" level (309). Lillian Bridwell-Bowles agrees that something must be done regarding the rhetorical standard at the freshman composition level. Bridwell-Bowles realizes "that students may need new options for writing if they…are struggling with expressing concepts, attitudes, and beliefs that do not fit into traditional academic forms" (295). Her understanding of the needs students may have stems from her own exploration of alternative styles of writing and their benefits. She has sought a type of writing that has "a more personal voice, an expanded use of metaphor, a less rigid methodological framework, a writing process that allows [her] to combine hypothesizing with reporting data, to use patterns of writing that allow for multiple truths…rather than a single thesis" (295). In giving few restrictions to what she names diverse discourse, Bridwell-Bowles leaves room for continued exploration into alternative ways of constructing the freshman composition paper.

Experimental writing usually happens slowly. Pamela Olano says, "[E]ventually we step off the limb…we write in a new voice, we experiment, we return to the limb" (qtd. in Bridwell-Bowles 297). Although there is a certain amount of fear in

experimental writing, it is necessary for students to adequately function and handle varying expectations within school and beyond. Min-zhan Lu, in "From Silence to Words: Writing as a Struggle," says, "[B]eyond the classroom and beyond the limited range of these students' immediate lives lies a much more complex and dynamic social and historical scene. To help these students become actors in such a scene,…we need to call their attention to voices that may seem irrelevant to the discourse we teach rather than encourage them to shut them out" (447). In other words, students and teachers alike may reject the "interference" of experimental writing, not wholly being sure of its necessity or viability, especially within the academic community. Ultimately, though, working with experimental writing prepares students for the "complex and dynamic" society that awaits them throughout academia and beyond.

Most would agree, though, that experimental writing frightens teachers and the boldest of students. One logical fear is stated by an anonymous student, "I still fear that it will lack coherence to any reader excluding me, and maybe me, too" (Bridwell-Bowles 307). Such fear is warranted, but the advantages of successfully implementing a diverse discourse must not be overlooked. If traditionally marginalized students can express their own distinct and pragmatic voices and develop their rhetorical skills in a way that prepares them for future academia and the real world by writing in an alternative to the expository essay, they must be given that opportunity. Freshman composition is primed for the introduction of multigenre rhetoric, a diverse discourse that incorporates negotiation and mediation, dialogic approaches, atypical persuasion, multiple voices, and varying physical forms.

Depending on how advanced a particular freshman composition class is, a mixture of the earlier-mentioned Martin/Rothery curriculum cycle and Callaghan et al.'s process-based genre orientation could be used to introduce multiple genres. Romano and Jung have their own formulas for introducing genre exploration and writing, which range from everyday quick writes in different genres to commenting on past work in a multigenre format. The important thing is to get students to work with different genres so as to build a basis for being able to combine genres in the most effective, rhetorical way. Students are able to think more critically on a given subject by enlisting multigenre rhetoric because it delays decision making, explores different voices and viewpoints, and entwines cognitive and emotional thinking. Even if a student is required to write an expository essay, the benefits of multigenre rhetoric will help the critical development of a hierarchical argument.

The next logical step of exploration would be to introduce multigenre rhetoric into freshman composition courses. Romano has taught multigenre rhetoric to high school students, and he and Jung have taught multigenre rhetoric to upper-level English classes. The benefits of finding individual voice and deepening critical thinking would seem to be best utilized when students are not fully indoctrinated into the currently accepted and expected way of writing in higher education: exposition. Freshman composition courses present a forum where diverse students are able to engage in critical discussion. Diverse students (different genders, races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, upbringings, etc.) bring social and cultural awareness and knowledge that is specific to them to the classroom. By allowing students to foster their diversity in critical discussion, their knowledge and world experience, which is continually developing and changing, blends with that of their

classmates. The classroom becomes a melding pot where known genres can be explored,

developed, and expanded by the students, personally involving them in the experiences

they read and write, allowing and motivating them to penetrate experience, to make the

page alive.

Further research with multigenre rhetoric should include empirical studies to

determine whether or not students who are instructed in a combination of expository and

multigenre rhetoric benefit more than students who are only instructed in exposition

during freshman composition. Advantages and/or disadvantages can be distinguished as

short and long term. Short term criteria could involve determining which students have a

better understanding of voice, types of argument and persuasion, organization, logical

development, and critical thinking. To determine long term advantages and/or

disadvantages, students from each type of subject group would need to be followed

throughout their academic careers to see how they handle writing and presentation

prompts. Beginning questions may include: To what degree does the majority of each

group employ the concept of *kairos*; that is, which group on the whole takes more

creative approaches to meaning construction? When creative approaches are taken, do

professors respond positively or negatively? Or, if professors encourage different

approaches, what kind of advantages does the student trained in multigenre rhetoric

have? As the demands of functional and purposeful writing continue to grow and

develop, research conducted involving multigenre rhetoric will be instrumental to the

field of composition.

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