# INVENTIO AND ELOCUTIO: LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AT ST. PAUL'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND TODAY'S STYLISTIC CLASSROOM

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## INTRODUCTION

Ever since the publication of Robert Connors's 2000 article "The Erasure of the Sentence," compositionists have reconsidered that "dirty" word of post-process writing instruction—style. This reconsideration is a good thing, in part, because near the end of his essay, Connors was pessimistic about the teaching of stylistics as a part of the field's future:

> Many people still professionally active today have deep background as generative rhetoricians or imitation adepts or sentence-combining pioneers, but they have lost most of their interest; they do not do that much anymore. They have cut their losses. We all must. (2000, p. 122)

This pessimism appears to have been short-lived, however, as the last decade in composition studies has witnessed a mini-renaissance of interest in stylistics. Two of the emerging issues in this resurgence of style include, one, style's role in public debates about writing instruction, and, two, the role of style as a tool of invention. In his 2008 book, *Out of Style: Reanimating Stylistic Study in Composition and Rhetoric*, Paul Butler argues that that the loss of stylistics from composition in recent decades left it alive only in the popular imagination as a set of grammar conventions. Additionally, Butler uses Michael Warner's argument about counterpublics—publics, e.g., the discipline of composition studies itself, which are defined in tension with the larger public sphere—to contend that it is through style that scholars in the field can find a needed entry into public discussions about writing, stressing that the field of composition and rhetoric

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should re-energize stylistic study in a concerted effort to dislodge popular public perceptions of writing instruction. In doing so, Butler also stresses the importance of style as a tool of invention to help students generate ideas for these public audiences. Butler's work suggests that the book has not closed on style, that there is much more to be done in re-establishing style as a subject of inquiry in composition, particularly in its role to prepare student writers for public audiences and to explore the inventional possibilities of style. Ultimately, this focus on public audiences and the interplay between style and invention suggests that the teaching of style is often synonymous with teaching composition.

In this chapter, I argue that the teaching of style, often discarded variously as prescriptive, decorative, and intellectually deadening, can and should be reconfigured as a vital element of current rhetorical instruction on the historical grounds that stylistic considerations are integral both to rhetorical invention and to rhetoric's public function. As the editors of this collection suggest in their introduction, style "creates and reflects knowledge, and allows us to access the ideology and cultural values of a text" (Duncan & Vanguri, this volume). Indeed, while the recent research in style has argued that style is an inventive canon tied to the public turn in composition, style as a source of invention historically been tied to public writing. Here, I explore the teaching of style in early modern England, making specific connections between the canon of style and its role in providing access to dominant forms of discourse in early modern English society. Specifically, I focus on the curriculum at St. Paul's grammar school in London and the role Erasmus played in developing its curriculum. I focus on St. Paul's because it is arguably the most important preparatory school in early modern England, educating generations of scholars who later exercised a profound effect on English culture and society through literature, the law, politics, commerce, and the clergy. By revisiting some of the pedagogical practices in early modern England, we can gain useful insights about how to teach style today.

St. Paul's Grammar school became the model for almost every subsequent English grammar school for the next two hundred years, and at its educational core was the teaching of style based largely on Desiderius Erasmus's stylistic textbook *De Copia*. Early modern writing curricula, as exemplified by St. Paul's incorporation of *De Copia*, was infused with the study of style as a source of invention and as preparation to write for the public sphere. As a review of Erasmus will explain, a dialectic exists in early modern rhetoric between the understanding of style as decoration and style as a tool to help rhetors invent arguments. Style in this period, therefore, was not just a simple matter of adding words to ideas—far from it. The canon of style during the early modern period emerged as a division of rhetoric that allows the ideas themselves to take flight

and affect the way knowledge was constructed for both listeners to a speech and readers of a text. The teaching of style at St. Paul's, then, acts as an important site for this chapter because the curriculum did not divide style from other areas of writing instruction, notably the invention of ideas and the preparation of students for the public sphere. By reminding ourselves of this important moment in the history of style, we can begin to see the pedagogical possibilities of style as a tool of composition instruction that prepares students to write for public audiences as well as a site for the discover of ideas.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part explores the role of stylistics in the curriculum at St. Paul's grammar school in London, a curriculum developed by humanists John Colet and Desiderius Erasmus that linked the teaching of style with the teaching of invention. The chapter's second part shows more specifically how style and invention were taught together in Renaissance grammar schools via the *progymnasmata* and the *declamatio*, exercises designed to train rhetors the art of invention and style. Finally, the last section of the essay describes a first-year composition course I teach that draws on some of the stylistic work from early modern England, including using imitation, using style as a source of invention, and other stylistic pedagogies. This style-based first-year writing course, at its core, uses Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say* to teach students how to use elements of style to create rich, sophisticated prose for public academic audiences. Specifically, Birkenstein and Graff's book offers writing teachers a kind of mini-progymnasmata and declamatio, reinforcing for students the interplay of style and invention. Although they never talk overtly about style and invention in their book, Graff and Birkenstein teach students to use numerous sentence-level and paragraph-level conventions designed to assist students to develop and generate ideas for writing. They stress as much in their introduction, suggesting that focusing on stylistics help students lead to discovery of ideas:

> Our templates also have a generative quality, prompting students to make moves in their writing that they might not otherwise make or even know they should make. The templates in this book can be particularly helpful for students who are unsure about what to say, or who have trouble finding enough to say, often because they consider their own beliefs so self-evident that they need not be argued for. (2010, pp. xx-xxi)

Much like the early modern grammar school classroom that used style as a tool of invention, the templates and lessons from *They Say/I Say* are designed to

use style as a generator of ideas. As such, using style as a generator of ideas allows students to develop their prose style for various public audiences. Indeed, Graff and Birkenstein reinforce for students the public function of style in *They Say/I Say*, noting that "Working with these templates can give you an immediate sense of how to engage in the kids of critical thinking you are required to do at the college level and in the vocational and public spheres beyond" (2010, p. 2).

Ultimately, this chapter shows how style is not a reductive, rigid, surface-only concern. Rather, style forms the very heart of rhetorical education and reinforces the connection between elocutio and inventio. Early modern grammar schools, like St. Paul's, act as a historical precedence to reimagining style as a core feature of the composition classroom, one that plays a central role in a student's rhetorical training.

## ERASMUS AND THE RISE OF ST. PAUL'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The teaching of style in early modern England fostered a humanist education, including preparing students for the public sphere. Even if the broader goals of an early modern rhetorical education were humanistic, using language in public contexts was very much on the minds of Renaissance educators. Many of these educators, of course, were heavily influenced by the Greek and Roman education models and used those models in their own early modern classrooms. As Teresa Morgan argues in her book Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds, most of the language instruction in the earlier periods focuses more on training bureaucrats rather than teaching stylistics as preparation for the public sphere (1998, p. 198-226). Likewise, Wayne Rebhorn reminds us in his book Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric that Renaissance writers see rhetorical training in the early modern period as preparation for the public realm. Rebhorn insists that, "Renaissance writers about rhetoric characterize the orator a ruler, label him a prince or king or emperor, and identify the audience he controls in a complementary manner as being his subjects" (2000, p. 4). Here, Rebhorn argues that rhetorical education in the Renaissance, and hence the textbooks on rhetoric that were produced during this period, was designed to prepare students for careers in which they would interact with the public on public matters. In other words, students who studied rhetoric in early modern grammar schools did so under the assumption they would use their training for public ends.

The most important grammar school in England to develop this type of curriculum was St. Paul's of London. Indeed, St. Paul's Grammar School

became the model on which almost every other grammar school in early modern England would be based. T. W. Baldwin points out that "anyone who wishes to understand the principles upon which the sixteenth-century grammar school was founded in England would be very unwise to begin anywhere else than with Erasmus" (1944, p. 77). Humanist John Colet, who was Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral and a close friend of Erasmus, wanted to apply classical-influenced education to his new school at St. Paul's. In 1504, Colet became Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and a year later inherited his father's fortune, a fortune that enabled Colet to expand upon and re-build the school at St. Paul's, which had been in disrepair for several years. It also gave Colet the impetus he needed to apply Erasmus's ideas about rhetoric and education to his own grammar school. In a letter to Erasmus, Colet envisioned starting a grammar school based on Erasmus's methods of teaching eloquence, expressing fondness for his friend's "genius, art, and learning, and copiousness, and eloquence," going so far as to express his desire for Erasmus to teach at his own school (Nichols, 1962, p. 94). Colet never did get Erasmus to teach for him, but he did start his own grammar school in London establishing, as the school's curricular foundation, Erasmus's ideas about teaching eloquence as preparation for the public sphere.

St. Paul's School in London opened in 1511 and became a place where style formed the centerpiece of a young student's education. This education did not just focus on eloquence for the sake of artifice only—although that did occur—but rather teaching the public function of style. Specifically, students at St. Paul's learned eloquence to help them gain access to careers in the law, politics, the clergy, and other early modern professions. In his study of John Milton's education at St. Paul's, *John Milton at St. Paul's*, Donald Lemen Clark outlines the curriculum at St. Paul to show how the education in style students like Milton learned there went beyond mere artifice to prepare students for public careers. Clark insists that "the whole of grammar school education was devoted to language and literature, not as sciences to be known, but as arts to be practiced" (1942, p. 130). By practice, Clark means that an education in style went beyond rote memorization and was designed specifically as rhetorical training for public careers in politics, law, and clergy.

Consequently, the main educational thrust of Colet's school, indeed of English grammar schools in general, would be the acquisition of style, based primarily on Erasmus's *De Copia*. In his statute on "What shalbe taught" in his grammar school, Colet clarifies this focus on eloquent expression, noting that the teaching of style does not just mean artifice but rather a marriage of eloquent expression and public function, based on the Roman model of preparing students to use rhetoric publically, "as have the very Roman

eloquence joined with wisdom specially" (Colet, 1909, p. 278). Here, Colet echoes Cicero's declaration of the role of the true rhetor found in Cicero's *De Inventione*: "wisdom without eloquence does too little for the good of states, but that eloquence without wisdom is generally highly disadvantageous and is never helpful" (Cicero, trans. 1949, p. 3). Humanists such as Colet and Erasmus took Cicero's argument about eloquence and wisdom and designed grammar school curricula intended to teach eloquence for public careers, so that students were taught to use eloquence not just for artifice only but to use eloquence in public functions. Erasmus's rhetoric, as outlined in *De Copia*, is a reaction to ornamentation for mere artifice. He argues that the good style should not be ostentatious and grandiose for its own sake, but rather it should have a rhetorical purpose.

For Erasmus, as with most sixteenth-century humanists, this purpose meant persuasion within the public realm. Of course, he does not shun stylistic polish and rhetorical decoration. Rather, he believes that the most accomplished and useful rhetorician was one who could turn from amplitude to terseness as the situation required, an understanding of figurative language that is echoed by William FitzGerald elsewhere in the collection. Erasmus, for instance, argues in *De Copia* that education in eloquence prepares students for various public audiences, and thus, he is concerned with the characteristics that enable success in that public function:

> To take compression of language first, who will speak more succinctly than the man who can readily and without hesitation pick out from a huge army of words, from the whole range of figures of speech, the feature that contributes most effectively to brevity? And as far as for compression of content, who will show the greatest mastery in setting out his subject in the fewest possible words if not the man who has carefully worked out what are the salient points of his case, the pillars so to speak on which it rests, distinguishing them from the subsidiary points and things brought in merely for embellishment? No one in fact will see more swiftly and surely what can be omitted without disadvantages than the man who can see where and how to make additions. (Erasmus, trans. 1978, p. 300)

Here, Erasmus spells out for his reader the usefulness of an education in style as a tool of invention, especially in pubic contexts. He points out the necessity for learning the figures of speech in order to "pick out from a huge

arm of words" those linguistic features that lead most to brevity. Erasmus also points out how stylistic education helps students summarize material quickly and efficiently, pointing out "the salient points of his case." In other words, Erasmus assumes that being able to use brevity and to point out the important points of a case are meant to be used in the public sphere and, as a result, showcase the public function of style.

Since so many of the grammar school students would use their education as stepping stones into the arenas of politics, law, commerce, or clergy—all social realms in which they would be asked to argue public issues—their education in eloquence would have a decisive political bent. Erasmus would articulate his vision of rhetorical education for the public sphere further in *De Ratione Studii*. In this text, Erasmus proposes a course of study that would serve as the foundation of the English grammar schools. In *De Ratione*, Erasmus takes his ideas about rhetoric and style that he developed in *De Copia* and applies them to pedagogy. Erasmus begins *De Ratione* with a discussion of epistemology, arguing that knowledge is "of two kinds: of things and of words" (trans. 1978, p. 666). For Erasmus, the knowledge of words comes prior to the knowledge of ideas, yet ultimately the knowledge of ideas is more important: "a person who is not skilled in the force of language is, of necessity, short-sighted, deluded, and unbalanced in his judgment of things as well" (trans. 1978, p. 666). Ideas can only be truly created or conveyed to an audience if they are accompanied by eloquent, precise language. In other words, Erasmus maintains that whatever figures of speech the rhetor uses, whatever trope or scheme a speaker employs, it must be done in conjunction with the rhetorical constraints that the situation demands. More often than not, those rhetorical demands were made in the public sphere. Ultimately, Erasmus's theory of rhetoric, the application of eloquence to wisdom for a public audience, would be adapted by Colet and applied wholesale in his grammar school at St. Paul's.

## THE PROGYMNASMATA AND DECLAMATIO

Elocutio at St. Paul's was taught in conjunction with inventio. Donald L. Clark writes that schoolboys at St. Paul's were "taught the same arts of eloquence as if [their] masters had chosen to call it all rhetoric instead of calling part of it rhetoric and the other part logic" (1942, p. 15). Students did not study these subjects separately, but rather they intersected and built upon one another in the schoolboy's course of study and were seen as one process of mental action. In other words, the teaching of logical arguments went hand-in-hand with the teaching of language. St. Paul's used Erasmus's ideas about *copia* and brought

it together with the traditional divisions of classroom practice: One, the elementary level was known as the *progymnasmata* and, two, the advanced level was known as the *declamatio*. Again, these two levels come from Greek and Roman educational methods which had changed little over the centuries.

The *progymnasmata* refers to the exercises designed to train rhetors in the art of invention. Specifically, at St. Paul's and at other grammar schools in early modern England, the *progymnasmata* was used to teach students to invent arguments for public functions. In "The Very Idea of a *Progymnasmata*," David Fleming insists that one of the primary virtues of the *progymnasmata* was how prepares students to a wide variety of rhetorical elements, most specifically for a public function: "some are deliberative, others are forensic or epideictic; some practice the student in introductions and epilogues, others in proof and refutation" (2003, p. 116). Fleming reminds the reader that the exercises in the *progymnasmata* train students for the whole of public rhetoric: the three purposes of public discourse: forensic, deliberative, and epideictic, as well as how to support arguments and refute others. In his essay on the uses of the Greek *progymnasmata* for teaching invention in modern classrooms, John Hagaman points out that "The exercises are based on analyses of prose passages, memorization, imitation, and students' own compositions" (1986, p. 24). Hagaman stresses that the teaching of the *progymnasmata* took into consideration the context of discourse, and not just mere rote memorization, and as such trains students to explore ideas from various perspectives, ultimately for public purposes. These exercises were not used simply as prescriptive measures to teach a young rhetor how to formulate an argument. The exercises in the *progymnasmata* were used as a teaching heuristic to explore the tensions between the instructor's desires for the student and the student's own desire for freedom of learning. For instance, Richard Enos points out that the *progymnasmata* was designed by classical rhetoricians not to be used in a prescriptive, rigid manner.

> One of the most important tasks for historians and theoreticians of classical rhetoric is to introduce, refine, and possible modify the heuristic … process of classical rhetorical theory for the resolution of contemporary communication problems so that the benefits of rhetoric, which have been evident for centuries, can continue to be made apparent through scholarly research. (Enos, 1983, p. 30)

In other words, the *progymnasmata* was used as a tool for students to learn how to eventually create arguments on their own, based on the rhetorical constraints they encountered. Indeed, early modern rhetoricians adapted the *progymnasmata* to fit their needs.

At St. Paul's, for example, school masters used the *progymnasmata* as a site where instruction in style was used as a tool of invention, designed to train students to develop their style for a variety of public roles. The *progymnasmata* was in fact aimed very squarely at public use. For example, the narrative sequence involved a retelling of a story from poetry or history and was aimed not so much at eloquence—although that was the goal as well—as it was at knowledge. Thus, as schoolboys retold a tale from history, they practiced how a story was told: point of view; what was accomplished; the time when it was accomplished; the place; how it was done; and the cause. Another example involves the *chreia*, in which students drew from a proverb and amplified it. For example, students might take a saying such as "Socrates said the root of learning is bitter, but the fruit is pleasant" and develop an essay based on its theme. Thus, such a saying is a rhetorical trope in which students would learn how to craft a piece of writing based on the precept of a proverb. In other words, they learned to develop eloquence, to explore an idea, and to arrange it appropriately all at once. For instance, Hagaman stresses that the sequenced exercises in the *progymnasmata* are meant to help students develop their rhetorical skills so that they are able to progress from concrete tasks to more abstract ones, thus training students to use a variety of rhetorical elements to help them address their instructors and classmates, as well a more public audiences. "The *progymnasmata*," Hagaman claims, "progresses from the concrete, narrative tasks to abstract persuasive ones; from addressing the class and teacher to addressing a public audience such as the law court" (1986, p. 25). To that end, students at St. Paul's were instructed in the *progymnasmata* as a means of teaching them to develop style based on a number of rhetorical situations they may eventually encounter in their professional and scholarly lives.

At the advanced level of grammar school, students were expected to showcase all of this learning as part of the *declamatio*. Toward the end of the students' grammar school career, they were expected to demonstrate their knowledge of rhetoric with a prepared speech (*declamatio*). In his *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, Richard Lanham defines the *declamatio* as "The elaborately ornamented and rehearsed speech on a fictional situation or hypothetical lawsuit which formed a central part of Roman rhetorical discipline" (Lanham, 1984, p. 44). If the *progymnasmata* were the smaller-scale exercises, the *declamatio* was a full-scaled rhetorical performance in which the student was expected to showcase all he learned and accomplished during his tenure in grammar school. Together, both the *progymnasmata* and the *declamatio* worked together to prepare students for using eloquence as a public function. In his *Roman Declamation in the Late Republic and Early Empire*, S. F. Bonner points out that the *declamatio* began as exercises in voice training, as rhetors learned to adjust their voice and pitch

to fit whatever rhetorical situation they faced (Bonner, 1949, pp. 277ff.). Early modern education adapted the practice in their grammar schools, and it soon became a central part of the curriculum. Lanham points out that *declamatio* was significant to the young boy's education because it allowed the student to receive a fairly broad education: not only in history and mythology, law and political science, but in psychology, sociology … and, above all, in decorum, the appropriate adjustment to social situations of all sorts. Declamation provided what we might call a centrifugal educational technique, a single central (we would say interdisciplinary) exercise out of which training of declamation provided, that is, a model for a core curriculum in miniature (Lanham, 1984, p. 44).

Lanham raises an interesting point about the usefulness of the *declamatio* in early modern education. The point about the *declamatio* as an interdisciplinary exercise is significant because it shows how language instruction was fundamental to a student's education in early modern grammar classrooms. Instruction in language, in eloquence, went hand-in-hand with teaching students how to think, how to learn their subject matter, and how to understand how to use language in a variety of public situations. This interdisciplinary curriculum, with the *progymnasmata* and the *declamatio* at its core, leads students use style and to develop eloquence as a tool for becoming participants on the stage of public life.

## TEACHING STYLE IN TODAY'S CLASSROOM

Much of what the early modern stylistic classroom addressed can be applied to today's writing classrooms. Recently, I taught a first-year writing course where my writers explored the intersection between style and invention, used imitation as a tool of developing their style, and wrote their projects for a public audience, both academic and non-academic. The students in this course were all first-year students attending the university on a service and social justice scholarship and, as a result, many of the writing projects asked students to write about issues of service for public audiences. In all, students wrote four major essays. I asked them to revise three of their projects for submission in their final portfolios. In addition to the portfolio, my writers also worked in small groups throughout the semester developing, planning, writing, editing, and producing their own academic journal. The journal contained essays written by each group member that explored issues of social justice and service that students and faculty at the university would find relevant and noteworthy. At the end of the semester, the groups' journals were reviewed by an outside team of writing specialists: the

university's Writing Center director and two of her consultants—an English department graduate assistant and an undergraduate junior marketing major. These readers came to class on the last day of the semester and discussed with the writers the strengths and weaknesses of each journal. Thus, throughout the semester, my writers became cognizant of the notion that they were developing their writing style for a real audience of academic readers in a way they normally would not if they were just writing for me or for their class colleagues.

While many of the assignments asked students to perform a variety of academic tasks—summary, making claims and supporting them with research, connecting personal experience to public contexts, among others—the main thrust of the course was exploring stylistics as a tool of invention. This interaction between style and invention was accomplished mainly through using Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say*. This book is an accessible introduction to the various sentence-level rhetorical moves that academic writers make in argumentative writing. The authors present dozens of model templates that students can incorporate into their own prose in an effort to see how academic writing is often writing done in response to other people's ideas. The book helped my writers unpack the vagaries and mysteries of academic discourse. As such, the exercises and lessons from *They Say/I Say* act as a mini-*progymnasmata* and *declamatio*. By this, I mean that the lessons on academic style the book teaches build on one another, showing how the different academic conventions and rhetorical moves can be used as tools of invention. Students use the templates to imitate various academic conventions, with an eye toward generating sophisticated prose for public academic and non-academic audiences. Ultimately, building on these lessons and stylistic elements allow students to showcase their learning at once in their final projects.

Each of the four major essays students wrote corresponded with a lesson from *They Say/I Say*, stressing the role style plays in the invention process. The first essay asked them to write a clear, well-organized summary of one of the essays from the course reader. In doing so, students were asked to establish some kind of connection between the article and its impact on their thinking about their education and what they hope to accomplish as a service and social justice scholar at the university. The second essay asked writers to pick one of the course readings and make a claim about whether they agree or disagree, or both, with the main claim of the reading, using library research to support their claims. In this essay, students were introduced to Cicero's arrangement scheme and expected to use it in their paper. The third essay asked students to pick an issue about which they are passionate and write three different letters to three different public audiences advocating for that issue. Finally, their last project asked them to write a personal narrative about their experience with service

and social justice and to connect their experience with a larger social context. In this final project, students were expected to showcase their stylistic learning, much in the spirit of the early modern *declamatio*. As such, the sequence of assignments in this course, using the exercises and lessons from *They Say/I Say*, mirrors the step-by-step process of the *progymnasmata* and *declamatio*.

For all four assignments, students were asked to use a number of the templates and the lessons on style from *They Say/I Say* to help them generate and develop their ideas in their papers and to further develop a more sophisticated prose style. Indeed, I would suggest that the stylistic lessons and templates from *They Say/I Say* reflect Butler's argument in *Out of Style: Reanimating Stylistic Study in Composition and Rhetoric* that the teaching of style appears in places where many of us in composition studies do not expect it. Specifically, Butler argues that is often mistaken to believe that style disappeared completely following the social turn and is no longer a part of the field. Rather, Butler implies that "style is often hidden, having dispersed into a 'diaspora of composition studies,' where it is being used in important ways" (2008, 24). Specifically, Butler locates this "diaspora" in such categories as genre theory, rhetorical analysis, personal writing, and theories of cultural difference. To these categories, I would add the various elements of academic discourse that Graff and Birkenstein's book address, since *They Say/I Say* works from the assumption that all good argumentative writing, including academic writing, makes claims in response to other claims.

Now, I would like to share some of my writers' reflections on how imitating and using the templates from *They Say/I Say*, how focusing on the interplay between style and invention, and how writing for various public academic and non-academic audiences helped them develop their own prose style. Imitation, of course, is nothing new in writing instruction, as Denise Stodola argues in this collection, noting that the medieval focus on imitation helps current writing instructions break down the form-content binary. This collapsing of the form-content binary is one of the strengths of *They Say/I Say*. One of my writers, Melissa, noted how focusing on the templates from *They Say/I Say* helped her write a more sophisticated academic style than she had before entering college. "The templates in *They Say/I Say* actually helped a lot," Melissa claimed, "because when I would be stuck with what transition to use or how to introduce a thought, the templates gave me great ideas to incorporate." Here, Melissa suggests that imitating the templates in her academic writing led her to develop ideas in her writing, not just use the templates for artifice or surface decoration. Indeed another student, Abbey, also suggested the importance of style in her writing, not just for her composition course but for other first-year courses as well. "Most of my classes required me to write a significant amount," she asserts, "so I took what I was learning about style and applied it to my other writing

assignments. I found it easier to take on opinions in speech, political science, and religion when writing with style in mind." Both Melissa and Abbey were able to use their lessons in style for other academic assignments outside the composition classroom, thus reinforcing the public function of style in writing instruction.

Here's an example of Melissa's prose in an early draft of her first assignment, where students summarized a reading and connected it to their personal experiences as students. The audience for this essay was the university community, so students had to write for an audience outside the classroom—a more public audience, if you will. In her essay, Melissa summarized Kate Ronald's essay on the importance of style and connected it to an experience from high school. Here's the opening of Melissa's first draft:

> In Kate Ronald's "Style: The Hidden Agenda in Composition Classes or One Reader's Confession," style is described as a necessity in writing. Without it every paper blends together and the reader awaits the end. Ronald argues against the age-old theory in schools: "it is what you say and not how you say it." Throughout my years of service before becoming an Arrupe Scholar and working with others I have learned that the way you connect with someone and interact with others has everything to do with the style of how you present the information therefore agreeing with Ronald's argument.

Melissa's opening is problematic. She does not clarify clearly Ronald's argument, nor does she clearly show how Ronald's essay connects to her own experiences from high school—though, she begins to make those moves. These moves are a bit clumsy, and she moves much too fast from Ronald's essay to her own experience.

> By the time Melissa submitted this essay in her final portfolio, she had revised it several times, using the stylistic advice from They Say/I Say. Her prose grew more confident, stronger, and she was able imitate the templates in a way that allowed her to generate ideas in her opening that were missing in the first draft, ideas that allowed her slow down and take the reader point by point to establish connections between Ronald's essay and Melissa's personal experiences. Here's the revised first paragraph:In her essay, "Style: The Hidden Agenda in Composition Classes or One Reader's Confession," Kate Ronald

> argues that while most writing instructors do not teach style, most of them do grade a student's writing style. Style, according to Ronald, is the sense that "someone is home" when writing (Ronald, 1995, p. 95). One feature of style that she elaborates on in her essay is the element of entertainment that shows the reader a focus on style. Ronald points out that if writers do not interest their audience, then the reader will have a hard time paying attention or remembering anything from the writing. This element of entertainment goes along with the importance of style in writing. Ronald argues that style is the most important part of writing and that personal experience is a great way to add outside experience to a paper and make it more interesting. I agree with Ronald's stance that style is the most important asset in conveying a message because I have seen style act as a significant asset in my own experiences, both academic and extracurricular.

This revised version not only shows that Melissa holds a firmer grasp of Ronald's argument, but she also displays a more eloquent style. The sentences are more cohesive with one another, and Melissa slows down her connection between Ronald's essay and her experiences so that the reader is less confused about how Melissa arrives at those connections.

But writing for an audience was not the only public audience these writers addressed. In their third project, students were asked to write three letters to different audiences outside the university, advocating for an issue. Jessica, one of the strongest students in the class, chose to advocate for clean water in her small Ohio town, writing to an audience of high school students urging them to begin a clean water advocacy club, as well as to an audience of local business owners. Jessica is an interesting example because she came to the class already a strong writer. As she noted in her final portfolio letter, "As skeptical as I was coming in to this class (I thought that since I had tested out of it with my two AP English classes, I didn't need to take it), I have learned a lot in the last few months." Later, she told me that the course's focus on style made her more conscious of how elements of style, imitation, and the templates from *They Say/I Say* led her to be more aware of the interplay between style and invention, especially as it relates to the stylistic elements cohesion. "The way I believe style consideration has most impacted by writing in the last semester was through the idea of cohesion," Jessica insists. "When I edit my papers, I now try to make sure all of my sentences flow with the sentences that precede them." In her letter to the local business owners, Jessica demonstrates how this focus on cohesion

leads her to write more eloquent prose for a public function. In this section of the letter, Jessica appeals to the business owners' awareness of cost, showing how clean water does not have to be as expensive as they may fear:

> As dismal as these statistics may be, the solution is hopeful. A mere $20 can provide one person with clear water for 20 years. One well, to supply an entire village with clear water, costs only $5,000. Last year, our group organized an end-of-summer dance for high school students in order to raise awareness and money for this cause. We succeeded in raising $6,312—more than enough to build an entire well and change the fate of a village community.

Her use of the templates from *They Say/I Say*, as well as her conscious use of the stylistic element cohesion, leads Jessica to develop ideas for her writing in a public sphere that she may not have been able to do otherwise. For instance, the first sentence in the above example uses a dependent clause to connect to the previous paragraph and to set up the argument about expense in this paragraph. Also, Jessica uses numerous transitions from sentence to sentence to reinforce cohesion from one idea to the next. As such, Jessica's heightened awareness of style in a public sphere echoes many of the stylistic exercises and purposes in the early modern grammar school.

Another student, Matthew, also recognized the power of sentence-level rhetoric in helping him generate ideas in his writing, for both academic audiences and non-academic public readers. Before coming to college, Matthew had not considered style much at all in his writing, noting that "My style before EN 111 had been sufficient for previous assignments in high school. However, I realized that I needed to be able to develop a more scholastic style for my years in college." Matthew learned how to generate ideas more fully and to connect more clearly to his audience. Here's an example of Matthew's prose, where he consciously uses the templates from *They Say/I Say* not only to imitate academic styles to produce more sophisticated prose but to help him generate ideas to write about. This passage comes from an essay in which Matthew responds to arguments made by Graff about the role of public schools fostering intellectualism through the use of students' personal interests, such as popular culture:

> Personal interests can indeed be the foundation for the understanding of intellectualism. In his essay "Hidden Intellectualism" Gerald Graff makes the claim that too often we associate intellectualism with common areas of study and

> that instead we should incorporate individual interests and passions to motivate the intellect. Graff uses personal experience to back this belief, citing the analysis he and his friends made between "sport teams, movies, and toughness" (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010, p. 300). According to Graff these interests are legitimate areas for intellectualism to thrive, "It was in these discussions with friends about toughness and sports that I began to learn the rudiments of intellectualism" (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010, p. 300). It is clear then that, at least to Graff, personal interests can be the foundation for counterarguments, arguments, and the composing of beliefs.

As this passage illustrates, Matthew imitates numerous academic moves and conventions, allowing him to create a more "scholastic style" to write a fluid summary of Graff's position. That is, Matthew incorporates various transitions and phrases, uses connecting elements to show cohesion from sentence-to-sentence, and he frames his summary around different templates from *They Say/I Say*, including such phrases as "According to," "It is clear that," and "Not only did," among others. In his final portfolio letter in which he reflects on his writing throughout the semester, Matthew acknowledges that "using style … for the first time with an understanding of ethos and pathos made the essay a more interesting one to write and gave me a new perspective and form to use in writing subsequent papers." The understanding of style that Matthew reveals in this letter suggests the interplay between style and invention, as well as the public function of style when students are required to consider audiences beyond the classroom, as he was asked to do in the previous assignment. Actually, Matthew himself says as much later when he observes the role style now plays in his writing for other academic audiences. "I am more conscious of when and how I insert my opinion and keep in mind the prompts and field of study," he asserts. In other words, a conscious understanding of style and its role in the writing classroom leads students like Matthew, as well as others cited in this chapter, to consider how style helps them develop ideas, to consider how imitating other styles improves their own academic prose, and to consider how style makes them more aware of their writing in the public sphere.

## CONCLUSION

My students' writing demonstrates how style is not a reductive, rigid pedagogy that teaches standards of form and rules of usage, but rather style

is a dynamic part of the writing process that can be seen as synonymous with composition. This understanding of style as a vibrant element of the writing classroom locates a historical precedent in the early modern grammar classroom. The education that students received at St. Paul's grammar school, for instance, points to the high place that style held in the early modern curriculum. For scholars and educators such as Erasmus and Colet, training in eloquence was hardly naïve, but this focus on eloquence led to careers in public oration, in the law, in commerce, in the clergy, and in other early modern professions. Students who read and imitated classical authors and who practiced and learned the *progymnasmata* and the *declamatio* did so with an eye toward public practice of their art. Accordingly, style formed the very heart of rhetorical education and reinforced the connection between elocution and *inventio*. This lively interplay between style and invention emerges in the contemporary writing classroom through the use of Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say*, a book that offers students opportunities to strengthen their own style by imitating numerous academic conventions, through using their templates as sources of invention, and through following a revised *progymnasmata* and *declamatio*. The early modern grammar schools, therefore, act as a historical precedence for contemporary writing classrooms to re-imagine style as a central feature of writing instruction.

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