How a Writing Tutor Can Help When Unfamiliar with the Content: A Case Study

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Writing Across the Curriculum places considerable demands not only upon the students in writing intensive courses, but also on the writing center staff to whom they go for help. This paper looks at some of the problems raised by tutors in this situation, and presents a case study in which such problems are negotiated in the course of a consultation between a student and a tutor. The kinds of revision resulting from this process are explored for the light they can throw on the relationship between language and content, as well as the relationships among discipline teachers, tutors, students, and the students' texts.

One aim of the Writing Across the Curriculum movement is that every teacher should be a writing teacher. However, while WAC assignments provide opportunities to write, the work of helping students to do it often falls to tutors in writing centers; and both tutors and teachers have expressed uneasiness about such consultations for a number of reasons. First, WAC assignments can challenge the tutors' priority of respecting students' ownership of their texts. What does it mean to own your text if you are writing on a topic set by somebody else, drawing on other people's ideas, and conforming to conventions of structure and voice imposed by a discipline? Conventions of one sort or another have always surrounded writing, and even students' "personal" writing is often largely a matter of reproducing commonplaces (see, e.g., Bartholemae). However, it is in the context of writing for unfamiliar disciplines that students and tutors are forced to confront these issues, identify the constraints and opportunities peculiar to writing in each discipline, and work within them. This brings

us to the second problem, that tutors may hesitate to advise on those conventions. The methods, forms, and voices favored by the disciplines are so various (Herrington and Moran 239-41; Odell 86) that some writing specialists have felt that it is better not to venture there (Larson 815-16; Spack 29), while others decide they must learn much more about the discourse of the disciplines before they can "make useful suggestions" (Kaufer and Young, 80; cf. Chanock, *Native Speaker*). Thirdly, when tutors do have the expertise to help, they may be suspected of overstepping the boundaries between language and content, and giving students "the answers they should find themselves" (Harris 18; cf. Clark 87; Sunstein 9; North, *Idea* 441; Stahlnecker 2).

For these reasons, writing tutors continue to debate where, or whether, they should draw boundaries based on the view, which Russell has traced through most of the last century in education, that writing is a matter of language, while content is a matter of knowing. In this view, as Odell puts it, "w*riting well* means observing conventions of diction, usage, syntax, and organization, conventions that are presumed to apply to all good writing and that can be identified even if one knows little about the subject matter being discussed" (86-87). When working with students who are writing for the disciplines, however, it soon becomes apparent that writing well is more than that. An essay is not a list of facts, but a coherently argued answer to a question generated by a discipline; and, to be successful, it must show an understanding of why that question is asked and of what kind of discussion constitutes an answer, in the eyes of that discipline. This has a bearing on what information is selected and what omitted and on how the information is organized. At the same time, this understanding bears upon the use of language, for many students' expression deteriorates when they are uncertain about the purpose of writing.

When inadequate expression is the result of uncertainty about the purpose of a particular discussion, surface corrections will do little to improve the work, while clarification of the approach of the discipline may do a great deal. This might seem to be the province of the discipline teacher rather than the writing tutor. "[T]hose who have the clearest view of the target, those who are most familiar with the particular relationships the students are trying to articulate, are those who are in the best positions to help the students write more clearly – the discipline specialists themselves" (Taylor 171). However, students are often not aware, when they come for help with a paper, that their problem is in handling the discourse

of their discipline. This emerges as they talk about their drafts, which they are unlikely to have an opportunity to do with their discipline teachers. Moreover, even if they take the draft to their teachers first, there is the problem that the characteristics of the discourse "are rarely articulated by the teachers involved", who are so thoroughly enculturated into the disciplines that, for them, the discourse has become transparent with use (Langer 72; Chanock, *Introduction*).

How, then, can writing tutors help, if they are not in the relevant disciplines themselves? Even without being familiar with a discipline, a writing tutor can often draw out the students' latent knowledge of how things are done in the books they are reading and the classes they are in, get them to articulate this, and help them to see how it may relate to the task at hand. I would like to offer a detailed case study from my context in Australia, where, because we have no English requirement and no Freshman composition course, this sort of teaching is the norm.

In 1984 North wrote that "Much more is known… about what people *want* to happen in and as a result of tutorials than about what *does* happen" (*Research* 29). Much research has been done since then; in particular, there have been transcriptions and analyses of writing conferences (e.g., Clerehan; Blau, Hall and Strauss), which give an idea of what happens *in* tutorials. The present paper seeks to complement these by looking at what happens *as a result of* a tutorial in which form was addressed through an initial focus on content. It will look closely at one student's drafts of an essay in Art History, and the consultation process that helped the student move from the first to the second draft, and prepare to tackle a third.

The student (whom I'll call "Megan") dropped her first draft in my box and signed up for an appointment two days later, according to the procedures for working with our unit. Megan had not been referred for help, but came because she was unhappy about the draft herself. This draft is reproduced in full in Appendix 1 (and I have added paragraph numbers for ease of reference); I ask readers to go there now, to experience the problems I am about to discuss.

This draft provides an excellent example of the sort of writing that presents problems of both language and content. It contains 32 errors (not counting spelling, capitalization, or missing words, which I regard as proofreading rather than learning matters, at least in a paper as literate as this one). They break down as follows: unclear pronoun reference (4); com-

mas (12, if we count a parenthetical pair as a single error); incomplete sentences (3); agreement (1); apostrophes needed (5); tenses (7; this is a gray area, when discussing what a dead artist "did" or "does"; but I have looked for consistency). Would I be considered to have acquitted myself adequately if I had taught Megan to recognize and correct those errors, with no substantial discussion of what the essay said? But then, what about paragraphing and topic sentences? If it were not for the **content** of these unfocussed, incoherent paragraphs, we would not know that there was anything wrong with them. The grammar of the propositions they contain is generally all right; whether or not writing makes a point is rarely a matter of its grammar. (In Megan's draft, for example, my marginal notes told us that the things in paragraph 2 were not apparently related; the end of paragraph 7 did not connect with its beginning; paragraph 12 had no focus; paragraph 13 did not explain how and why the portrait of Richelieu differed from others by Bernini; paragraph 13 split in the middle, but remained one paragraph; and paragraph 15 did not explain why the buttons were carefully rendered, but not the fabric.)

Could we, then, have pared each paragraph down to one of the points within it and fashioned a topic sentence for that? This would have been an improvement, but it would not have made a good essay, and in that case, how worthwhile could Megan have felt it to be? The unsatisfactory character of several of these paragraphs went beyond paragraph level, to the problem with the argument of the essay as a whole; and they were only going to get better if Megan could decide what her argument was.

This did not mean, however, that I was going to tell her the answer. As it happens, I do not know the answer to this essay question. I have never studied Art History, and although I have read enough students' essays in that discipline, and their teachers' comments, to gain an impression of the kinds of things Art History students do, I had never seen an essay on this topic before. However, I did not need to know anything about Houdon or Bernini to know that the essay did not work, nor to know why it did not. The questions I asked Megan came out of the inconsistencies in the essay itself, but they led her to go back to the material she had read and think her way to a coherent answer.

I marked up the errors for my own reference, but did not ask Megan to work on them in this draft. Instead, I asked her questions about the content. The draft began by describing the style of the period within which each artist worked; she said this would be "necessary" to the comparison

of the busts. Immediately she was in difficulties, because her characterization of the period style did not mesh well with the work in either case, so that, in writing of the period and of the artist together, she was saying unrelated and apparently contradictory things. "It doesn't seem that either of these busts looks like the style you've described for that period," I pointed out, "so why is it necessary to know about the period style?" "That's exactly what I've been worrying about!" said Megan, sounding exasperated, but also relieved. If it bothered me too, that did not help the essay, but at least it confirmed her doubts. She had tried, she said, to make sense of her own observations in terms of the secondary reading, but she could not. Some of them fit, but others didn't. "I started it this way because that's how you start Art History essays — you give the historical context and then you do your visual analysis of the art works." The main problem around paragraph 7, she saw, occurred for the same reason: "When you analyze a work you have to look at the circumstances of how it was created." "Ok," I agreed, "but why, in *this* case?" What was important about the circumstances of these busts' production? The answer was not to be found in that paragraph, at any rate. "Is there," I asked Megan, "some overall way you could characterize the differences between these busts?" She found it in her observation in paragraphs 5 and 6, that the bust by Voltaire shows us **who** the man is, while the one by Richelieu shows us **what** he is. Taking this back to the question, we found that was what it asked about. It was not a question about period styles as such, but about what the style of each bust communicated about the sitter.

Megan's problem in this draft throws an interesting light, I think, on the debate about whether, and how far, acculturation into a disciplinary genre constrains a writer's exploration of her subject. Brannon and Knoblauch, for example, have expressed concern about students working with "prefabricated structures which writers simply select and 'fill up' with content" (39), and Dixon sees academic genres as "mind-forged manacles" that limit creativity (9). In the American context, writing tutors place great emphasis on non-directive dialogue with students, respecting their "ownership" of their texts (Clark, "Maintaining Chaos", 86; Clark, "Perspectives"; Thonus, 60). It is possible to talk about a student's "own purpose" or "what she wants to say" in the context of personal writing, or of "persuasive writing on public issues" (Lauer 62). But in the context of writing for the disciplines (and in my university, students do no other kind), the student's "own purpose" becomes compli-

cated. Part of Megan's purpose was to make sense of her observations, to her own satisfaction; the other part was to write an Art History essay to her teacher's satisfaction. And this is rarely a matter of idiosyncratic preferences. Brannon and Knoblauch are concerned that "teachers commonly allow their models of the Ideal Text, their private notions of formal propriety, to deprive writers of control over their own purposes, interpreting any deviation from the Ideal Text as a skill deficiency" (40). However, there is nothing private about the models of a discipline's discourse community; they may be internalized, and they may be tacit, but they are held communally and they can be articulated. It is probably better to help students understand how the things they want to say mesh or do not mesh with these models, and why, than to ignore them. Bazerman thinks that "it is not the serious attention to disciplinary discourses that restricts our intellectual options, but the refusal to attend that fosters the hegemony of narrow discourses" (66). It is better for students to know consciously what these genres are than to know it unconsciously; and as they gain more conscious control, they may find that, as Berkenkotter and Huckin argue, "far from being rigid templates, genres can be modified according to the rhetorical circumstances" (160).

So it proved in this case. Megan's draft was in trouble largely because she was trying to apply the disciplinary template she knew about – making sense of a work of art by relating it to its historical context – too rigidly, to uncooperative subject matter. In order to solve her problem, she had to articulate her understanding of this template and to see the problems of applying it to this essay. Instead of writing the kind of essay that demonstrates how a work of art is characteristic of a period style – one disciplinary form – she needed to write another kind, demonstrating how an artist's choices of method work together to produce a particular effect. (These essays often take the form of a comparison because students are likely to notice more about the techniques an artist has used in one work if they compare it with another that was done differently. The contrast between the works stimulates the writer to wonder how each result was achieved.)

Thus, Megan's solution did not involve rejecting the patterns of writing in Art History, but feeling her way to a different one of these patterns suited to another of the purposes of this discipline. Her second draft did not break the mold; indeed, as we shall see, it conformed more closely to the preferred structure of essays in the discipline. Her second draft dis-

plays that socialization into her academic discourse community that so-cial constructionists perceive as necessary to a student's success (for a survey of this position, see Nystrand et al. 288-291). Megan achieved this, however, not by unreflectively imitating the literacy practices of the discourse community, but by wondering why the ones she was attempting to use did not work to organize her meaning in this particular essay.

At this point Megan went away to write her second draft. (This one had footnotes, which I have not included, but I have indicated where they were placed.) Again, this draft is reproduced in Appendix 2 and readers are asked to visit it before proceeding.

I do not think there is any doubt that this is a much better essay than the first. It is interesting, therefore, that in terms of the purpose for which students are ostensibly referred to me—to get help with their "English expression"—it is actually worse. This draft contains 38 errors, 6 more than the first draft. Moreover, a whole new class of error has appeared: this draft has 9 run-on sentences, where the previous draft had none. In fact, it is these sentences that account for the apparent decline in expres-sion, for the errors of fragmented thinking—the unclear pronoun refer-ence and the incomplete sentences—have simply disappeared, which I think makes sense in terms of the greater coherence of the argument this time.

It is also possible that the greater coherence is itself responsible for the appearance of run-on sentences (I include comma splices here, as I treat the two together). Taking Mina Shaugnessy's view of error, I have come to regard these run-ons as a sign of progress in writing. They tend to be found in well-argued essays, and the writers appear to be using them to give coherence to the argument. They know that a sentence contains one idea, and apparently, if their idea is not yet finished, they carry on the sentence until it is. (Indeed, if we look at the run-on sentences in Megan's essay, we find that each of them connects ideas that are so closely related that Megan thought they should be read together.) When I discuss run-on sentences with students in these terms, I have met with ready comprehen-sion and rapid improvement. It is still necessary to show them, in terms of subject and verb units, how to tell a sentence from a non-sentence, but the whole operation seems to make better sense to them. It seems helpful, therefore, to look at run-on sentences as an instance of "interlanguage", in the linguists' sense of an error which shows that something has been learned about the target language (Selinker; Ellis 47, 173-4; Kutz 388).

While it may seem odd that the use of language appears to have improved even though there are more errors, this makes sense in terms of Odell's comment that "judgements about the quality of writing cannot be separated from judgements about the quality of meaning making reflected in that writing" (98). What has Megan done, then, to improve her meaning making to such an extent? In reorganizing her material, she has attended to two important matters: she has eliminated the inconsistencies that stemmed from her misconception of the essay's purpose; and she has chosen a structure that keeps her argument clearly visible throughout.

To see how this is done, we need to look at how the arrangement of each draft is related to the purpose Megan was pursuing. Megan's first draft was designed to show how a work is typical of a period style. The first six paragraphs present a contradiction, as Megan begins by describing the style of each period, but then finds that neither of the works she is examining conforms to the style of the period in which it was created. Without resolving this problem, she moves on to the visual analysis, dealing with the bust of Voltaire in paragraphs 7-12, then with the bust of Richelieu in paragraphs 13-17. In each of these paragraphs, she looks at a particular technique used by the artist and discusses its effect. The things she looks at—scale, costume, pose, and features—are roughly the same for each bust, but because she deals with the busts separately, she does not use the common points to construct a comparison.

In the second draft, Megan has gone from 17 paragraphs, with no conclusion, to 10 paragraphs that include a conclusion. This is because she has reorganized the material to serve a different purpose. Here, she is focussing on the nature of the works. She has not abandoned the "history" component of Art History, but this time she has correctly identified the part that history plays in these works. Instead of establishing the historical context of the works in terms of period styles, she begins by focusing on the role of the subject in historical events, linking this to the character of each one's bust. Richelieu's is the portrait of a statesman; Voltaire's, the portrait of an intellectual. Her first two paragraphs thus replace the first six in the previous draft, eliminate the contradiction they contained, and set up a clear basis for contrast between the works. This is then carried through in a series of paragraphs that bring together the contrasts that were separated in the first draft. She looks at how the scale works in each bust, the effect in each case of including or excluding costume from the portrait, each subject's pose, the different rendering of the eyes, and the

use of illusion or naturalism to give expression to the features in each portrait. The artist's contrasting methods of working then get a paragraph each, noting what effect the method had on the character of the work, and the final paragraph recalls the main points of the analysis. While the visual analysis makes the same points in both drafts, the structure of the second draft keeps the comparison in view throughout. The improvement in meaning making, then, is the result of a more consistent argument and a more coherent presentation. The essay reads better because it says more sensible things.

Of course, it was still going to be necessary to work with Megan on her run-on sentences, commas, and apostrophes, and for her to correct her spelling. Nonetheless, I think that this draft, had she submitted it in the present form, would have engaged her reader and been quite successful. Indeed, it might have been successful enough to make a reader of the previous draft uneasy. However, it was not because Megan did not have the right answer that our discussion took the turn it did. It was because she did not have a **sensible** answer. And this may help us mediate between teachers' and tutors' understandings of the boundaries of their work. Megan and I did not treat language separately from content, and in several ways her language improved as a result of thinking further about content. So did her text structure, in terms of the approach normally adopted in her discipline, for Art History students are usually advised to compare two works by examining them side by side with reference to a series of features (e.g. modeling, color, brushwork) or considerations (e.g. purpose, function, circumstances of production). Megan had chosen, in her first draft, a structure which dealt with all features of the one work first, and then all features of the other; the second, more effective way of organizing her observations came naturally out of her recognition of what kind of sense her observations made.

Talking about content, however, did not mean that I gave her information or ideas about the period or the works she was examining; it meant talking about why she was having difficulty making sense of what she knew about them. If this misled her as to the right answer to her question, not a great deal could have been at stake, since the original draft could not have been successful in any case. Thus, although I am aware of the limits to my expertise, I do not think they should stop me from discussing content; when the discussion throws up a question that depends on subject information or the approach of the discipline, I ask the student to think

about what she has already learned about this, and if that proves inadequate, I can send her back to the sources or her teacher, having helped her to work out what she needs to ask about. This traffic back and forth is one way in which trust is established so that boundaries between my work and the discipline teachers' are not a problem; in addition, I ask students to keep all the drafts we have worked on together in case their teachers want to see what we have been doing, and I keep a brief record of each session as well.

It often turns out that my lesser familiarity with the subject matter is an advantage in this situation, as a student can learn more by having to explain the topic to me than she would by having it explained to her. This advantage has been noted recently by Geiger and Rickard, who teach in a department as well as tutoring in a writing center:

> In instructor-student conferences, we are completely aware of what the writing assignment involves, and we know what we expect from our students. In writing center tutorials, the student must provide us with all of this information, arriving at a clearer understanding of the writing assignment through their own cognitive abilities (7).

An instructor may have to hold back, when a student comes to ask about a problem with an assignment, because the instructor *is* in a position to "hand them…answers"; the tutor is not, and may be able to help the students to "find [the answers] themselves".

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Appendix 1

QU: Compare and contrast the style of J.A. Houdon's portrait bust of Voltaire (1788; N.G.V.) with that of G.L. Bernini's Cardinal Richelieu (mid 17th C; N.G.V.) Describe if and how these stylistic features are in each case related to the personality and/or social, political or cultural significance of the sitter.

1. In comparing these two busts it is necessary to look at the style of the period within which these two artists worked.

2. Bernini belongs to the Baroque period 1580 - early 18th century. This was a period which was essentially, emotional, expressive, with an interest in dynamic movement. It was a reaction against mannerism and its intellectualism, elitism and emotional coldness. There was also a desire to communicate religious themes to the masses. Berninis' portraits present a great likeness to the sitter, but in most cases his main objective is to portray something of the social or political status of the subject.

3. The Neo-classical period was a time of political and social revolution which saw the abolition of the monarch and the proclomation of a republic in 1792. The French revolution was dedicated to the restoration of harmonious society, with unaltering principles and classic perfection. According to Thames and Hudson........ it is a style of decoration, based on Ancient Greek and Roman example or inspired by classical models. 1775-1815. It is a term which developed in the 19th century, for what was

thought, to be a cold, lifeless imitation of Greco-Roman art. In fact in the 18th century it was referred to as the "true-style". A revival of the arts- a new renaissance. Neo-classicism was a reaction against the over-decorative, flamboyant, fashion of the Rococo period.

4. Houdons Voltaire in some books appears in the Rococo period, others in the classical. He seems to be a synthesis of Baroque, Rococo and Neo-classicism.

5. Houdon's Voltaire cannot be seen as a decorative, lifeless or impersonal revival of antique art. On the contrary it is a work full of expression, which conveys to us the peculiarities of the sitter. Allowing the viewer to see who this man is.

6. On the other hand Bernini's bust of Cardinal Richelieu, mid 17c, indicates the power of the man, possibly someone of influence and superiority, a politician, a statesman. We see what the man is, but not who he is.

7. In comparing the two portraits it is important to examine the circumstances under which the works came into existence. Voltaire, a philosopher and historian, had been imprisoned in the Bastille, and later spent most of his life living away from Paris. Houdon admired the philosophers of the enlightenment who were the intellectual base of the revolution. Voltaire returned to Paris on the eve of his death in 1788. He went to Houdon's studio where the sculptor was able to observe him. However, most of the work was done from the death mask which he took after May 30, 1788. Houdon studied anatomy closely, and did not disdain the use of plaster casts. His modelling and scientific precision does not however rob the work of life, but gives him the framework within which to instill life.

8. The scale is slightly under life size. Inviting the viewers attention without intruding on their space. it indicates a humble person who does not desire to overshadow the viewer.

9. He uses the classical-realist formula without shoulders, truncated, and undraped. There is nothing to indicate the status or career of the man, but are left to ponder the facial expression and personal qualities of the subject.

10. Houdon tilts Voltaires head down, with the large cranium facing towards the viewer, suggesting a head full of ideas, an intellectual mind.

11. The technique he uses for rendering the eyes, gives them a degree of naturalism. He cut out the whole iris, bored a deeper hole for the pupil and, by allowing a small fragment of material to overhang the iris, estab-

lished an illusionistic effect of the light falling on the surface of the eyeball. Houdon like his Greek and Roman predecessors placed an importance on the rendering of the eye to create a sense of life and personality in the portrait.

12. Although Voltaire has little hair Houdon's treatment of it is almost impressionistic. His brow displays the wrinkles of an old man and his skin appears to be a thin cover over the bone structure. Voltaire had had several sittings at the studio but most of the work was done from the death mask. This was also a common practice in Republican Roman portraiture. See diagram.

13. Bernini's, Cardinal Richelieu, a French statesman became Chief minister to Louis XIII. He helpted consolidate centralised power in France by crushing the protestants and weakening the nobility. He lived in imperial state, and commissioned leading painters such as Philippe de Champaigne to paint his portrait. Cardinal Richelieu apparently begged Cardinal Barberini to approach Bernini requesting him to make his portrait. Bernini usually had his subjects sit for him many times, and allowed them to pursue their normal activities, moving and talking, so that he could observe their natural mannerisms. He would then create the sculpture in their absence integrating the individual characteristics into the work, and creating a vivid naturalism. For the Cardinal's portrait he used the triple portrait by Philippe de Champaigne as reference.

14. Cardinal Richelieu's scale is slightly over life size, giving it an impressive, imposing apprearance. Being a little larger than life allows the sculptures presence to dominate and demand attention. The cardinal was a man who held a powerful position which would have demanded respect.

15. The upper part of his body is draped in his official robes, the cross around his neck indicating his status. The drapery is treated in a stylized manner. The folds are simplified and symetrically balanced with one side mirroring the other. Bernini models the material in a plain manner with no reference to the texture of the fabric. The buttons however are carefully rendered in detail, as are the ties and medallion, which contrast against the smooth surface of the material.

16. Bernini has chosen a pose which places the head looking slightly to one side, held high, looking straight ahead. This gives the Cardinal a superior look as he stares not at us but somewhere above and beyond.

17. His face is actually quite crooked, and this is accentuated by plac-

ing the nose slightly off centre, and the very thick broad eyes at slightly different heights. The effect is a crooked face within a symmetrical setting. These devices give the viewer a sense of uneasiness, and result in presenting a portrait of a superior aristocratic type.

18. [need to write a conclusion.]

Appendix 2

1.Cardinal Richelieu was a French statesman who became Chief Minister to Louis XIII. He helped to consolidate centralised power in France by crushing the protestants and weakening the nobility. The arts were powerful tools in the hands of absolutism, and Richelieu understood their value as instruments of propaganda, and a means of glorifying the state and himself. He was a master of political survival, who attempted to accumulate as many sources of power as possible, and was not opposed to using his position as Cardinal to help him achieve his political aims (1). Bernini in his bust of Richelieu has used a large triangular form with an angular broken outline, in which strong diagonals and deep carving give the work an energy and power, and portray Richelieu as a powerful, superior political figure.

2.Voltaire is also a political figure, a philosopher of the Enlightenment, which was the intellectual basis of the French Revolution. He was born in 1694, his father was a middle class lawyer his mother a noble and he was introduced to the free thinking elements of the aristocracy at an early age. He had great wit and social skills, he was a poet, historian and an intellectual. Voltaire detested feudal society, attacked religion and often defended victims of injustice. He was concerned with affirmation of values, reason, tolerance, social harmony, equality before law, scientific progress, classical cannons of culture and taste (2). He had been imprisoned in the Bastille and later spent most of his life in exile. He returned on the eve of his death to Paris, where he met Houdon at his studio. Houdon uses a classical form with clear outline, and a distinct absence of diagonals to capture the peculiarities of this subject. The work is full of expression and allows the viewer to see who this man is, without revealing his status or political views.

3. The size of these two works is quite different and reflects the purpose of the works. Bernini has made his portrait of Richelieu slightly over life-size, with a large upper body and broad shoulders, giving it an impressive, imposint appearance. Being a little larger than life allows the sculpture to dominate and demand attention, very much as the Cardinal himself would have done in his position as statesman in the court of Louis XIII. Houdon's Voltaire on the other hand is slightly under life-size, inviting the viewers attention without intruding on their space. It indicates a more humble man who does not desire to overshadow his viewer.

4. There is a strong use made of the upper body and drapery in one sculpture and none in the other. Cardinal Richelieu is shown in his ecclesiastical robes with his cross around his neck indicating his status. His cloak is large with the folds being deeply carved and symmetrically balanced, one side mirroring the other. Bernini's use of strong diagonal lines in the drapery give a sense of vigour, and power, to the work. Bernini models the material in a plain manner, using modulating forms, with no reference to the texture of the fabric. The buttons, ties and cross are modelled in sharp detail, contrasting with the smooth surface of the material, and allows the cross to stand out against the smooth background, highlighting the fact that here we have a statesman, and a senior figure in the Catholic Church. Voltaire's bust on the other hand is undraped. The body is truncated and it is without shoulders, in the classical-realist style (3). Houdon has not given us any drapery to distract our attention from the face of Voltaire. He is not interested in conveying to us the status of the man, but seeks to focus all the attention on the head and face, to reveal the expression, emotions, and intelligence of this subject.

5. The poses also contrast the differences in character of the two subjects. Bernini has chosen a pose which places the head held high, looking straight ahead. This gives the Cardinal a superior look as he stares not at us, but somewhere above and beyond. Houdon has tilted Voltaire's head downwards, and his eyes look slightly to the right, the fact that they do not stare directly at us creates an invisible barrier between us and the sitter. As a result there's a certain quality of withdrawal or reserve, which makes us search more intensely for the inner nature of the image. The large cranium which faces the viewer also suggests a head which may be full of ideas or an intellectual mind.

6. These two artists have used very different methods for rendering the eyes. Bernini does not attempt to make them look naturalistic, rather

he leaves them as a blank surface, staring out vacantly past the viewer. If the eyes are the window of the soul, we have no view here. Houdon, like his Greek and Roman predecessors, placed an importance on the rendering of the eye to create a sense of life and personality in the portrait. The technique he used gives them a great degree of naturalism. He has cut out the whole eye, bored a deeper hole for the pupil, and by allowing a small fragment of the material to overhang the iris established an illusionistic effect of the light falling on the surface of the eyeball. In his naturalistic rendering of the eyes an insight into the characteristic, personality, and emotions of Voltaire is achieved.

7. Bernini has used some illusionistic devices to give expression in Richelieus face, Houdon on the other hand has used increased naturalism to emphasise Voltaires facial characteristics. Cardinal Richelieus face is actually quite crooked, Bernini has accentuated this by placing the nose slightly off centre, and the very thick broad eyes at slightly different heights. The effect of this crooked face within the symmetrical setting of the drapery, gives the viewer a certain uneasiness, which results in presenting a portrait of an awe inspiring diplomat, maybe someone you could not trust. Voltaires facial characteristics, on the other hand, are fairly naturalistic. For this portrait much of the work was done from the death mask taken after Voltaires death. Houdon studied anatomy closely and he didn't disdain the use of plaster casts or masks, a technique which had been used in Roman Republican sculpture to present a very realistic, warts and all, impression of the person. Voltaire's skin appears to be a thin cover over the bone structure, and the brow displays the winkles of an old man. Voltaire has little hair, but what he does have is given a very soft texture, closely resembling actual hair. If we compare that to the Bernini, we see that he carves the hair, with deep grooves and diagonal lines, resulting in a less naturalistic effect.

8. The art of the Baroque period was commissioned mainly by the aristocracy and the church, Cardinal Richelieu had a colleague approach Bernini for this commission. Bernini used a painting by Philip de Champaigne as the reference, which wasn't the way Bernini usually worked. In most cases he would have the subjects sit for him many times and would allow them to pursue their normal activities, moving, talking, so that he could observe their natural mannerisms. He would then create the sculpture in their absence integrating the individual characteristics into the work. In this work he has established from the painting the sub-

jects religious position, and appears to be aware of his political status, but not the personality and individual characteristics of the subject.

9. Houdon had been commissioned by the Comedie Francise to make a portrait of Voltaire, and they had many sittings before Voltaire died. This close contact enabled Houdon to capture the spirit that was alive in this old man. The National Gallery of Victoria's is only one of many versitons, Houdon often re-interpreted his works many times, casting them in different materials, to cater for his growing market amongst the bougeois.

10. Both Bernini, Houdon and the sitters were very much men who were in tune with their Eras. The art of Bernini's period was commissioned mainly by the aristocracy and church, the portrait of Cardinal Richelieu fits both of these categories. Bernini being a deeply religious man, and part of the aristocracy, enjoyed using his illusionistic devices as a means of glorifying the church and the subjects of courtly life. Houdon on the other hand belonged to an era which saw a growth in the bourgeois, and an increasing interest in portraiture which showed ordinary people in everyday scenes. The themes of the art took on a moralising tone, and became rational and stoic in tone (4). Houdon's portrait has returned to classical form with no diagonals or broken lines. Anything that may detract from the rational truth of the subject is discarded. Houdon attempts to present us with a truthful portrait of Voltaire, who like himself, upheld the Neo-classical thoughts of the period.