STYLING ACADEMIC DISCOURSE:
A SOCIOCULTURAL ACCOUNT OF WRITING STYLES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

BY

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DISSERTATION
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English with a concentration in Writing Studies in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014

Urbana, Illinois

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Abstract

This dissertation advances a more rigorous theoretical and empirical approach to the study of disciplinary writing style. In scholarly and pedagogical conversations around disciplinary writing, there is a prevailing tendency to see disciplines as having singular, stable, agreed-upon styles; in the field of rhetoric and composition more broadly, empirical research on what styles are and how they develop is scarce. Definitions of style have been assumed, vague, or diffuse, without discussion of how and why they differ or how style is treated in other disciplines. Drawing on literature from fields such as sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology and from case studies of advanced academic writers in multiple disciplines, I contribute a new, sociocultural definition in which style is not a static, homogeneous artifact but a dynamic activity in which meaning is continually negotiated, often contested, and necessarily informed by the language ideologies of the writers, readers, and other interlocutors. Through analyses of writers’ texts, responses to texts, and talk and embodied actions (e.g., facial expressions and gestures) in literacy history and text- and discourse-based interviews, I show that the writers hold language ideologies that predispose them toward a belief in generic characteristics of good writing and universally accessible meaning and toward representations of styles as stable and discrete. But stylistic meaning, I demonstrate, is never stable: even disciplinary insiders disagree on whether a particular sentence is clear, change their minds over time about stylistic choices, and apply seemingly all-inclusive principles like “show, don’t tell” differently across genres, texts, and portions of texts. Challenging deep-seated notions that a person’s style knowledge and practices are established and uniform and that a discipline has “a style” that experts widely share and that can be mastered, this dissertation offers a productive framework for future research, teaching, and theory on style.
Acknowledgements

I first want to thank my participants, who so generously shared their time, experiences, and writing. Special thanks to Ashley, my neighbor, friend, and first participant, who read and responded to several drafts of her case study; to Corinne, who indulged my incessant questions about style and who must have added “send newest draft to Andrea” to her workflow because I never had to ask her to send me drafts; to Laura, one of my best friends, whose comments and gestures about “flowery” writing inspired this research and who let me interview her at inconvenient times (e.g., the day she got engaged; a few days before her doctoral thesis performance); to Debojoy, my friend and fellow grad student, for his openness and willingness to talk for hours; and to Jing Jing, who transformed our interviews into mentoring conversations about the job market and the tenure track.

To say that I could not have completed this project without the help of Paul Prior, my advisor and chair, would be a laughable understatement. His scholarship and mentoring—through spoken conversations, email exchanges, and MS Word notations—have molded, enriched, strengthened—no verb suitably describes the enormity of his influence!—this project. I have drawn much encouragement and inspiration from my other committee members, Peter Mortensen, Gail Hawisher, and Michele Koven, especially Peter’s attention to my tone when I discussed participants and other scholars, Gail’s enthusiasm for my work and challenge to attend to the digital, and Michele’s guidance through the literature in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. And I am grateful to Kate Vieira, who served on my committee during my special fields exam and gave me feedback on my dissertation proposal, and to Anne Haas Dyson, whose spring 2012 qualitative methods class pushed me to write up one of my cases.
Julie Hengst was my transcription system guru and, thanks to her research project on metaphor as an interactional discourse resource in aphasia, introduced me to metaphor and metaphoric gesture studies before I knew I was heading there. Fellow Research Assistant Jake Kurczek introduced me to the “master metaphor list.”

Many a peer saw and responded to bits of my drafts and listened patiently to me talk about many different aspects of this project. In my first year as a PhD student, Becca Woodard formed a writing group with her language and literacy colleagues that has now lasted five years and exists weekly (more or less) over Skype. I am thankful to Becca, Sonia Kline, Jenn Raskauskas, Kirsten Letofsky, and Alecia Magnifico for their encouragement, feedback, patience, intellectual community around language and literacy teaching and learning, and overall merriment (facilitated by Jenn’s “SOUP of the Month Club”). A newer but no less important writing group has been Yuki Kang, Eileen Lagman, Allie Cavallaro, and Ligia Mihut. Their mix of feedback and friendship (especially Korean feasts orchestrated by Yuki) nourished me academically and emotionally. In addition, a number of other friends—Eric Dienstfrey, Katherine Flowers, Purnima Ghale, Amy Herb, Zak Lancaster, Kaitlin Marks-Dubbs, Julia Smith, Jon Stone, and Heather Vorhies—offered insights on style and companionship these past several years. Thanks also to Haley Schneider and Cody Cooper for copyediting Chapter 2; Sarah Shreeves, Bill Ingram, and Seth Robbins for helping me navigate IDEALS to store my video and audio clips; and my mom for last-minute format-checking.

My parents, Barbara and Edward Olinger, and sister, Sarah Olinger (soon to be Sarah Quiter) shared observations about writing and style, gifted style-related books for my birthdays and Hanukah, and offered love and support, even when I acted irritated when asked how my dissertation was going.
Last but not least, I would like to thank my boyfriend, Jonathan Lippman. His presence can be detected when I use the word “declare”—his favorite word—but hundreds of in-person and telephone conversations with him have shaped this project at all stages. A master stylist, he also worked with me to hone some of the prose. I thank him for his love, patience, honesty, intellectual stimulation, and introduction to many activities and hobbies that get me away from my desk and out into the world.
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Chapter 1
A Sociocultural Approach to Style

Introduction

As we encounter texts in our daily lives—as we read, write, share them—we make observations about their styles.

English professor Bob Markley remarked that he once wrote an anonymous review of a manuscript, and a colleague of his happened to read the review and immediately “pick[ed] it up as my writing” (Interview, October 1, 2013). For the colleague, this review emanated a singular, recognizable writing style, that of Bob Markley.

Stylistic observations often cross over into judgments, particularly for instructors reading their students’ writing. In the first year of her undergraduate studies in literature, English professor Manisha Basu was expected to demonstrate “a certain maturity to writing that will come from reading certain things,” namely, “your Milton, Bacon, Locke, Mill.” Her writing was deemed “at some level […] simple, and it needed to be dense in a certain way” (Interview, September 16, 2013). While pursuing her doctorate in music, cellist Laura Usiskin had her thesis adjudged “informal” by her advisor and her program notes “fluffy” by a second professor (Interview, December 28, 2011). To the professors, aspects of Manisha’s and Laura’s texts contained certain inherent stylistic qualities; these qualities may also have led them to develop perceptions of Manisha and Laura as certain kinds of writers.

Writing styles are immensely difficult to describe, and our attempts to do so, through adjectives like “dense,” “informal,” and “fluffy,” often mystify more than they reveal. (What does “informal” mean, exactly?) They can be even more puzzling when the same text or the same writer receives different stylistic attributions, as in the case of Laura. At worst, these terms
can discourage writers, slow progress toward their goals, and alienate them from the communities they wish to join.

Behind these terms, however, are particular readers and writers with predilections for language based in their own literate lives. These predilections shape people’s expectations for and perceptions of styles, as well as their own stylistic practices. In this dissertation, I crack open such stylistic terms and peer into the processes that result in their formation and sedimentation (and even their evolution). I argue that to truly demystify “style,” writing teachers and researchers should view it not as a static and innate property of texts but as a kind of activity, an “artifact-in-action” (Prior, Hengst, Roozen, & Shipka, 2006, p. 761). This view summons questions like the following:

*How do people develop stylistic awareness? What features do they notice in their own or others’ styles? How do these features come to be grouped and recognized as a certain person’s style (e.g., Bob Markley’s) or a certain kind of style (e.g., dense, informal, fluffy)?*

*How do people practice style? How do people, like Manisha, mold or remold their writing to suit certain stylistic ideals? To what extent does ostensible stylistic change actually occur?*

*How is style judged? Do judgments agree? (E.g., did Manisha’s professors agree on what constituted appropriate “density”?) How can different, even conflicting interpretations of style be reached, as in the case of Laura?*

This introductory chapter creates space for these questions. To ask and answer them, however, demands an approach to style conducive to this work. Although the public arguably has been consistently interested in style, and rhetoric and composition has recently witnessed a resurgence of scholarly engagement, there are a number of challenges to asking such questions.
First, writing in the disciplines scholars and teachers seem to view disciplinary styles as discrete, homogeneous, agreed-upon *objects*—a perspective that cannot explain the above anecdotes. Second, definitions of style in rhetoric and composition tend to be loose or quite different, and there is little analysis of the affordances of such definitions or attention to the ways other fields understand style. After describing these problems, I more comprehensively review style definitions and research from a variety of disciplines. I cull the best from each discipline to develop a definition of style and a set of research questions that guide the rest of the dissertation. Broadly, this chapter articulates a sociocultural approach to style and argues that such an approach will advance style theory and research in rhetoric and composition.

**Conversations on Style in the Public Sphere and in Rhetoric and Composition**

Despite its vexing shiftiness, “style” continues to fascinate many different publics, from professional writers, including academics, to English and writing teachers, to everyday citizens concerned about the literacy skills of students and workers. For academics, style might help them address a wider and more public audience or might allow them to mark themselves as consummate disciplinary insiders. In U.S. college writing programs, teaching style in terms of clarity is especially common, as evidenced by the popularity of Joseph M. Williams’s work; this instruction, occurring as it often does in first-year or advanced composition courses, thus may be disconnected from efforts to teach students disciplinary writing.

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1 His textbook, *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, now titled *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, has gone through eleven editions since 1981 and has spawned a condensed version, now in its fifth edition (Williams & Bizup, 2015) as well as several printings of a version for nonacademic writers (Williams, 1990).

2 See Barnard (2010) for an interrogation of the taken-for-granted virtues of “clarity.” Barnard argues, among other things, that this concern for clarity (bound up with critiques of theory in the humanities) patronizes students by separating them from professional academics who *are*
Style also circulates in the public sphere around concerns about students’ and workers’ declining standards of literacy. In these conversations, style is conflated with not just clarity but also grammatical, lexical, and mechanical correctness (Butler, 2008). In fact, lamenting the absence of rhetoric and composition scholars in public discussions about literacy, Butler (2008) proposes that style scholars are those who can perhaps best intervene. He suggests, for example, that to challenge the view that the only good writing is “clear” and “error-free” (and the view that these qualities can be judged by a universal reader), “the field of composition might point to writing styles that are complex, nuanced, and yet highly effective at complicating and enriching the discussion of difficult ideas” (p. 133).

Although style has never ceased to interest these groups, scholarly conversations on style and other language-related topics within rhetoric and composition slowed for about thirty years, starting in the mid-to-late 1970s (MacDonald, 2007). This decline stemmed from a drive toward professionalization within English Studies by rhetoricians and compositionists, who sought to distance themselves from seemingly arhetorical, low-level matters (Connors, 2000; Howard, 2005; MacDonald, 2007; Rankin, 1985/2010).

In 2000, however, Robert J. Connors published “The Erasure of the Sentence,” one of many articles that began to analyze this trend and which Butler (2008) points to as “the beginning of a tangible re-emergence of important discussions about the role of style in the discipline” (p. 13). Indeed, since Connors’s piece, there has been a steady, though small, stream

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of new work on style since Butler’s 2008 book, including a textbook (Holcomb & Killingsworth, 2010), a monograph (Fahnestock, 2011), and an edited collection (Duncan & Vanguri, 2013a). In addition, coming into print are a Parlor Press/WAC Clearinghouse reference guide to style by Brian Ray, a monograph and article by Holcomb (tentatively titled “Motives of Style”), and, in 2015, a new textbook by Butler (tentatively titled *How So? The Writers’ Style*). And, in a number of different fields involved in language studies—sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, stylistics, linguistic anthropology—style has also been an object of theory and research.

Within scholarly conversations in rhetoric and composition, however, there are two key problems, as mentioned above. One is that conversations within writing in the disciplines (WID) have typically treated disciplinary styles as single and homogeneous. The second is that definitions of style tend to be assumed, vague, or diffuse, and this definitional problem is exacerbated by rhetoric and composition’s limited attention to the varied ways other disciplines understand style. I will describe each of these problems in the next section.

**Problems in Studying Style**

*Homogeneous Style in Writing in the Disciplines*

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4 Other relevant work that has been published since 2010 includes a few articles on clarity (Barnard, 2010; Clausson, 2011; Kreuter, 2013), a few articles on style (Carillo, 2010; Lockhart, 2012; Ray, 2013), and a number of articles on language, voice, stance, or linguistic indexicality (Davila, 2012; DiPardo, Storms, & Selland, 2011; Duncan, 2011; Jeffery, 2011; Jwa, 2012; Medzerian, 2010a; Sperling & Appleman, 2011; Tardy, 2012; Wolfe, Britt, & Poe, 2011). This list does not include work on style in rhetorical studies within communication, which will be addressed below.

5 Arguably, the limited attention rhetoric and composition has given to definitions underlies these problems.
Writing in the disciplines has long been trying to steer faculty and students away from universal notions of “good writing” toward discipline-specific understandings. Homogeneous tendencies persist, however, in comments about a discipline having “a writing style.” Such remarks occur in literature both outside of and within writing studies research and instructional materials alike. Writing in a library science journal about graduate students’ research behaviors, Rempel (2010) mentions “using disciplinary jargon, demonstrating an understanding of the literature and the field, and using the particular style of the discipline” as elements of “becoming grounded within a disciplinary community” (p. 533). In her composition textbook chapter, Hinton (2010) enjoins students to study models their instructors provide, like scholarly articles: these models will not only exemplify citation formats and provide “professional examples” but also reveal “what style of writing a discipline values” (pp. 30-31).

In WID scholarship, notions of a singular disciplinary style also appear. Hansen and Adams (2010), contextualizing an article on approaches to teaching social science writing, note that two departments designed “a 200-level introductory course in which [students] learn the basics of research and writing in the major, including its style, conventional formats, and documentation styles” (para. 10). And these ideas surface in discourse community theory. Swales (1990) argues that genres, owned by discourse communities (p. 26), are driven by particular communicative purposes and “exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience” (p. 58). Beaufort (2012) posits that a “discourse community coalesces around a set of values and goals, has a set of typical genres that are used by those in the community, has overall norms for ‘good writing,’ and defines the social roles of writers within the discourse community” (p. 183). Her notion that discourse communities share
values, goals, genres, and “overall norms for ‘good writing,’” then, reflects the pervasive assumption within and without writing studies that a discipline has a unitary, agreed-upon style.

As the research reported in this dissertation will show, the question of whether disciplinary styles are so homogeneous remains open. Thaiss and Zawacki (2006), for instance, argue that instructors’ understandings of good writing in their discipline are an “ambiguous mix” of contexts—general academic, disciplinary, subdisciplinary, institutional, and idiosyncratic (p. 61). Interviewing four literature faculty about the rationales behind their grades on a set of sample student papers, Wilder (2012) found consistent disciplinary *topoi* underlying their evaluations, more so than idiosyncratic preferences. However, Wilder was looking at rhetorical moves, such as the use of multiple examples or the focus on a contrast between appearance and reality, aspects that, arguably, do not fall under language use. Some support for the heterogeneity of disciplinary style appears in Hartig and Lu (2013). Noting that U.S. law schools have long promoted “plain English” by recommending that writers avoid nominalizations and the passive voice, they analyzed ten sample memos from legal writing textbooks and law school and professional legal society websites. The authors found not only passive voice and nominalizations but also considerable variation in the frequency of such items within each sample memo.

Another example of within-discipline stylistic heterogeneity appears in Prior’s (1998) critique of Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman’s (1988) study of the disciplinary socialization of Nate, a PhD student in composition and rhetoric. Berkenkotter et al., in part, asked three rhetoric and composition professors to flag “off-register” words and phrases in Nate’s papers and in a comparison group of texts by composition and rhetoric scholars. In one of Nate’s assignments of 950 words, one rater found 25 off-register words or phrases, another found 35,
and a third found 46. A few words—“horribly,” “looking glass,” “ridiculing,” and “mindframe”—were all marked as off-register. Whereas Berkenkotter et al. see these varied judgments as agreement, Prior (1998) argues that they are evidence of “differences in discourse and knowledge values among professors” (p. 16). Prior also notes that there was considerable variance in what was marked in the experts’ texts—an average of 1 “flaw” in an article by Richard E. Young and an average of 15 “flaws” in an article by James Kinneavy; this variation in off-register scores for leading scholars in the field is not discussed in the article. For Prior, this study confirms that “even the experts in a discipline do not find themselves operating in a predictable arena of shared values and conventions” (p. 17). Prior’s discussion and the above examples are early challenges to the pervasive notions that a discipline has a singular style, as well as telling illustrations that the stability and homogeneity of disciplinary styles should not be assumed.\(^6\)

\textit{Vague and/or Diffuse Definitions of Style}

The second problem in style scholarship within rhetoric and composition relates to how style is (or is not) defined and to the absence of discussion on how treatments of style vary—a problem compounded by a lack of attention to the diverse treatments of style in other fields.

Given that style is one of the five canons of rhetoric, one might suppose that its definition is at least somewhat stable and known to scholars, even those who do not specialize in style. In such composition scholarship and textbooks, however, a kind of terminological looseness predominates. Here, style is seen as an element of textual or linguistic form, not clearly

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\(^6\) I must observe here that “a discipline” itself is a fabrication, as all disciplines incorporate and build on multiple other disciplines. It would be interesting to look for correlations between a person’s view of their discipline and view of disciplinary style. Would those who recognize the cross- and inter-disciplinary natures of their own disciplines still have relatively homogeneous expectations for disciplinary style?
differentiated from terms like voice or language. The following sentence, taken from a Parlor Press reference guide on genre, typifies this problem: “From there, the analysis [i.e., the typical English for Specific Purposes genre analysis] turns to an examination of the genre’s organization…and then to an examination of the textual and linguistic features (style, tone, voice, grammar, syntax) that realize the rhetorical moves” (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 46). It is not clear whether or how the authors differentiate style, tone, and voice. (For that matter, the distinctions between grammar and syntax and between textual and linguistic features are also not explained.) As another example, the textbook *The Writer’s Eye: Composition in the Multimedia Age* (Costanzo, 2008) outlines different stages of the composing process for writing and for film. It discusses style as follows:

> When you revise for style, ask yourself these questions. First, is the style appropriate for your topic, purpose, and audience? Second, does the writing voice reflect your personal style, the way you want to sound? Third, is the voice consistent throughout? If not, do you have good reason to change the style at any point? (p. 64)

It is possible that the author perceives a difference between “the style” and the “writing voice”/“your personal style,” but, if so, he does not explain it. The last two sentences, however, make it seem as if he equates “the voice” with “the style.” Such swapping of language-related terms without accounting for why, and such listing of language-related terms without clarifying their relationships, is common practice in rhetoric and composition scholarship and textbooks.  

The effect is that work not devoted to examining style subtly perpetuates its mystification.

As one might expect, rhetoric and composition scholars writing specifically on style or related terms usually do come armed with a definition, but their treatments are often quite

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7 The reasons for doing so likely vary. Authors may see these terms as having the same or very similar meanings and may choose to list several ones in the hope that at least one will “stick.” Or, authors may perceive differences between the terms but may not explain them in order to save space or avoid digressions.
different from one another, ranging from “rhetorical options at the sentence and world level” (Connors, 1997, p. 257) to “a relationship among…writer, text, and audience” (Loewe, 2005, p. 242). Further, there is little discussion of the differences between such treatments and the implications of these differences. Duncan and Vanguri (2013b) find that the term “style” is able to simultaneously hold a variety of definitions quite comfortably, with each of those definitions able to dialogue with each other and promote a multifaceted view of the importance of the canon and how it suffuses the act of composition. (p. xiii)

But this multiplicity arguably invites more problems than it solves. Some literature might understand style as solely about achieving “clarity” (see critical discussions in, e.g., Howard, 2005) or avoiding errors (see critique in, e.g., Holcomb & Killingsworth, 2010, p. 187), although a treatment of style should be able to encompass both and more. As another example, Micciche’s (2004/2010) conception of “rhetorical grammar,” included in the Bedford/St. Martin’s Critical Sourcebook Style in Rhetoric and Composition (Butler, 2010), seems to encompass—or obviate the need for—the term “style.” Where are the overlaps between her, and others’, conceptions of grammar and style? The failure to articulate how the definitions differ and why these differences matter risks confusing or limiting our notions of style.

Style is further mystified by the fact that style scholarship occurs and can look quite different in disciplines outside of rhetoric and composition, including areas of applied linguistics, stylistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. To wit:

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8 She writes that rhetorical grammar “emphasizes grammar as a tool for articulating and expressing relationships among ideas” (p. 253); its study “encourages students to experiment with language and then to reflect on the interaction between content and grammatical form” (p. 255).
• Rhetorician and compositionist Edward P. J. Corbett (1986/2010) defines style as “the choices that an author made from the lexical and syntactic resources of the language” (p. 210).

• Applied linguists/corpus analysts Douglas Biber and Susan Conrad (2009) see style features as linguistic features that “are not functionally motivated by the situational context [as are register features]; rather, style features reflect aesthetic preferences, associated with particular authors or historical periods” (p. 2).

• Applied linguist Norman Fairclough (2003), a founder of critical discourse analysis, calls styles “discoursal ways of being, identities” (p. 159).

• Sociolinguist Penelope Eckert (2001) identifies style as “a clustering of linguistic resources, and an association of that clustering with social meaning” (p. 123).

• Literacy researcher Anne Haas Dyson (1989) writes that style “refers, not to knowledge about a particular symbol system, but, rather, to a way of using symbols, a preferred way of responding to, organizing, and communicating about experiences” (p. 69).

Duncan and Vanguri (2013b) postulate that this multidisciplinary interest in style can actually serve as an advantage: “teachers and scholars in composition,” they observe, “have multiple traditions from which to draw,” and “more productive cross-disciplinary efforts” can result (p. xii). But while rhetoric and composition interacted regularly with stylistics between the 1960s and the 1980s,9 the past thirty years have seen only light attention. For instance, Holcomb and

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Killingsworth’s (2010) textbook synthesizes a number of different approaches to style (including style in the rhetorical tradition, style as clarity, and even Goffman’s [1981] notion of “footing”) but cites only three (classic) books from stylistics—Leech and Short (1981), Wales (2001), and Traugott and Pratt (1980)—and does not reference works from sociolinguistics.

Although rhetoric and composition scholarship now regularly engages with research areas within applied linguistics, including second language acquisition, English for Specific Purposes, World Englishes, and corpus linguistics, style scholarship has not received this treatment. Given such varied understandings across disciplines (and, of course, within them), cross-disciplinary efforts are impeded without knowledge of the affordances of other disciplines’ definitions and approaches.

In short, style is chronically undefined or defined loosely or is regularly interchanged with and left undifferentiated from terms like voice, register, and tone. When style is more carefully defined, on the other hand, the definitions—across and within fields—have been quite disparate. For one of the five canons of classical rhetoric, and one still so extensively referenced in scholarship on writing and language, the lack of clear definitions and the obscuring of important distinctions are striking. Without an understanding of the phenomena composing “style,” it is difficult to see how progress can be made in style theory, research, or pedagogy.

Interactions waned once composition began questioning the utility of linguistics for composition research and teaching (see, e.g., Crowley, 1989; Faigley, 1992).

10 In the early 1990s, second language writing emerged as an interdisciplinary field integrating second language acquisition and composition; in the 2000s, those interested in translingual pedagogies began attracting compositionists’ interest to World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca research; more recently, corpus analyses of student writing have begun to circulate in composition journals (e.g., Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Gere, Aull, Perales Escudero, Lancaster, & Vander Lei, 2013).
The next section of this chapter provides this needed survey. I detail the varying definitions of and scholarship on style and voice in rhetoric and composition and in other fields that investigate style: stylistics, sociolinguistics, certain areas of applied linguistics, and linguistic anthropology.

**Style in Different Fields**

*Rhetoric and Composition: Style*

Given composition studies’ deep connections to Western rhetorical history, I will start with definitions of style from this tradition. Rhetoric has tended to treat style as synonymous with language (e.g., “verbal expression,” Müller, 2006, para.1). In his essay on “Style” for the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, Müller identifies “style” (*elocutio*) as the core of the five rhetorical canons: “It is style that brings the text into linguistic existence. Without style or verbal expression, invention and disposition could have no effect. And it is style that provides the basis for memory and delivery” (para. 1). Identifying style with language has led to many discussions about the relationship between thought (or content) and language: whether language is mere ornament or dress to thought. Only in the Renaissance, argues Müller (2001/2006), did the concept of style as evoking one’s personality or soul emerge.

Rhetoricians have also described style as the *choices* that one selects from the language. For instance, Corbett (1986/2010) defines style as “the choices that an author made from the lexical and syntactic resources of the language” (p. 210); Connors (1997), who was Corbett’s student, defines stylistics as “the study of rhetorical options at the sentence and word level” (p. 11

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11 Although the concepts of “style” and “voice” are prevalent in creative writing instruction and textbooks, creative writing has produced little theory or research on the subjects (Fodrey, 2013), so I do not review it here. For the sake of space, I also do not review rhetoric and composition definitions or research on “ethos.”
257); Graves (2005), in her study of rhetorical figures in scientific processes, describes “style” as “the words chosen to express the idea” (p. 18); and Weiser (2005) defines style as “purposeful attention to language at the sentence level” (p. 26), a definition she concedes is “very broad” but that allows her to identify as many CCC articles as possible over three decades that might focus on style, articles that include such topics as metaphor, error, dialects, and argumentation. More recently, Holcomb and Killingsworth (2010) distinguish grammar, style, and performance, defining style as “the choices a writer makes within that [the linguistic] system” (p. 2). (They develop this definition by emphasizing style as interaction; see below for a discussion.)

Another aspect of some rhetoric and composition definitions of style is the emphasis on patterns of language. Medzerian (2010a) defines style as “the patterns of language features that define a particular author’s writing within a given rhetorical situation” (p. 16); MacDonald (2002), in an article defines style as “language patterns discernible at the sentence level” and separates it from another level of analysis, “features of language within the sentence, such as nominalizations, reporting verbs, lexical hedges, uses of the first person ‘I’” (p. 622). More recently, Holcomb and Killingsworth (2010) distinguish grammar, style, and performance, defining style as “the choices a writer makes within that [the linguistic] system” (p. 2). (They develop this definition by emphasizing style as interaction; see below for a discussion.)

Butler (2008, 2010), whose work makes an argument for a renewed investment in style within rhetoric and composition, defines style in slightly different ways in his monograph and in the introduction to the Bedford/St. Martin’s collection of classic readings on style. Both definitions, however, combine the elements of style as language, as choice (though also as unconscious selection), and as pattern. Style is

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12 Along with Weiser (2005), MacDonald (2007) is concerned with the disappearance of language-related topics from the field, not simply style-related topics. MacDonald searches CCC presentation titles from 1955-2005 for the terms ESL, grammar, style, language, linguistics, discourse analysis, and semantics. The fact that MacDonald and Weiser are doing relatively similar searches (albeit on different data sets) arguably demonstrates the conflation of style and language.

13 Her categories relate as well to a linguistic tradition where discourse refers to phenomena above the level of the sentence.
the deployment of rhetorical resources, in written discourse, to create and express meaning. According to this definition, style involves the use of written language features as habitual patterns, rhetorical options, and conscious choices at the sentence and word level… (Butler, 2008, p. 3)

a series of both conscious and unconscious choices that writers make about everything from the words we use (diction) and their arrangement in sentences (syntax) to the tone with which we express our point of view (e.g., ironic, formal, or colloquial) and the way we achieve emphasis in a sentence (e.g., by placing the most important information at the end). (Butler, 2010, p. 1)

One element absent from treatments of style as language, choices, and patterns is attention to the meanings indexed by these patterns and choices—e.g., Bob Markley, or denseness, or informality. Another absence is the role of the listener, reader, or viewer in constructing stylistic meaning. These definitions focus (sometimes implicitly) on how composers or speakers use style, but judgments about stylistic meaning come equally often from readers or listeners. Butler (2010) mentions “tone” and the achievement of “emphasis,” qualities that writers and readers might perceive quite differently. For instance, Laura’s advisor, not Laura, saw “informality” in her text.

A few recent definitions in rhetoric and composition encompass notions of the indexical meanings and co-constructed nature of style. Holcomb and Killingsworth (2010) define style as “the choices a writer makes” within the linguistic system (p. 2), but their model creates room for the social nature of style and the cultural meanings that styles index. They understand style to involve textual, social, and cultural “arenas,” which overlap and interact. In the social arena, “writers use style to establish certain ‘footings’ with their readers and their subject matters” (p. 7). In a chapter on “footing,” they write that they prefer the term “footing” to “voice” because “the concept of voice focuses on the performer, but footing always puts the performer in relation to something else—or somebody else: the audience” (p. 61). In addition, hinting at the negotiated nature of style, they add, “[S]tyle never is merely produced and sent abroad into the world,” but
rather “is delivered, shared, negotiated between an author and an audience” (p. 61).

Another work that attends to the processual nature of stylistic meaning is Loewe (2005), who is concerned that

in examining style, we often grasp at audience expectations, speculations about the writer's personality, textual features, or impressionistic labels. In doing so, we may treat style as a static list of properties possessed by, for example, certain writers or texts, instead of as a relationship among the members of the triad of writer, text, and audience. (p. 262)

Loewe draws from systems theory and cybernetics to argue that a model of style should “conceptualize style as a system of processes and relationships” (p. 241). I will return to these concepts at the end of this chapter when articulating my own definition of style.

Within rhetoric and composition, scholarship in the past decade that is interested in the teaching and learning of “style” (as opposed to other terms, like “voice”) has covered a number of topics. It has analyzed the absence of style and language instruction and research and argued for a renewed commitment (e.g., Butler, 2010; Connors, 2000; Howard, 2005; MacDonald, 2007; Myers, 2003; Pace, 2005; Rankin, 1985; Weiser, 2005)\textsuperscript{14}; discussed pedagogical approaches and techniques (e.g., Butler, 2011; Carillo, 2010; Duncan & Vanguri, 2013a; Howard et al., 2002; Johnson & Pace, 2005), including issues with teaching style as “clarity” (e.g., Barnard, 2010; Howard, 2005); analyzed theories of style as represented in textbooks (Lockhart, 2012) and handbooks (Kreuter, 2009), teacher perceptions and students’ stylistic analyses (Medzerian, 2010b) or rubrics (Vanguri, 2013); and analyzed published texts (MacDonald, 1994; 2007).

\textsuperscript{14} Connors (2000), Myers (2003), and MacDonald (2007) do not actually focus on the term “style.” Connors discusses the decline of “sentence-based pedagogies,” with style mentioned in the section on imitation pedagogies, and Myers draws on corpus linguistics and SLA research to argue that these pedagogies work by providing students with rich input of lexicogrammatical patterns. MacDonald extends Connors’ argument to argue that the decline has been in language study generally, not just the sentence; “style” is one of the key terms she searches for in CCCC programs, along with “ESL,” “grammar,” “language,” “linguistics,” “discourse analysis,” and “semantics.”
Vande Kopple, 1992, 2002). A significant amount of research analyzes the language of texts but does not do so using the term “style.” I will describe these works below.

In addition, the past decade or so has seen literature within rhetoric that examines style but not for pedagogical ends. This work focuses on theories of style in the history of rhetoric, including Newman (2005) on style theory in Aristotle; Graff (2001, 2005) on theories of style in Aristotle, Isocrates, and Alcidamas; Camper (2013) on Augustine’s theories of style in the fifth century; and Stark (1999) on Margaret Cavendish, the seventeenth-century English writer and scientist.

Some work within rhetoric also studies the stylistic features of oral and written texts, with a focus on features from the rhetorical tradition. Holcomb (2007), for instance, analyzes figures of speech in a Daily Show segment, a speech by George W. Bush, and an essay by John Edgar Wideman. Fahnestock’s (2011) Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion, a compilation of “templates or probes for examining language” (p. 18), indexes resources involving word choice, syntax, interactive elements of language (e.g., pronouns, reported speech), and passage construction. Fahnestock (1999) analyzes how figures of speech besides metaphor work in historical scientific texts. Uniquely, Graves (2005) analyzes the use of metaphor, metonymy, and analogy in scientific processes by drawing on not just final texts but drafts, observations at a physics lab, and conversations with a scientist as he thought aloud to her while he composed. She argues that these stylistic elements are not ornamental but inventionals and epistemic—they create knowledge.15

15 Graves’ work aligns with others in applied linguistics and science studies that examine how scientists use semiotic resources, including metaphoric language and gestures, to create knowledge (e.g., Alac & Hutchins, 2004; Becvar, Hollan, & Hutchins, 2005; Ochs, Gonzalez, & Jacoby, 1996).
To summarize, rhetoric and composition literature that uses the term “style” has tended to focus on pedagogy and text analysis of writers’ production, to the exclusion of examining how “style” is interpreted by and negotiated with others. One exception is Medzerian’s (2010b) dissertation. In one chapter, she analyzes interviews with composition teachers for how they understand and assess style. She uses the speech communication framework of “rhetorical distance” (Hunsaker and Smith, 1973), showing that her interviewees see effective style as that which shortens the distance between writer and reader and creates “imaginative involvement,” in which the reader enters the reality of the text.

Given the conflation of language and style in many definitions, it is also important to mention research circulating within rhetoric and composition that does not use the term style but involves linguistic analysis of texts, at varying amounts and levels of systematicity. Linguistic analysis of texts has shown up in studies of student writing (e.g., Ivanič, 1998; Lancaster, 2012; Prior, 1998; Tardy, 2009); published genres (e.g., Bazerman, 1988; Swales, 1990, 2004), studies of the popularization of scientific knowledge (e.g., Myers, 1990), analyses of multilingual and translingual writing and response (e.g., Canagarajah, 2009, 2013; Casanave, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2010), and studies that focus on plagiarism and language borrowing (e.g., Abasi, Akbari, & Graves, 2006; Ouellette, 2008; Petrič, 2012). Little of this literature uses the term “style,” but it is relevant because, in its treatment of language, it explores the identities, relationships, activities, and other indexical meanings created by the language, as well as, in some texts, the responses of

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16 Interestingly, Weiser (2005) argues that one reason for the decline of style scholarship was a growth in studies that emphasized readers instead of detailed, systematic text analysis. I would argue that a text-focus and a reader-focus should not be seen as mutually exclusive. I also do not think we can necessarily generalize from her results: she examines articles from only one journal, *College Composition and Communication*, and the uptick of reader-focused articles in the last decade refers to only about 4 articles. (Of the 18 articles published about style- and language-related topics, 20% focused on the reader.)
readers like advisors (e.g., Prior, 1998; Tardy, 2009) and journal reviewers (e.g., Lillis & Curry, 2010).

On the subject of rhetoric and composition’s emphasis on pedagogy and textual production, it is important to mention another exception: the analysis of style by rhetoricians of popular culture, many of whom attended the University of Texas at Austin under the mentorship of Barry Brummett. Spurred by Vivian’s (2002) call for renewed attention to how style permeates social and political life, Brummett and his students have viewed style as a way to understand popular culture and “the basis for a contemporary and future rhetoric” (Brummett, 2008, p. xii).

There are several notable, and valuable, aspects of this approach: attention to the multisemiotic nature of style and to the many different interpreters of stylistic meaning. For instance, Webster (2009) documents the ways in which stylistic features such as skin-revealing clothing and race emphasize the femininity and sexuality of female athletes instead of their athleticism, and Young (2014) explores the styles of different public intellectuals by highlighting representations of their “physiological style” (e.g., by analyzing their clothing and hair), the degree to which their words and deeds are consistent, and the public’s reception of their styles and ideas. She remarks that “the public audience must co-create” the public intellectual’s style (p. 100); to do so, she quotes from book endorsements, website comments from members of the public, and Amazon.com ratings, among other markers of popularity.

*Rhetoric and Composition: Voice*

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17 Webster defines style as “the coalescing of signs on the physical body,” with race as one such sign. She defines “the body” as “the performative site of style” (p. 48).
Although rhetoricians and compositionists have not always attended to indexical meanings in their definitions of “style,” they have done so when studying “voice,” viewed as the discursive construction of a persona. “Voice” has had just as many, if not more, definitions than style, including expressionists’ much-contested view of voice and Bakhtinian notions of voice. Among expressionists, “voice” was seen as entailing multiple meanings: “the right to speak,” “a source of individual truth leading to authenticity,” and “the ability to speak, which is …acquired as a matter of course if allowed to develop outside of intimidating and overly conventionalized discourses” (Yancey, 1994, p. xi). Such notions were critiqued for, among other things, their assumptions of a stable, singular self expressing a Platonic inner truth (e.g., Hashimoto, 1987).

Agha (2005) notes that Bakhtin used “voice” in a fairly loose sense, to index social types (e.g., particular classes and professions—what Bakhtin calls “social speech types” or “social voices”) and “event-specific, potentially unique images of personhood”—what Bakhtin calls “individual voices”) (Agha, 2005, p. 39). Some voice researchers have viewed it as indexing just social types (e.g., Brodkey & Henry, 1992, Engeström 1993; Harris, 1997; Wertsch, 1990); others have used it to represent a blend of individually distinctive elements and social types or socially shared conventions (e.g., Matsuda, 2001; Prior, 2001; Sperling & Appleman, 2011).

Matsuda (2001), for instance, defines voice as follows:

Voice is the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires...It is distinguished from similar concepts such as “style” and “register,” both of which refer to the use of particular sets of discursive features, by its emphasis on the effect; that is, style and register are factors that contribute to—as well as constrain—the construction of voice. Ethos and persona are also similar to voice in that they are all concerned with self-representation in discourse; however, both ethos and persona are the result of deliberate choice (Cherry 1998), whereas voice in this definition may be intentional or unintentional. (pp. 40-41)
Although it is not clear what particular “sets of discursive features” differentiate register from style (and differentiate those two from voice), his definition helpfully emphasizes the multisemiotic nature of voice. In addition, the word “effect” does suggest a notion of co-construction and of the indexical meanings created, although not so directly.

One line of voice research (e.g., Prior, 1998, 2001) has explored how multiple voices come to mingle in texts through cycles of response and the (often implicit) co-authoring of texts. Another line has tended toward the experimental, analyzing readers’ constructions of the author and the linguistic and non-linguistic features that readers understand as triggers (e.g., Jeffery, 2011; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Tardy, 2012a; Tardy & Matsuda, 2008). Tardy (2012b) calls these studies “a reader-based approach to researching voice” (p. 41), and Jeffery’s (2011) work with high-school English teachers is a good example. When describing the “voice features” of two high-scoring student essays, Jeffery’s teachers constructed student writers’ voices in complex and sometimes conflicting ways. The phrase “a place in the sun,” used in a student’s narrative essay, was seen by some teachers as a cliché and others as a positive feature: the use of imagery and figurative language (p. 106). These different valuations of the same language features led some teachers to perceive the writer as a “calculating, insincere author responding to the demands of formal schooling” (p. 116) and others to perceive him as a novice adolescent writing simply trying on different voices.

Although empirical research on how voices are perceived and produced has taken a sociocultural turn in many respects, voice still does not seem to be tightly defined in this work. In addition, the literature is unclear on whether voice is an alternative way to name the same phenomena as style or to identify some other phenomena.

*Stylistics*
Stylisticians are interested in “the various forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure” in order to “ground a stylistic interpretation and to help explain why, for the analyst, certain types of meaning are possible” (Simpson, 2004, p. 2). Most stylistics examines literary texts—the language of fictional prose, poetry, and drama—but expository prose and multimodal texts (e.g., advertisements, comics, film) are also studied.

In stylistics, definitions of style tend to appear not in research articles and chapters but in textbooks. In their classic book Style in Fiction, for example, Leech and Short (1981) work with two definitions: a broader one, in which style is “the linguistic characteristics of a particular text” (p. 12), and which underlies large-scale studies of authors’ or texts’ style (p. 40), and a narrower one, in which style refers to “those aspects of linguistic choice which concern alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter,” (p. 39, italics in original), which allows for discussion of the different values of particular variants. This definition resembles those in rhetoric and composition that associate style with language and view style as choices. Also like rhetoric and composition, stylistics has also discussed the issue of whether form and content are separable (e.g., Milic, 1965/2010).

Stylistics research, consisting of linguistic analysis of texts, by definition can only infer the reader’s mindset. However, Weber’s (1996) survey of the history of stylistics notes scholars’ growing attention to role of the reader. He describes that with the rise of pragmatics and discourse analysis, the role of context became more important, and it became increasingly clear that style is not either inherent in the text (as the formalists claimed) or totally in the reader's mind (as Fish and other reader-response theorists claimed) but an effect produced in, by and through the interaction between text and reader. Thus meaning and stylistic effect are not fixed and stable, and cannot be dug out of the text as in an archaeological approach, but they have to be seen as a potential which is actualized in a (real) reader's mind, the product of a dialogic interaction between author, the author's context of production, the text, the reader and the reader's context of reception—where
context includes all sorts of sociohistorical, cultural and intertextual factors. (p. 3)

Almost fifteen years later, Jeffries and McIntyre (2010) validate this perception of a move:

most approaches to stylistics these days see the text (literary and other) as the centre of a communicative event which may take place in a range of places and timescales, and which includes the producer and the recipient. In other words, literary and other texts are considered as discourse events, and not just stable artefacts with stable meanings. (p. 71)

In stylistics, however, actual readers have mostly been explored through cognitive stylistics or cognitive poetics, a field that emerged in the 1990s and studies the “models which accounted for the stores of knowledge which readers bring into play when they read, and on [sic] how these knowledge stores are modified or enriched as reading progresses” (Simpson, 2004, p. 39). In these studies, researchers set up experiments to study the perceptions of actual readers in order to better understand certain cognitive models, like schema theory, text world theory, and narrative comprehension (Simpson, 2004, pp. 89-92). Allington and Swann (2009) make the point that research results based on rating, recall, and think-aloud tasks are arguably better treated “as indicative of the competencies on which particular groups or individuals are able to draw when pressed than of how reading ‘normally’ proceeds” (p. 224, italics in original). Referring to Hall’s (2008) critique, they note disjunctions between the experiments and more natural reading conditions in terms of what is read, how the material is presented, and where reading takes place (p. 227).

Despite Weber’s interest in “a dialogic interaction between author, the author's context of production, the text, the reader and the reader's context of reception,” attention to how actual readers negotiate style beyond experimental studies is limited—just like in rhetoric and composition. An exception is the special issue of Language and Literature that Allington and Swann’s (2009) essay introduces, which includes a range of studies analyzing the discourse of actual readers, whether an ethnomethodological analysis of book group sessions (Benwell, 2009),
discursive-psychological analysis of teacher-led booktalk (Barajas & Aronsson, 2009), analysis of discussions about a book on slavery along with questionnaire responses (Lang, 2009), and analyses of the “stylistic preoccupations” of British readers between 1800-1945, as captured in the UK’s Reading Experience Database (Halsey, 2009). Hall (2009) argues that studies like these illustrate the need [for stylisticians] to recognise the importance of the agency of real readers. What they [real readers] notice and what they do with what they notice is of interest in itself and cannot be fully predicted by a stylistician, even though regularities and patterns in context will undoubtedly be found. (pp. 336-337)

For rhetoric and composition, stylistics offers a parallel case of a field struggling to capture how real readers understand styles.

**Sociolinguistics**

Sociolinguistics has tended to focus on social dialects (or sociolects)—how spoken language varies between groups distinguished by such factors as geography, class, race, ethnicity, age, and gender.\(^{18}\) In early variationist studies, stylistic variation was contrasted with “social” variation and defined as intraspeaker variation. Traditionally, a researcher would conduct a sociolinguistic interview and elicit multiple kinds of speech—ranging from reading a word list (considered to elicit “careful,” i.e., more formal, speech) to having an informal conversation (considered to elicit “casual,” i.e., more informal speech that is closer to the person’s “vernacular”). In this way, intraspeaker variation was also understood as differing levels of attention one paid to speech. Labov (1970), for instance, found that pronunciation of the voiceless interdental fricative (“th” in “thing” versus “ting”) was stratified by socioeconomic

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\(^{18}\) Dialect is often used synonymously with “sociolect,” though it can also refer to the subtype of geography—or, more accurately, when “the demographic dimensions marked by speech are matters of geographic provenance alone, such as speaker’s birth locale, extended residence and the like” (Agha, 2007, p. 135).
class, but that each socioeconomic group veered toward the standard when they were paying more attention to their speech.\(^{19}\)

Critiques of this model emerged in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Bell, 1984; Brown & Levinson, 1979; Coupland, 1980; Milroy, 1987). One was that speakers’ agency was conceived quite narrowly, as mere self-correction: these studies treated style “not as involving a choice between socially meaningful forms, but as the result of self-monitoring to suppress a natural cognitive process” (Eckert, 2012, p. 89). Another critique was that such models did not explain “why stylistic variation is structured, since a static approach treats stylistic variants as the automatic correlates of particular contexts” (Coupland, 1980, p. 2).\(^{20}\) A third was simply that this understanding of style did not explain the data. Bell (e.g., 1982) found that radio newscasters in New Zealand consistently varied their speech when working for different stations. And Rickford (1979) and Wolfram (1981) both found that attention paid to speech actually increased when speakers moved to less formal varieties (Bell, 1984, p. 149).

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of sociolinguists found that other theories, such as Howard Giles’ accommodation theory (e.g., Giles, 1973), better captured the complexity of style as intraspeaker variation, rather than as level of attention paid to speech. In this theory, speakers might accommodate, maintain, or diverge from the language variety spoken by their addressee depending on how they wanted to affiliate (Bell, 2007). Bell’s (1984, 2001) theory of “audience design” understands people to shift styles primarily in response to their audience but also in

\(^{19}\) Bell (1984) remarks that at the same time that variationists were studying interspeaker (“social”) and intraspeaker (“stylistic”) variation, other sociolinguists were studying politeness strategies (e.g., Brown and Levinson, 1978) and address systems (Ervin-Tripp, 1973), among other topics. Bell calls this “macrostyle” research, in contrast to the variationist “microstyle” research (p. 147).

\(^{20}\) Agha, writing in 2007, critiques a more basic premise of variationist sociolect research, that language variation can index speaker types. He writes, “But indexical for whom? Under what conditions?” (p. 135), calling attention to the issue of co-construction.
response to what Bell calls *referees*: people or groups who are “absent but influential on the speaker’s attitudes” (Bell, 1984, p. 161). As an example of an audience design study, Rickford and McNair Knox (1994) found that an African American teenager used more African American Vernacular English (AAVE) features when interviewed by an African American woman and her daughter than when interviewed by a White graduate student. (They also found differences in AAVE features depending on the topic—e.g., school and career plans versus boyfriends and girlfriends.)

The essential limitation of audience design and accommodation theory research is one that it shares with variationist research. These studies, which count the number of linguistic features a speaker uses with different audiences, “assume that stylistic ‘levels’ in terms of frequencies of occurrence are regularly perceived to be meaningfully different” (Coupland, 2007, p. 76). Coupland (2007) notes that “it has yet to be demonstrated that a 60% pattern will have a different meaning, as (supposedly) an aggregated linguistic style, from a 40% pattern” (p. 75). He argues, “this procedure side-steps a theory of sociolinguistic indexicality which…gives priority to the local contextualization of single variants in discourse” (p. 76). (However, Coupland does applaud the fact that audience design studies “show the malleability of sociolinguistic identity, even though the studies themselves are conceived and designed around apparently fixed categories” (p. 76).)

Sociolinguists of style have thus moved to understand style as a “creative,” not “reactive,” process (Eckert, 2000, p. 214). Coupland (2007) argues for the term “styling” over style because he wants to move researchers away from the simplistic categorization of styles and toward the meanings, uses, or functions of styles in interactions, toward the ways individuals “styl[e] social meaning” to construct and perform certain in-the-moment identities (p. 3). A key component of
this perspective is Silverstein’s (2003) concept of the indexical order, which understands that signs can take on new and competing meanings. As an individual’s or group’s “concerns continually change,” remarks Eckert (2012), “[linguistic] variables cannot be consensual markers of fixed meanings; on the contrary, their central property must be indexical mutability” (p. 94).

One implication of studying style as styling is attention to stylization, defined as when “speakers produce specially marked and often exaggerated representations of linguistic varieties that lie outside their habitual repertoire” (Rampton, 2013, p. 361). A related area is what Rampton has called “crossing”—stylizations of a language variety that belongs to another group. Coupland (2007) considers stylization a natural extension of the study of styling: “once we recognise speakers’ agentive role in constructing meanings in how they contextualise variation, and when we also recognise that speaking involves a degree of metalinguistic awareness…, it seems right to talk of speakers performing speech” (p. 146). He lays out characteristics for distinguishing speech that could be considered “high performance” from “mundane performance” (pp. 147-8).

Similar to rhetorical studies in communication, sociolinguistics attends to not just linguistic features (e.g., phonological variants, word choice) but also other semiotic resources, including music preferences, clothing, make-up, and facial expressions and demeanor. For example, Eckert (2012) found that jocks “took pride in their happy demeanor, whereas burnouts consider jocks’ perennial smiles to be fake, viewing problems as an integral part of who they are individually and collectively” (p. 97). Style is thus understood as a bricolage of semiotic features that participants actively combine and transform to create new identities. As a typical definition

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De Fina (2007) separates stylization and style as follows: “we need to distinguish between stylization, the performance-oriented assumption of a voice or voices that are distinct from the speaker's self, and personal style, as the manifestation of a coherent 'way of being' through regular linguistic (and non-linguistic) choices” (p. 79).
of style, Bucholtz (2011), citing Coupland (2007) and Eckert (2003), describes style as “a bundle of semiotic resources indexically tied to a social type, category, or persona” (p. 11) as well as a repertoire that connects with “entire ways of being in the social world” and “create[s] distinctions within as well as between broad social categories” (p. 2).

There is much to gain from sociolinguistics’ work on style even though it is focused mostly on spoken language (see, however, De Fina, 2007, which analyzes Italian Americans’ dialect-shifting during card-playing and uses of Italian words in English newsletters). Useful concepts absent from, or less emphasized in, rhetoric and composition and stylistics include an interest in stylization and in indexical meanings such as personas; the belief that style is a creative process of bricolage; and attention to the co-constructed nature of style.

A related line of work is the study of stance, a topic of interest in a number of fields, including applied linguistic studies of texts. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) define stance as “the display of evaluative, affective, and epistemic orientations in discourse” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 595), and they see stance as one of many indexical processes that can construct identities in moment-to-moment interaction as well as over time (“stance accretion,” see DuBois, 2002; Rauniomaa, 2003)—thus potentially accumulating into styles (p. 595-6). Stance-taking can thus be used to study features that compose a person’s perceived characteristic style or the ways in which people style-shift.

Johnstone (2009a), for instance, analyzes a corpus of Barbara Jordan’s interviews and speeches to show how “the Barbara Jordan style” “emerges out of interactional and epistemic stancetaking moves that project personal epistemic and moral authority: informational, fairly noninteractive talk, full of markers of certainty, together with explicit references to Jordan's own life experience” (p. 30). As another example, sociolinguist Kirkam (2011) studies how students’
stance-taking moves—as illustrated by their use of epistemic phrases “I don’t know” and “I think”—accrete to personal classroom styles:

Tom and Elle both used *I think* with similar frequency, but the stances projected via this phrase also differ considerably…Elle constructs a combination of assertive and tentative stances through *I think*’s co-occurrence with other modals, while Tom takes up a knowledgeable and authoritative stance that accretes into his ‘sports expert’ persona. (p. 213)

Similar to Coupland’s (2007) critique of studies that merely count the number of instances of a particular feature, Kirkham argues for the importance of studying the situated uses and functions of such features. “Contextualizing specific instances of stance-taking in terms of linguistic styles and the ideologies that frame them,” he writes, “is a crucial element in moving towards a fuller understanding of why people say the things they do in all types of social interaction” (p. 214). With concepts such as stance, styling, and stylization, as well as conception of style as a bricolage of multisemiotic resources indexing particular personas, sociolinguistics has much to offer style studies in rhetoric and composition.

*Applied Linguistics*

Applied linguists interested in discourse analysis have sought to identify characteristic linguistic features of different kinds of discourse in order to develop more accurate grammars (e.g., Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan’s [1999] *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, which reports distributions of linguistic features by “register,” including conversation, fiction, news, and academic prose) as well as to develop teaching materials that address disciplinary and genre differences (e.g., Swales & Feak’s [2012] *Academic Writing for...

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22 Initially, the differences between terms like “genre,” “register,” and “style” were even less stable than they are now. Biber and Conrad (2009) note that in the 1960s, linguists like Joos (1961) and Crystal and Davy (1969) used the term “style” to describe situational varieties (p. 22). (Crystal and Davy analyze linguistic features within newspaper reports, conversation, and legal documents, among other categories.)
With this emphasis on description to inform pedagogy, applied linguists have tended to focus on linguistic features that distinguish different kinds of texts. There are two main approaches to doing this, stemming from systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and from corpus-based linguistics, particularly the work of Douglas Biber.23

According to Martin (1984/2001), register in SFL encompasses the field, tenor, and mode of a situation. Field refers to the topic/content (ideational resources), tenor to the writers’ attitudes and relationships to the reader (interpersonal resources), and mode to what Schleppegrell (2012) describes as “the role language plays in the context” (textual resources) (p. 22) and what Nunan (2008) and Martin (1984/2001) describe as channel of communication (spoken or written, face-to-face or by telephone, etc.). Nunan suggests that standard procedures for text analysis “begin with genre analysis (identifying the overall communicative function, the generic stages and the characteristic morphosyntactic features), and then ‘drill down’ into the text, doing a more fine grained register analysis, looking at field, tenor, and mode” (p. 60).24

An alternate perspective on register is one by corpus-based linguists, emerging from the work of Douglas Biber and colleagues.25 Biber and Conrad (2009) make a distinction between “register,” “style,” and “genre”; a text can be analyzed for all three aspects. A focus on genre means that one is interested in describing a complete text: “Genre features are not pervasive;
rather, they might occur only one time in a complete text, often at the beginning or ending boundary. They are also conventional rather than functional” (p. 7). A genre analysis of a corpus of letters, for instance, might identify patterns in how letters start or close.

“Register” refers to “a variety associated with a particular situation of use (including particular communicative purposes)” (p. 6) and “style” to linguistic features that are associated with authors’ aesthetic preferences within a particular register or genre. In this approach, the linguistic features in styles are seen as not functional but motivated by the author’s values and preferences; registers, on the other hand, are seen as functional, emerging from aspects of the situation, including mode (whether people are talking or writing or signing), production circumstances (whether the language is real-time, planned, scripted, or revised/edited), and relations among participants (e.g., their relationships to one another and how much shared knowledge exists) (p. 40). The lack of time for planning in the register of conversation, for example, leads to vague nouns (e.g., thing) and incomplete utterances, whereas the surplus of time available for careful editing in some registers of writing leads to complex noun phrases and complete sentences (p. 68). Texts within these registers can also be examined for their style—for the pervasive and frequent linguistic features that set them apart from others in the register and that are based on the speaker’s or author’s beliefs about how they want their communiqués to sound.

Biber and Conrad show how novels can differ in style while still belonging to the general register of fictional prose. Similarly, a few other applied linguists have looked systematically at individual writers’ or texts’ distinctiveness within socially shared conventions, often using corpus analysis to do so. Hyland (2010), for example, sought to understand what made Deborah Cameron and John Swales’ styles distinctive. He created corpora of their writing (125,000 words
of published articles from Cameron; 750,000 words from published articles and books from Swales) and identified high-frequency content words, multi-word clusters, and keywords (those most unusually frequent in comparison to a larger reference corpus of applied linguistics articles). Hyland then analyzed the collocations of non-content words in the keywords lists, like *is*. He identified Cameron, for instance, as commonly using language to “establish truths” (e.g., lots of *it is adj. to infinitive* like “it is reasonable to…” and “it is my own view that…”), “challenge contrary positions” (e.g., lots of *not, but, and though*), and “establish solidarity with readers” by “correcting rather than confronting” their misconceptions (e.g., use of the stance adverbial “arguably,” use of conditional if-clauses). He summarized the effects of these frequent linguistic structures as follows:

Her preferred argument strategies actively construct a heteroglossic backdrop for the text by explicitly grounding propositions in her individual subjectivity, recognizing that her view is one among others and taking on alternatives through a combative and confident dialogue. One consequence of this is the emergence of a distinctive identity as a steadfast and committed academic, a disciplinary expert confident in her beliefs and determined in her assurance. (p. 176)

Hyland found that Swales, in contrast, used self-mention, hedges, and engagement strategies to project the identity of a “more self-effacing, conciliatory,” “cautious and inquiring” researcher (pp. 174-175). Hyland concludes that this methodology “takes us beyond what individuals say about themselves to what they do in interaction on repeated occasions and how they build a consistent persona through discourse,” drawing on social resources to position themselves both as individuals and as members of particular communities (p. 185).

Another type of text analysis within applied linguistics examines the textual construction of interactivity—in Hyland’s (2005) words, how writers “[adopt] a point of view in relation to both the issues discussed in the text and to others who hold points of view on those issues” (p. 175). Hyland discusses how writers manage these interactions through two aspects, stance—a
writer’s “textual ‘voice’ or community recognized personality”—and engagement—how the writer “acknowledge[s] and connect[s] to others” (p. 176). Stance markers include linguistic features such as hedges like *might* and *perhaps*, boosters like *clearly* and *obviously*, and attitude markers like *appropriate, logical, agree, prefer, unfortunately, and hopefully.* Engagement features include pronouns that reference the reader, personal asides, and appeals to shared knowledge.

Applied linguists interested in disciplinary texts have generally stuck to text analysis, with little investigation of how this language is interpreted and received.27 A few exceptions have been studies that do both corpus analysis and text-based interviews with different groups of people, such as faculty members in the same general discipline (Harwood, 2006, 2007) or the professors of students whose texts were collected in a corpus (Lancaster, 2012). As mentioned in the Rhetoric and Composition section on voice, above, there is also a small body of research done by composition and literacy researchers (some of whom also identify as applied linguists) that elicits readers’ responses to particular “voice” features (e.g., Davila, 2012; Jeffery, 2011; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Tardy, 2012a; Tardy & Matsuda, 2008). Tardy (2012b) argues that based on this research, “the study of voice must *take into account readers’ impressions rather than (solely) writer’s (sic) intentions or textual features*, and that theories of voice must also *distinguish between authors’ intentions or impressions of their own voice and readers’ constructions of authors’ voices*” (p. 46, italics in original).

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26 See Gray and Biber (2012) for a review of current conceptions of stance in various applied linguistic traditions. The two major types of stance are personal emotions and feelings (“attitudinal stance”) and “assessments of certainty and belief (epistemic stance)” (p. 15).
27 See Hyland (2006) for a review of text analysis studies that examine different aspects of discipline-specific texts, including rhetorical moves, authorial stance, and engagement with readers.
As this review shows, research in applied linguistics has mostly analyzed single texts or a corpus of texts, identifying linguistic features and interpreting their discourse functions. This research is particularly valuable for its exploration of the linguistic resources of style, but it rarely looks at the situated nature of style or considers issues of co-construction.

*Linguistic Anthropology*

In the 1960s and 1970s, sociolinguistics was a “cover term” for many different emerging approaches to the study of language, culture, and society, including variationist sociolinguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, and conversation analysis (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008, p. 402). By the mid-1980s, though, U.S. sociolinguistics had become narrowly defined as “a quantitative approach to language and society,” and ethnographic work was understood to occur mostly under linguistic anthropology (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008, p. 402). In their 2008 introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, however, Bucholtz and Hall argue for a “coalition” called “sociocultural linguistics” (a term chosen for its lack of baggage) in which they show what sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and other approaches have in common: shared “theoretical resources,” including “practice, performativity, indexicality, identity, ideology, emergence, agency, stance, activity, and representation” (p. 406). To some extent, then, ethnographic approaches to stylistic variation in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology draw significantly on one another.

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28 Hymes, in particular, “worked hard at constituting the field of ethnography of communication by creating links with almost everything one could think of at the time as even marginally relevant to the study of the interface between language and culture” (Duranti, 1997, p. 13). Gumperz’s and Hymes’ 1972 edited collection *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, for instance, included papers more traditionally understood as ethnography of communication (e.g., chapters on Turkish boys’ verbal dueling, African American signifying), along with papers by conversation analysts Garfinkel, Sacks, and Schegloff and papers by Blom and Gumperz on code-switching and Labov on language change.
There is a recent emphasis in the anthropology of education to examine “voice,” defined as “the capacity to make oneself heard” (Juffermans & Van Der Aa, 2013, p. 112). This understanding stems from Dell Hymes (1996):

The vision of voice unites two kinds of freedom: freedom from denial of opportunity due to something linguistic; and freedom for satisfaction in the use of language. In other words: freedom to have one’s voice heard, and freedom to develop a voice worth hearing. One way to think of the society in which one would like to live is to think of the kinds of voices it would have. (p. 46)

Hymes’ view of “voice” is the basis for a 2013 special issue in Anthropology & Education Quarterly on voice in educational discourses. Blommaert (2005) espouses a similar definition of voice: “the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so” (p. 4) and “the capacity to cause an uptake close enough to one's desired contextualisation” (p. 45). In a globalized world, this means that voice is “the capacity for semiotic mobility” (p. 69, italics in original). 29

Given that this understanding of voice is arguably less tied to linguistic or semiotic varieties, I devote the rest of this section to two influential statements made by linguistic anthropologists: Irvine’s (2001) essay on style as principles of distinctiveness and Agha’s (e.g., 2005, 2007) concepts of registers and enregisterement.

IRVINE (2001) ON STYLE

Irvine’s (2001) essay articulates a number of points about “a sociolinguistic view of style” (p. 22). In addition to seeing styles as involving aesthetics, i.e., “consistency of linguistic features” (p. 22)—a common aspect of rhetoric and composition definitions of style—she argues that

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29 This view of voice vaguely resembles a more recent description from rhetoric and composition. Holcomb and Killingsworth (2010) write that in written texts (not spoken ones), “style is the moment of performance, the moment when what we want to say is realized through language and communicated to our readers” (p. 72).
styles only have meaning in contrast with others. Styles are thus “part of a system of distinction” (p. 22, italics in original). She writes that it is thus impossible to talk about individual styles “in isolation”; you need to attend to the “relationships among styles—to their contrasts, boundaries, and commonalities” (p. 22). Another aspect Irvine highlights is that style requires interpreters. Styles have distinctive meaning “only within a social framework (of witnesses who pay attention); it thus depends upon social evaluation” (p. 21). Irvine refers back to Peirce’s understanding of signs as requiring interpretants and writes that for a sign to have meaning, “it must be meaningful to, and at some level understood by, some persons whose actions are informed by it” (p. 22). She goes on to say that these co-constructed meanings are based “on the participant’s social position and point of view” (p. 22) and are also “culturally variable”—“local history and tradition” need to be considered (p. 22). The fact that stylistic meaning “depends on social evaluation” means that it interacts with language users’ “ideologized representations” (p. 21) of language, or “the speaker’s understandings of salient social groups, activities, and practices, including forms of talk” (p. 24). She argues, as a result, that ideologies about what people or texts sound like are important to study.31

Irvine also argues that distinctions between “dialect” (understood as a language variety of a group of users) and “register” (understood as a language variety of a situation) fall apart. In Javanese, for example, a more refined variety, Krama, pertains to “depersonalized, flat-affect,

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30 This principle shows up in my second case study chapter. It also is at play in Reiff and Bawarshi’s (2011) discussion of the prevalence of “not-talk” in genre classification, i.e., that it is common for students to say what a particular genre of writing is not like.
31 Irvine (2001) believes that “ideologies” is an important term to use, over “assumptions,” for example, because it emphasizes the fact that participants have different points of view, and ideologies are thus not uniformly shared: “Although ideology cannot simply be considered ‘false consciousness’ (see Eagleton 1991), there will always be some portions of an ideologically pervaded consciousness that would strike someone else, differently positioned, as false” (pp. 24-25).
and regulated by an ethic of proper order, peace, and calm,” whereas a coarser variety, Ngoko, is what “one loses one’s temper in” (Errington, 1984, p. 9, qtd. in Irvine, 2001, p. 29). Yet the level one chooses is based on the social rank of one’s addressee—e.g., “a high-ranking addressee is supposed to be relatively disengaged from worldly concerns and to ‘need’ protection from vulgarity and stormy emotion” (Irvine, 2001, p. 29-30). Speaking in a particular refined or coarse language level, therefore, not only conjures aspects of the situation (who one’s addressees are and whether it’s appropriate to display affect in their presence) but also particular types of people (the identity or role of the speaker and of the addressee) (Irvine, 2001, p. 30).32 And, Irvine describes, these varieties become resources people can draw on when they style-shift. Conjuring or avoiding “the ‘voices’ of others, or what they assume those voices to be,” facilitates “displaying attitudes” (p. 31). Given that dialect and register are intertwined, Irvine argues for “style” as the term of choice because it “places less emphasis on a variety as object-in-itself and more emphasis on processes of distinction.” Style, she finds, allows for emphasis on not just “institutionalized patterns and varieties” but also the “more subtle ways individuals navigate among available varieties and try to perform a coherent representation of a distinctive self” (p. 31). This approach resembles Coupland’s (2007) understanding of the term “styling” as the “creative, design-oriented processes” of the individual in constructing and performing certain identities (p. 3). Irvine also appreciates the term style because it does not imply only linguistic phenomena, whereas “register” and “dialect” do.

In summary, Irvine argues for researchers to focus less “on the specific features of a style…and more on the contrasts and relationships between styles,” as well as to attend to “the

32 This could be considered an example of orders of indexicality. What initially signaled a behavior toward others ultimately signaled what kind of person the speaker is. As Agha (2007) describes, “markers of respectfulness to others” gets “re-evaluated” as “marking one’s own respectability” (p. 187).
differentiating process—axes of distinctiveness that organize differentiation at many levels” (pp. 42-43)—including how ideologies organize distinctiveness through processes such as iconization, recursivity, and erasure (Irvine, 2001; Irvine & Gal, 2000). Her approach also focuses on the situated, co-constructed meanings of style, a useful perspective for rhetoric and composition scholars.

**AGHA ON REGISTER AND ENREGISTERMENT**

Agha (e.g., 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007) sees registers (which he also refers to as “register formations”) as a broader term than style and the product of large-scale processes of enregisterment. Agha considers registers to be associated with a wide range of varieties and practices, including those of law, military strategy, prayer, status, ethnicity, gender, the observance of respect and etiquette (2007, p. 148) and even “Standard English” (whose varieties are “promoted by institutions of such widespread hegemony that they are not ordinarily recognized as distinct registers at all” [2007, p. 146-7]). In his view, “dialects” and “sociolects” “are routinely and readily converted into registers” (2007, p. 135), and styles are co-occurrence patterns that can also become enregistered. Language varieties of differing types can thus be parts of registers or registers themselves.

What are registers, exactly? They are “reflexive models of the effects of speaking” (2005, p. 46), “cultural models of action”\(^3\) in which repertoires of linguistic and non-linguistic signs\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Metalinguistic terms like “polite language,” “upper-class speech,” and “scientific term,” he says, “hint at the existence of” these models, or folk understandings of different types of discourse (2007, p. 145).

\(^4\) A repertoire can be just linguistic or linguistic and nonlinguistic (what he calls “semiotic”). Models that link semiotic repertoires to particular types of people, relationships, and practices are “semiotic registers”; models that link linguistic repertoires to particular types of people, relationships, and practices are “discourse registers” (2007, pp. 81, 147). Semiotic repertoires might compose linguistic repertoires and also (for written registers) visual elements like
are indexically linked to “enactable pragmatic effects” such as “images of the person speaking (woman, upper-class person), the relationship of speaker to interlocutor (formality, politeness), the conduct of social practices (religious, literary, or scientific activity)” (2007, p. 145). A register must be recognized by some population of users, large or small. Agha describes a register as a “social regularity,” meaning that it is established by “the evaluative activities of others”—not just the activity of an individual user (2007, p. 153). However, although they are “social formations,” they are “not necessarily sociologically homogenous formations” (2007, p. 171, italics in original). He uses the term “ideological formations” (2007, p. 150) to hint at the tensions within register formations, including “competing valorizations” (see Agha, 2007, pp. 157-159). Agha considers “the extent and degree of sharedness” of a register an “empirical issue that requires systematic study in each case” (2007, p. 154). Although it is often assumed that a register’s forms and meanings are “uniformly shared,” he considers that “a very special case” and identifies “sociological fractionation,” in which a register is differently valued by different groups, to be “the more general case” (2007, p. 154).

 Registers are also “historical formations” that “change in both form and value over time” (2007, p. 148). Dimensions by which they might change include their repertoire (what kinds of linguistic and non-linguistic forms, their form classes, and how many forms), the range of their stereotypic indexical values (what kinds of personas, relationships, and practices are indexed, photographs and typography and (for spoken registers) particular types of clothing, bodily posture, and seating arrangements, to name just a few (Agha, 2007, p. 180). Agha (2007) uses similar examples as Irvine’s (2001), from Javanese, to show that concepts like “coarseness” and “refinement” often involve not just different vocabularies and prosodies but also different ways of holding one’s body, gesturing, and dressing.

Agha remarks, however, that “the orderliness of social life around facts of register use is not in general a ‘sharedness’ problem. It is a mutual coordination problem, a question of how partially overlapping perspectives on a register’s forms and values can yield orderly forms of interaction among its users” (2007, p. 154). I will return to this question of coordination in the conclusion chapter.
and whether they are positively or negatively viewed, and the domain of people acquainted with them (the number of people who recognize them and/or who are proficient in them) (2007, p. 169).

Agha considers any description of a register “merely a sociohistorical snapshot of a phase of enregisterment for particular users” (2007, p. 170). “Enregisterment,” one infers, is the more interesting process to study: he writes that a register “exists as a bounded object only to a degree set by sociohistorical processes of enregisterment” (2007, p. 168). Enregisterment is defined as the “processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population” (2007, p. 81). The process of enregisterment thus entails that the population of users is reflexive about their language—that they understand the stereotypic personas, relationships, and practices that the language conjures.

Returning to the difference between style and register, Agha states that the term “style” “under-differentiates” three phenomena. First, style refers to “co-occurrence styles”: an observable patterning of linguistic and/or non-linguistic signs. These patterns may not be perceptible or significant, however, which leads to the second meaning of style: “enregistered styles.” In this meaning of style, the co-occurrence styles are linked to stereotypical indexical meanings by language users—i.e., they are enregistered. (“Every register involves co-occurrence styles, some of which are assimilated into register models as enregistered styles” (2007, p. 186).) Once this happens, a third type of style can emerge: “strategic stylization” of this enregistered style, in which someone performs an enregistered style “for strategic ends” (2007, p. 187). Agha

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36 Agha (2007) dislikes the countability of the term “register,” for it implies that registers are “collections of objects—like button-s and pebble-s—that can be identified and enumerated in an unproblematic way,” as well as that “each register is a closed set of forms” and that each item has some kind of “inherent” meaning (p. 168).
gives an example of someone performing sports announcer talk: “anyone—not necessarily a sports announcer—who is acquainted with the register can formulate a social persona through the performance of criterial patterns in a way that is non-congruent with independently indexed facts of identity” (2007, p. 187). Enregistered styles, whether stylized or not, are thus part of registers—or could also encompass them. (In that case, though, they would be called registers, not styles.)

Agha also distinguishes between registers and voices, or “voicing phenomena.” He considers a “voice” a “figure of personhood” indexed by the linguistic (or nonlinguistic) signs and perceptible to readers or interlocutors through some kind of contrast with the rest of the text or through explicit identification of the voice (e.g., reported speech, proper name, pronoun, assignment of a certain segment of text to a speaker) (2005, pp. 43-45). Some figures of personhood indexed might be relevant only to a particular text (e.g., a Dickens novel) or occasion. But those that are enregistered by “many language users” to index some “social-demographic classification”—such as “masculine or feminine, as high- or low-caste, as a lawyer, doctor, priest, shaman, and so on” (2005, p. 45)—would be considered registers, or fragments of registers.

Although both Agha’s “register” and the “style” of contemporary sociolinguists like Bucholtz, Eckert, and Coupland consist of patterns of linguistic and nonlinguistic signs indexically linked to particular identities and practices by a group of language users, the sociolinguists are interested in how individuals craft distinct selves through style, whereas Agha

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37 Johnstone’s (2010) Rhetoric Society of America conference paper summarizes Agha’s approach to style and enregisterment for an audience of rhetoricians. Interestingly, she does not distinguish style from register; she focuses on enregistered styles (and strategic stylization) and the value of the concept of enregisterment.

38 He prefers “figure of personhood” because it does not have the linguistic (oral/aural) baggage of “voice” (2005, p. 39).
is interested in how enregisterment works on both macro and micro levels: how metapragmatic activity of various kinds typifies and shapes registers and makes them distinguishable from other co-textual semiotic activity; how registers grow and change; and how users contest and trope upon them.

Given the “coalition” of sociocultural linguistics that Bucholtz and Hall (2008) argue for, however, we should not be surprised to find sociolinguists drawing on the concept of “enregisterment” and linguistic anthropologists drawing on sociolinguists’ notions of style. Sociolinguist Johnstone, for instance, has written about Barbara Jordan’s “style” (including analyses based on Biber’s (1988) multi-dimensional analysis of registers) (see her 2009a chapter) as well as the enregisterment of Pittsburghese (see her 2009b, 2011 articles).

**A Sociocultural Definition of Style**

Butler (2008) calls on readers to “redefine style in a way that is meaningful to the field and that makes the study of style consonant with our disciplinary vision” (p. 157). In this section, I draw on aspects of the above literatures, especially on work from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, to develop my approach to and definition of style.

To articulate a definition, one must first decide on style’s relationship to the array of language-related terms that might consist of, encompass, or overlap with it, terms like dialect, register, genre, voice, stance, tone, and discourse. Depending on how these terms are defined, they could be seen as indexing individually distinctive elements of language, socially shared conventions, or some combination, and they could also be seen to describe different aspects of

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39 Studies of discourse—from applied linguistics and stylistics, sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, and rhetoric—often foreground one aspect, either the social or the personal. A classic example of socially recognizable written personae is Walker Gibson’s (1966) *Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy*. Gibson’s approach—identifying linguistic features, like the use of first- and
the same text. For instance, Biber and Conrad (2009) show how the same text can be analyzed for register, genre, and style (see also Ferguson, 1994, p. 25).

On the other hand, some linguistic anthropologists have resisted segmenting language varieties (dialect vs. register vs. genre vs. style) and argued that researchers should instead focus on the “multiple indexical resonances” in discourse and how they “serve as resources for the production and interpretation of social meaning” (Bauman, 2001, p. 77). Bauman illustrates why with an example from the genres of calls, spiels, and sales pitches by Mexican market vendors, showing that these genres also index situations (traditionally “registers”) and speakers (traditionally “dialects”). Irvine (2001) makes a similar argument with the example of Javanese, in which “the language levels [coarse v. refined] evoke both the situations characteristically connected with such responses and the persons characteristically manifesting them” (p. 30).

Writing for an audience of applied linguists, Prior, Hengst, and Duff (2011) remark on our limited vocabulary for describing such “forms of recognizability” and argue that more important than identifying, say, whether or not architecture students’ notebooks are a genre (as Medway, 2002, does), is to study how something recognizable emerges from “laminated interdiscursive processes.”

Although a fuller definition of “style” will appear in a few paragraphs, I will say here that I use “style” to encompass both socially shared and individually distinctive elements of second-person pronouns, that are distributed differently across styles (his term)—prefigures methods of corpus-based studies of writing and speech. Less frequently, other researchers explore the distinctiveness of particular texts, writers, or speakers (e.g., stylistic Hoover, 2007, on Henry James; sociolinguist Johnstone, 2009a, on Barbara Jordan; and rhetorician Stark, 1999, on Margaret Cavendish). And other researchers seek out the personal-within-the-social: what makes writers individually distinctive within socially shared features (e.g., applied linguist Hyland, 2010; sociolinguist Johnstone, 1996).
language\textsuperscript{40} and other semiotic resources—elements that other researchers, depending on their tradition, might fit under “dialect,” “register,” “style,” and “voice.” (I wish to preserve the distinction between genre and style because I see styles as pervading genres; see also MacDonald, 2002.) Using style in this broader way allows me to examine how individuals express themselves distinctively, and, more specifically, how individuals perceive their writing to stand out from particular conventions.

Even seemingly individually distinctive elements, however, draw on socially shared resources.\textsuperscript{41} Although language users are inherently creative, there are no unique signs. We communicate by combining the semiotic resources that surround us. Features that people might identify as part of their own ways of communicating are often ones that they have adapted from others. For example, someone who peeves over uses of “hopefully” as a sentence adverb was likely influenced by exposure to prescriptivist ideas. (The proscription against “hopefully,” in fact, began circulating in the early 1960s (Whitley, 1983).)

\textsuperscript{40} Here I follow Prior (2001), who rejects the binary view of “voice” as either personal or social and argues for an alternate perspective that sees voice as “simultaneously personal and social because discourse is understood as fundamentally historical, situated, and indexical” (p. 55).

\textsuperscript{41} See, e.g., Bakhtin (1986), who describes an individual’s speech to some degree as the process of \textit{assimilation}—more or less creative—of others’ words (and not the words of a language). Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others’ words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of “our-own-ness,” varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate. (p. 89)
I prefer style as my broad and fundamental term for several reasons. The first is that it is used in more fields than “voice” or “register.” Duncan and Vanguri (2013b) note the benefit of the term’s prevalence for composition pedagogy and research:

Because style has homes in literature, linguistics, rhetoric, technical communication, and other fields, teachers and scholars in composition have multiple traditions from which to draw, reinforcing composition’s existing propensity to reference other fields. Style also allows for more productive cross-disciplinary efforts, because style is a term that is already familiar, if not ubiquitous, in these other realms. As such, style can act as a language that guides our discipline by defining our mutual priorities and differences. (p. xii)

Although I have argued above that definitions of style in rhetoric and composition have tended to be undefined or defined loosely, or have varied widely, I hope that the definition of style I provide in this dissertation can provide some structure.

In addition, “style” allows me to move more easily into multiple modes, given “voice’s” roots in the linguistic and, in particular, the oral/aural (see, e.g., Agha [2005, p. 39] and Bowden [1999]); to avoid the connotations of “voice” as the emanation of a single, authentic self in composition’s expressivist tradition (see, e.g., Holcomb & Killingsworth, 2010), and to avoid “voice’s” emphasis on production over the co-construction of meaning (Irvine, 2001).

Drawing on the sociocultural theories described above, I define style as the dynamic co-construction of typified indexical meanings (types of people, practices, situations, texts) performed and/or perceived in a single sign or a stretch of co-occurring signs; this process, engaging writers/speakers/produces and readers/interlocutors/receivers, is influenced by participants’ language ideologies. The following sections will elaborate on and justify the parts of this definition, drawing on the literature I have just reviewed.

42 Agha (e.g., 2007) sees a place for style and voice but finds “register” the more fundamental and broader term, whereas Irvine (2001) and Eckert (2012) argue for style as the more important and encompassing term.
Typified Indexical Meanings (Types of People, Practices, Situations, Texts)

Style moves our attention from the language or other semiotic resources to the meanings that they index: types of people (e.g., Chicagoan, woman, kindergarten teacher), types of practices and situations (e.g., prayer, TED talk, formal situation), and types of texts (e.g., Bible, text message, diary). In fact, as Abbott and Eubanks (2005) remark, many adjectives used to describe styles, like “conversational” and “elegant,” are metonyms (or, more specifically, synecdoches), in that they treat the language or other semiotic resources as an extension or part of a larger whole, like a type of person or situation.

Focusing on the indexical meanings of language and other signs unites seemingly disparate topics in rhetoric and composition studies under the category of “style.” For instance, the habitual be, an article error, a nominalization, and the rhetorical device of anaphora can all be seen as conveying “styles” because of their indexical meanings: respectively, African American Vernacular English, a non-native speaker of English, a bureaucrat (for style handbook-writers like Joseph Williams and Richard Lanham), and a sense of gravity.

The indexical meanings of style are prominent foci in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, experimental studies of voice in composition/applied linguistics, and applied linguistics’ work on discoursal identity (e.g., Ivanič, 1998). In rhetoric and composition and stylistics, however, definitions of style tend to neglect indexical meanings by viewing style as merely a set of choices. One exception is Holcomb and Killingsworth (2010), which emphasizes not just textual patterns but also the social and cultural meanings that styles index and how style enables the performance of certain identities or stances.

Dynamic Co-Construction of Meanings
Above, I noted indexical meanings of the habitual *be*, an article error, a nominalization, and anaphora. These meanings are not inherent in the linguistic forms but are constructed by writers and readers. As Peirce (1940) has theorized, a sign needs an interpretant. Going further, Vološinov (1973) writes that a “‘word’ is precisely the *product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*” (p. 86, italics in original).

The fact that utterances and other signs are co-constructed, however, does not entail that writer and reader agree on the meaning of the form. A nominalization might, for Williams and Lanham, be “officialese” or an attempt to make something sound more important than it is; for another reader, that same nominalization might be essential to conveying a particular scientific concept. Similarly, the treatment of “homework” as a count rather than a mass noun (“homeworks”) might sound natural and unproblematic to one reader but erroneous to another. Thus, because the same semiotic form can index different meanings across individuals in the same group or across different groups, co-constructed meanings are necessarily dynamic. And, of course, these meanings can change across contexts and over time.

Attention to the dynamism and co-construction of stylistic meaning can be found in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, experimental studies of voice in composition/applied linguistics, and experimental studies of readers in stylistics. In linguistic anthropology, for instance, Agha (e.g., 2007) emphasizes that registers are undergoing constant flux in the size and meanings of their forms and in the number of people who are proficient in or can recognize them. But in work primarily involving text analysis—most rhetoric, composition, and stylistics work,

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43 The material, of course, may not necessarily be alphabetic and print; styles may also be constructed by speakers and interlocutors or by producers and receivers/interpreters of other kinds of semiotic material. This argument will be addressed in its own subheading below.
as well as certain areas of applied linguistics—the readers’ and interlocutors’ construction of stylistic meaning is ignored or assumed but not pursued.

It is significant that I define style as “the dynamic co-construction of...meanings,” not “the dynamic, co-constructed...meanings.” That is, I marry style with “co-construction”—a fluid, active process—and not with “meanings”—which are staid, concrete, and artifactual. I thereby seek to emphasize style as an action, activity, or process, informed in this by researchers such as Coupland (2007), Agha (e.g., 2007), and Becker (1995).

Coupland’s (2007) term “styling” tries to shed the “thing-ness” of the noun “style.” “We are mainly interested in styles (noun),” he writes, “for how they have come to be and for how people ‘style’ (verb) meaning into the social world” (p. 2). Coupland focuses on how people style identities, whether fleeting or stable, with particular semiotic resources; Agha’s (e.g., 2007) term “enregisterment” describes what Coupland labels “how they have come to be.” As I discussed above, Agha (2007) identifies “enregisterment” as the “processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population” (p. 81). Combining elements of both terms, Becker (1995) argues for the term “languaging” over “language” to move away “from an idea of language as something accomplished, apart from this activity we have shared, to the idea of languaging as an ongoing process...something that is being done and reshaped constantly” (pp. 414-5).

This part of the definition, thus, highlights not only that style is the performance of a particular identity (or alignment with particular typified indexical meanings) but also that style’s meanings are constantly jostling one another and being reshaped. Style involves negotiated and negotiating meanings; it is not a static object or artifact.
Influence of Participants’ Language Ideologies

Unconsciously underlying or overtly fueling the co-construction of meaning are participants’ language ideologies. Defined as “beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use” that “often index the political economic interests” of speakers or groups, may be “explicitly articulated or embodied in communicative practice,” and are usually “incomplete, or ‘partially successful,’ attempts to rationalize language usage” (Kroskrity, 2010, p. 192). A research area mostly within North American linguistic anthropology, the tradition emerged after Silverstein’s (1979) article, “Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology” (Kroskrity, 2010, p. 192), which argued for attention to the effect of ideology on language structure and use.

Broadly, language ideologies shape the choices that composers and speakers make when they select semiotic forms, consciously or unconsciously, and when they (and readers and interlocutors) perceive typified indexical meanings in those forms. For instance, a writer might avoid passive voice because she believes the active is more “direct” and “clear.” At the same time, ideologies are “incomplete,” or “partially successful,” as Kroskrity writes; they do not and cannot fully explain practice. The same writer who might try to avoid the passive will inevitably miss certain uses of it. The quite natural limits of people’s awareness of how they use language explains why Strunk and White, famous promoters of the active voice, use the passive throughout The Elements of Style as well as mislabel uses of the passive (Pullum, 2010, in press).

Language ideologies can be the typified meanings people construct in styles (e.g., the indexical meanings of habitual be, or an article error, or anaphora) or beliefs about how communication works (e.g., that meaning can be universally clear) or the nature of style (e.g., that a discipline has a discrete style that experts share; that styles can be learned by imitation). Language ideologies can surface in a variety of implicit and explicit ways (e.g., Agha, 2007;
Inoue, 2006; Lucy, 1993; Silverstein, 1993), including metalinguistic or metapragmatic discourse (Woolard, 1998, p. 9), that is, formal and informal accounts that describe language and its use. Metapragmatic discourse about writing style, which will be revisited throughout the dissertation, can include discussions of style, descriptive labels like “narrative” or “stereotypically academic,” genres like writing guides and books, advice like “show, don’t tell,” and embodied evaluations like making a disgusted face when speaking words in a particular style.

Driving the workings of language ideologies are three semiotic processes enunciated by Irvine and Gal (2000): iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure. These processes, which allow language users to “construct ideological representations of linguistic differences” (p. 37), provide useful ways for thinking about the relationship between ideology and stylistic practice. In iconization, linguistic features are seen to not merely index a particular type of person or activity but also to resemble them, “as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence” (p. 37). The language ideology thus identifies “qualities supposedly shared by the social image and the linguistic image” and makes the relationship seem “inherent” (p. 38). Fractal recursivity operates like a fractal in geometry, whereby a distinction (e.g., between groups or varieties) is “reproduced within each side of a dichotomy or partition…or, conversely…intra-group oppositions may be projected outward onto inter-group relations” (Irvine, 2001, p. 33). In erasure, the language ideology simplifies a phenomenon, and “facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained.

44 I follow Inoue (2006) in viewing metapragmatic and metalinguistic as interchangeable, “since discourse about any level of language, from structure to use, is ultimately about using language” (p. 18). See also Lucy (1993, p. 17).
away” (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 38). As an example, “a social group or language might be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation discarded” (p. 38).

*Meanings Performed and/or Perceived by Writers/Speakers/Producers and Readers/Interlocutors/Receivers*

This aspect of the definition affirms that style has a multisemiotic nature. In other words, stylistic meanings are performed and/or perceived not just by writers and readers but also by speakers and interlocutors or other types of producers and (albeit a problematically passive term) receivers.

In composition, certain branches of applied linguistics, and stylistics, the focus has attached to and remained on linguistic style, either spoken or written. But linguistic styles engage more than just language. Face-to-face conversation involves not just talk but also eye gaze, body position, facial expression, gesture, laughter, and prosody. And an alphabetic essay, to fit certain generic requirements, must be on certain paper (white), in a certain color of ink (black), with certain margin sizes and fonts, all of which combine to project a certain kind of writer.

Sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology initially focused on oral styles but moved to consider the ways oral styles co-occurred with visual, material, kinesthetic, and other semiotic resources. Within sociolinguistics, the notion of style as bricolage foregrounds that “the elements of a style may be taken from any available semiotic material” (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 11) and that these elements are then “interpreted and combined with other resources to construct a

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45 Note, though, that stylistics has recently been applied to multimodal texts; see Nørgaard, 2011, for an essay on teaching multimodal stylistics.

46 The concept of bricolage was introduced by Claude Levi-Strauss in the 1960s and applied to style by media theorist Dick Hebdige (1984). Eckert then adapted it for sociolinguistics.
more complex meaningful entity” (Eckert, 2008, pp. 456-7). Likewise in rhetorical studies within communication, researchers have begun to analyze semiotic resources that co-occur with language, looking at, for instance, aspects of “working-class style” within gun culture (Brummett, 2008) and the physical appearance of public intellectuals (Young, 2014).

Although this dissertation focuses on writing styles, I treat style as constituted by multisemiotic resources for two reasons: first, in order to speak to studies of style across disciplines, and, second, to acknowledge that writing styles are produced through multiple semiotics and may bear residue from them. A gesture that a colleague makes to characterize an argument might lead a writer to tinker with the actual text, for example, or, a feature of one person’s writing style may be modeled on that of someone else’s speech style, past or present.

A Single Sign to a Stretch of Co-Occurring Signs

Stylistic meanings can be perceived in and/or performed from a single sign, such as a word or particular intonation (e.g., Rampton, 2005), or a stretch of co-occurring signs, such as a word or stretch of utterances in a particular intonation. The stylistic meanings of these signs can accumulate into patterns, allowing readers to develop notions—not necessarily uniform—of a particular author’s or text’s “style.”

The semiotic constituents of these patterns might be better understood as stylistic “bits.” Both the specific term “bits” and the larger idea it indicates are inspired by Blommaert’s (2010) view of people’s linguistic knowledge not as competence in entire languages but as multiple...

47 Eckert (2008) provides an example of bricolage with clothing style: two teenage girls, who identified with the “preppy” group (which wore straight-legged blue jeans) but wanted to distance themselves from the group’s expectation of “extreme conformity,” appropriated an element from the counterculture, “new wave” style of dressing (teens who wore all black and pegged pants): they pegged their jeans (p. 457).
“truncated repertoires” that are “composed of specialized but partially and unevenly developed resources. We never know ‘all’ of a language,” he writes; “we always know specific bits and pieces of it” (p. 23). The concept of stylistic bits foregrounds the fact that styles are not homogeneous but composed of many discrete elements of stylistic material and that these bits are constantly shifting and often have quite different origins. For instance, in one child’s text analyzed in Kamberelis and Scott (1992), bits of language were inspired by and even directly lifted from both Steve Winwood and Jesse Jackson, among other sources.

In rhetoric and composition and literacy studies, Bakhtinian literature on “voice” has captured the ways in which our texts—written, oral, and otherwise—are a blend of voices. (See, e.g., Bowden’s [1999] dialogic stylistic analysis of professional and student texts.) Conversely, style literature has approached styles as univocal stretches of text (e.g., rhetoric’s high, middle, and low styles). Although Holcomb and Killingsworth (2010) acknowledge that “most authors move back and forth [between high, middle, and low styles] as the occasion demands, often within the same text” (p. 79), the rhetorical tradition provides little support for viewing texts as having more than one “style” or as composed of heterogeneous stylistic bits.

**Research Questions**

I began my research interested in how writers in different disciplines understood, practiced, taught, and learned disciplinary writing styles. I came to a more specific set of questions as I began to analyze my data; write up my findings for various venues; engage with the literature, noting the dearth of research in rhetoric and composition that attends to the processes shaping style and the prevalence of notions in WID that disciplinary styles are singular,
homogeneous, and stable; and craft a definition of style that raised my awareness of such questions and helped me begin to answer them. The questions are as follows:

- How do academic writers represent styles in talk, text, and embodied actions?
- How do groups of interacting writers negotiate style in their composing activity?
- How stable are these representations and practices within individuals, within groups, and across groups?

The chapters that follow address these questions.

**Chapter Outline**

Chapter 2 introduces the methods and methodological framework that ground the research. I used convenience and snowball sampling to identify graduate students, upper-level undergraduates, and faculty members across the university. I describe issues of consent and identifiability and then detail how I collected, reduced, analyzed, and presented the data. I conducted literacy history interviews and collected texts and associated drafts; then, with a narrower set of eight focal groups in ecology, film history, history, literary and film studies, music, and psychology, I conducted text- and discourse-based interviews with writers and, when possible, with people (e.g., advisors and coauthors) who gave feedback on, or otherwise shaped, the drafts. I also argue for the importance of video-recorded interview data whenever possible, in order to capture participants’ gestures, facial expressions, and body movements. These “embodied actions” can be valuable sources of information on how participants understand style as well as on their attitudes toward particular stylistic choices. I conclude with a discussion of the limitations of my methodological choices.

Drawing from across my data set, Chapter 3 explores the foundations of writers’ style representations in textualist ideologies (Collins, 1996) and the Conduit Metaphor of
communication (Reddy, 1979). Throughout, I show how the semiotic processes of erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000) and adequation and distinction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004) drive writers’ representations. First, I analyze the metaphors underlying writers’ conceptions of style contrasts, such as the metaphor of Communication as Journey within notions of style as linear versus circular. I examine linguistic but also nonlinguistic representations of styles—embodied actions such as facial expressions and gestures—as participants may gesture instead of use an adjective to describe a particular style. I then describe how such representations emerge and are enacted in participants’ lives and texts. They develop through encounters with institutional gatekeepers such as journal reviewers, or through interactions with mentors and professors. Through these experiences, writers received training in particular ways of inspecting their styles, practices that reproduced textualist ideologies and the Conduit Metaphor’s ideal of clarity. Writers revealed that they also viewed their writing development through the lens of these textualist ideologies that assume the existence of universal qualities of good writing. I conclude with a discussion of how and why writers’ representations often fail to describe the complexity of their own or others’ practices, a theme explored in more depth in Chapters 4 and 5. Illuminating the connections between styles and the particular kinds of writers my participants hoped to be, I begin to uncover the political and ideological work of style representations.

My first case study (Chapter 4) draws on interviews with several groups of writers in the Department of Psychology, focusing especially on a senior psychology major (Corinne), her thesis advisor (Harold), and the professor teaching her thesis-writing course (Dan). I first detail how conceptions of styles can become reified. The student and her two professors develop metapragmatic understandings of the professors’ styles, such as, for instance, Dan’s “narrative style” and Harold’s “stereotypical academic style.” Yet I trace how despite the writers’ explicit
metapragmatic representations, these “styles” are constantly on the move. In Corinne’s eyes, for instance, Harold’s style expands to become more narrative and then contracts to become more stereotypically academic. I then move to illustrate several features of style: the ways in which particular sentences in writers’ texts index different meanings for different readers, the quite contextual nature of seemingly universal style principles like “show, don’t tell,” and the hold of particular ideologies about good writing and good writers even among those who appreciate the heterogeneity of stylistic practice. By examining style representations, practices, and principles among a group of interacting writers in psychology, I reveal the dynamic, co-constructed nature of style amid the grip of ideologies of universality and consistency.

My second case study (Chapter 5) illustrates more deeply how metaphor and embodied actions such as gestures can be valuable sites for comparing writers’ stylistic understandings and practices. It explores how three writers in ecology and entomology—a postdoc, her Ph.D. advisor, and her postdoc advisor—understand and enact a disciplinary “writing style.” In both their talk and their gestures, the three writers expressed broad agreement on the qualities of good scientific writing. However, when I asked them about their preferences for particular stylistic choices in their texts during discourse-based interviews, their views tended to conflict, and they sometimes even changed their minds about what they had preferred a year earlier. These disagreements complicate popular notions that a particular discipline has a style uniformly shared among experts and that experts have a stable mastery of that style.

In the conclusion, I outline the project’s implications for those who teach, learn, and research particular “styles.” The analysis shows that even disciplinary insiders may not agree on whether a particular sentence is “clear,” may change their minds about textual choices over time, and may apply so-called universal principles like “show, don’t tell” differently across genres,
texts, and portions of texts. Given this variability, I suggest that acquiring a nuanced understanding of disciplinary writing involves staying open and attuned to the ways in which its “style” is in flux—in writers’ beliefs and practices. For researchers, I argue that analyzing talk around writing, including embodied actions, can reveal how particular stylistic choices are interpreted and can disclose the profoundly embodied nature of stylistic understanding. Finally, I assert that a sociocultural theory of style adds much-needed structure to the disparate conversations about style in multiple fields and offers a productive framework for future research on the embodied, situated histories of styles for individuals and disciplines.
In qualitative research, human behavior that seems uniform is actually a complex and perspectival social construction. Although “humans often seem to have created similar meaning interpretations,” Erickson (1986) argues that “these surface similarities mask an underlying diversity: in a given situation of action one cannot assume that the behaviors of two individuals...have the same meaning to the two individuals” (p. 126). This statement could very well describe style. What appear to be stretches of signs homogenously indexing a single type of writer or practice—e.g., Bob Markley’s style, or a “dense style”—are composed of heterogeneous stylistic bits to which writers and readers may attribute different meanings. A sociocultural approach to style thus entails a particular blend of methodologies: a qualitative one, in which I seek to understand what style looks like from participants’ perspectives, and a more top-down methodology based in text analysis, which involves comparing what participants say with what they actually do in their texts. These methodologies involve a mix of methods, including extended conversations around texts; interviews with not single writers in isolation but writers who work together; “parallel discourse-based interviews” (Prior, 1995, 1998) with co-authors in order to identify the extent to which their beliefs and practices about style align; and videorecording when possible to capture multisemiotic understandings and enactments of styles.

This chapter introduces the methods and methodological framework that ground my research. In it, I justify the choice of academic disciplines as a site for the study of style; outline my types of participants and recruitment strategies; discuss how my participants and I negotiated

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issues of consent and identifiability; detail methods of data collection, analysis, and presentation; explore how I, as the researcher, shaped the interviews; and examine limitations of the methods and methodology.

**Research Sites**

The nature and development of specialized styles could be explored in any community or workplace setting, as every site has its specialized discourse practices, along with its ideologies about what these practices are and how they should be learned and taught. Academia, however, is a particularly useful site in which to investigate the meanings of writing style. First, a university offers access to multiple disciplines, allowing me to develop a generalized understanding of the phenomena of style and style acquisition. Second, unlike professional workplaces where employees have already participated in academic programs (e.g., medicine, law, accounting, nursing), academia is a site where a great deal of explicit teaching and evaluation of writing takes place on the undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels—from classroom assessments and peer review to feedback on manuscripts. “Style” is often an explicit topic of discussion, where students and instructors must produce specialist language but also desire to speak to as wide an audience as possible, and where newcomers may feel ambivalent about aligning with the identities indexed by this language (e.g., Attenborough, 2011; Benwell & Stokoe, 2005; Ivanič, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Looker, 2011; Olinger, 2011).

The main location of this study is the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). However, because I interview people who have given feedback on my focal participants’ writing, my site extends to a few other universities in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, given my use of convenience sampling, one of my focal participants is a friend who attended another university.
Participant Recruitment and Types

I sought to interview writers who were advanced enough in their discipline to have a sense of what disciplinary style looked and sounded like: i.e., graduate students, postdocs, and faculty members. I also included two college seniors in my study, as they were writing honors theses that were meant to resemble or even turn into published journal articles. My study has participants at three levels of participation: “primary,” “secondary,” and “one-time.”

Primary Participants

Primary participants were graduate students, faculty members, or upper-level undergraduates. I had separate consent forms for primary participants I would be interviewing in their role as “writer” and those I would be interviewing in their role as “mentor/editor” (e.g., if I interviewed a journal editor about how he or she worked with writers). It turned out that all primary participants except one, Jing Jing, fit the “writer” role; in this interview with Jing Jing, Jing Jing discussed her work teaching a graduate seminar and talked through her comments on a particularly exemplary student paper.

I tried to recruit some primary participants who received their secondary or postsecondary education in countries outside of what Kachru has called the “inner circle” of English speakers (Kachru & Nelson, 1996) because I wanted my study to reflect some of the linguistic diversity on campus and because of my interest in style ideologies and practices when English is an additional language.

I used convenience and snowball sampling to identify primary participants. Some primary participants were friends and acquaintances or my friends’ and colleagues’ friends, colleagues, or spouses. Primary participants also introduced me to, or told me about, new people,
including students they taught, friends they had, or colleagues they worked with. (Table 2.1, below, indicates how I met each primary participant.)

Phase I of data collection consisted of literacy history interviews and text collection. I completed literacy history interviews with 20 primary participants and collected texts from 19 of them; one student wanted to ask his advisor and committee member for permission to share texts, and he never got back to me about their decision. Thirteen of the primary participants received most of their schooling in the U.S. or Canada, and seven received secondary education, college, or master’s degrees outside of North America: in China, India, Iran, and Turkey.

Phase 2 of data collection consisted of follow-up interviews about texts and interviews with relevant secondary participants. I completed Phase 2 with eight of the primary participants (and any relevant secondary participants I had access to, described below). These “focal participants” promised particularly rich data, were especially engaged in the study, and/or were easiest to access. (Table 2.1, below, indicates the primary participants with whom I completed data collection; see also Appendix A for more comprehensive information on the data collected for eight focal groups.) I hope to complete Phase 2 with a number of the other primary participants, but this dissertation will mostly analyze the experiences of the eight focal participants.

I offered participants the choice between identification of their real name or use of a pseudonym. Full names in the table below indicate the former; first names indicate the latter.

Table 2.1. Master list of primary participants and data collection status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Primary Participant</th>
<th>How I Met Them</th>
<th>Data Collection Complete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Ashley Bennett (postdoc)</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Andrew (Ph.D. student)²</td>
<td>Ashley’s colleague</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Andrew is his real name; he preferred that only his first name be used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Participant Information</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>Bethany Cutts (professor)</td>
<td>friend (gym)</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Studies</td>
<td>Jing Jing Chang (professor)</td>
<td>Dongxin’s colleague</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>Zak Lasemi (professor)</td>
<td>friend (gym)</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Dongxin Zou (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>friend of friend</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Lin (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Dongxin’s colleague</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary &amp; Film Studies</td>
<td>Debojoy Chanda (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>friend (grad school)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Jennifer Lansing (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>friend (neighborhood)</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Heng (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>husband of friend</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Sevilen (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Heng’s colleague</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Sunil (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Heng’s colleague</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Laura Usiskin (cello fellow)</td>
<td>friend (high school)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Dan Simons (professor)</td>
<td>Ashley showed me his writing guide</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Corinne (college senior)</td>
<td>Dan’s student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Mary (college senior)</td>
<td>Dan’s student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Planning</td>
<td>Megan (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Andrew’s colleague</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Studies</td>
<td>Jamie (professor)</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Studies</td>
<td>Derek Mueller (professor)</td>
<td>sent cold email</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Studies</td>
<td>Jim Purdy (professor)</td>
<td>Jamie’s colleague</td>
<td>Phase I only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I initially tried to find two primary participants per discipline. Doing so, I thought, would allow me to gain a modicum of familiarity in a discipline as well as to better understand the diversity of a discipline’s stylistic practices and ideologies through triangulation. Not surprisingly, I quickly learned that disciplinary boundaries were difficult to draw but that this was not a bad thing. For instance, I was excited to recruit both Ashley and Andrew, members of Sarah’s lab group in the UIUC Department of Crop Sciences. I soon learned, however, that Andrew was not actually doing research for Sarah; his advisor had left for another university, and Sarah had stepped in as what he called his “unofficial advisor,” writing letters for him and inviting him to lab meetings. Andrew considered his work in horticulture to be quite different from the work of the others in the lab, whom he perceived to have more “leeway to be creative”

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3 Corinne is her real name; she preferred that just her first be used.
and, in their use of concepts like “paradigm,” a more social science bent. Given that styles involve writers “negotiate[ing] their positions and goals within a system of distinctions and possibilities” (Irvine, 2001, p. 24), Andrew’s perceptions of his own field’s style expectations in contrast to those of other lab members are extremely relevant to this research. My study design, in fact, naturally introduced me to more than one person per “field” because of my plan to interview secondary participants.

*Secondary Participants*

Secondary participants are people who work with primary participants on their writing—and, for the most part, who commented on the texts that primary participants shared. Secondary participants were “literacy brokers” (Lillis & Curry, 2010) who included co-authors, advisors, mentors, and course professors. (One exception is Jing Jing, a secondary participant to Dongxin but a primary participant in her role as mentor of graduate students in a course.) Table 2.2 lists the 12 secondary participants I interviewed in connection with my eight focal primary participants. (Appendix A also includes this information.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Primary Participant</th>
<th>Secondary Participant (Relationship to Primary Participant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Ashley Bennett (postdoc)</td>
<td>Claudio Gratton (Ph.D. advisor) Sarah Lovell (postdoc advisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Studies</td>
<td>Jing Jing Chang (professor)</td>
<td>Adam (Ph.D. student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Dongxin Zou (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Jing Jing Chang (mentor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary &amp; Film Studies</td>
<td>Debojoy Chanda (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Anustup Basu (advisor) Manisha Basu (committee member) Bob Markley (course professor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Laura Usiskin (cello fellow)</td>
<td>Paul Hawkshaw (supervisor at Norfolk Chamber Music Festival)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Dan Simons (professor)</td>
<td>Christopher Chabris (co-author)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Corinne (college senior)</td>
<td>Dan Simons (course professor) Harold (thesis advisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Mary (college senior)</td>
<td>Dan Simons (course professor) Mikhail Lyubanksy (thesis advisor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One-Time Participants

The final category of participant in my study is the one-time participant, someone who interacts with primary participants during times when I was observing. I conducted three observations, but only one yielded one-time participants (for details, see the Limitations section). I therefore had two one-time participants, both members of Sarah’s lab group in the Department of Crop Sciences. (The other two lab members present were primary participants, Andrew and Ashley.) I invited the one-time participants to participate as primary participants, but neither responded to my recruitment email.

Summary

Although I started out with 20 primary participants, this dissertation focuses mostly on 8 focal groups of 18 primary and secondary participants in the sciences and social sciences (ecology, psychology) and humanities (literature, film history, history, music). This smaller group consists of two college seniors, four graduate students, one postdoctoral student, and 11 faculty members. The groupings range from co-authors to students and people giving them feedback, whether advisors, course professors, supervisors, or mentors. See Appendix A for a summary of the data collected from the eight focal groups.

Consent and Identifiability

My participants had a high degree of control over the amount, type, and use of the data. Given that authors have the right to claim authorship for their work as well as to protect their identity, my general consent form for primary and secondary participants (see Appendix B) allowed people to specify whether they wanted their real name used or preferred that I give them a pseudonym. It also allowed participants to specify whether they would allow video-recording
(or just audio-recording) and, if they chose the former, if they were comfortable with my using images of their face, or if they preferred that I create line-drawings for still images and use x-ray versions of videos.

In addition to the general consent form, I asked participants to complete a date-specific form every time we met (See Appendix C, Release for the Recording of an Event). This form allowed participants to control whether, for that particular interview, I could audio-record, video-record, or photograph them. It also allowed them to control how I used this particular recording in publications or presentations and gave an option that they could be identifiable, or not, for this particular recording (see Figure 2.1):

![Image](image)

**Figure 2.1. Excerpt from Release for the Recording of an Event**

This date-specific form, when interviewing primary participants the second time (and sometimes more), thus provided an opportunity for us to further specify and, if necessary, to renegotiate issues of consent for that particular recording.

There are a number of cases when identifiability becomes a complex issue: in the case of sharing published texts but requesting a pseudonym and in the case when, e.g., a primary participant requests that their real name be used but the secondary participant requests a pseudonym (or vice versa). I will explore some of the implications of these difficult cases below.

*Published Texts and Pseudonyms*
I conveyed to participants that even if I gave them a pseudonym, total anonymity would be impossible given the contextual nature of the data. My general consent form, however, noted that if participants shared published texts, I *would need* to use their real name in order to quote from or represent those texts:

> To somewhat limit your identifiability, I can use a pseudonym for your name in all of my drafts and final reports of this research. (However, if some of the texts that you provide for the research are published texts, then I would need to use your real name in order to quote from or represent these texts.)

The unstated reason for doing this was to avoid violating copyright, which might happen if I quoted from a published text without citing it.

All but one of the participants who insisted on pseudonyms and who shared writing were undergraduate or graduate students who did not plan to submit those texts for publication. The exception was Sunil, who asked for a pseudonym and shared drafts of a co-authored manuscript that was accepted for publication. I did not make him a focal participant.

*Connected Participants with Conflicting Preferences for Anonymity*

Occasionally, primary and secondary participants had conflicting preferences for whether they wanted to be anonymous. This happened in the case of advisor-advisee relationships. When the advisor asked for their real name to be used and the advisee requested a pseudonym, this was not a problem because the primary participant was not planning on publishing the work shared with me (Mary, Adam). The only complication with identifiability was that Harold, who is Corinne’s advisor, requested a pseudonym, whereas Corinne preferred her real (first) name be used. I have kept the wishes of both, which risks Harold’s identifiability to some extent. Fortunately, Corinne was working on an unpublished thesis during the time of data collection, so
I have not quoted from published texts (whose copyright restrictions would obligate me to fully name both co-authors).

Data Collection

I collected textual data as well as over 46 hours of interviews in three phases: (1) initial literacy history interviews with primary participants, along with text collection; (2) text-based interviews with focal primary participants and with secondary participants; and (3) additional interviews (and text collection) with primary participants as needed.

Phase 1: Literacy History Interviews and Text Collection

After meeting with the participant to describe the study, we would set up a meeting for the first interview. Before the interview started, the person signed the general consent form (Appendix B) and a date-specific consent form (Appendix C).

These semi-structured interviews fit into the genre of the literacy history interview (see, e.g., Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Brandt, 2001): autobiographical accounts of a person’s experiences reading and writing over their lifetime. In conversations ranging from 1-2 hours, which I video-recorded when the participant allowed it, we discussed the participant’s writing experiences in high school, college, graduate school, and beyond, especially with various advisors, and their understandings of expectations for academic writing in their field. In all the interviews, I felt it was important to not impose a particular understanding of “style.” As a result, I did not define the term “style” when I used it, and I asked about the influence of both social (e.g., disciplinary conventions) and individual elements (e.g., what they felt made their writing unique) on
their views and practices. (See Appendix D for an example of literacy history interview questions for Debojoy’s interview.)

At the end of the interview, the participant and I discussed which writing projects I might “follow” that s/he had worked on or was currently working on. For each project, I sought to collect as many drafts as the person had, along with comments from co-authors, advisors, reviewers, or colleagues. The purpose of collecting these process documents was to reconstruct “text histories,” for which I aimed to gather “as much information as possible about the history of a text, including the drafts produced, the different people involved—including authors, reviewers, translators, editors, and academic colleagues—the chronology of involvement and the nature of their impact on the text and its trajectory” (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 4). Sometimes participants had texts with drafts and comments or other process documents; other times, they did not, or did not feel comfortable sharing them. (See Appendix A for a list of texts collected from participants, including writing projects they shared and other texts they shared or I collected.)

If it seemed relevant, I introduced the possibility of my observing activities related to the primary participants’ writing, such as lab meetings or advising sessions. This was more difficult to collect than I thought, mostly because many participants shared projects that had already been completed. For instance, Corinne met weekly with her advisor, but we discussed that it would better fit their relationship if she met and gave me an update afterwards than if I attended each weekly meeting. I was, however, able to attend and audio-record one meeting of Sarah’s lab group. Two of the attendees who participated were “one-time participants” (see Appendix E, Release for a One-Time Participant).
Phase 2: Text- and Discourse-Based Interviews

The second phase of the study involved conducting follow-up text- and discourse-based interviews with primary participants and interviewing secondary participants. (See Appendix D for an example of text- and discourse-based interview questions with a primary participant, Laura.) At the end of follow-up interviews with primary participants, I asked them if they’d feel comfortable with my contacting one or more of the people who had commented on the texts we had discussed. (In the case of Debojoy, I interviewed two people who had not commented on the texts he shared—his advisor and committee member—because I thought doing so would provide a fuller contextualization of his writing history and experiences, especially as all three received master’s degrees in English literature from Jadavpur University in Calcutta, India.)

If the primary participant were comfortable with my contacting a secondary participant, they signed a permission form (Appendix F, Permission to Contact a Secondary Participant) that I could show to the secondary participant if I needed to. (I never had to.) I then emailed the secondary participants to ask if they’d be interested in an interview. A few primary participants wanted to first alert the secondary participants that I would be writing.

In a few cases, a potential secondary participant did not respond to my email. In a few other cases, I decided not to interview some secondary participants in order to manage my own research time and attention. For example, one of Dongxin’s friends proofread some of her manuscripts; Dongxin sent a commented-on draft after we did the text- and discourse-based interview, but by then I had begun to focus my energies on recruiting new primary participants. For Corinne and Mary, I interviewed Dan and their advisor, but decided I did not have time at that point to interview Dan’s TA, who gave feedback on drafts.
Like literacy history interviews, text- and discourse-based interviews elicit writers’ metalinguistic knowledge. Instead of discussing the topic of style in general, participants can ground their views in specific words, phrases, and sentences in particular texts. In the sections below, I explore the challenges and possibilities of discourse-based interviews, which are a particular type of text-based interview. Then, I describe my procedures for selecting texts for the interviews, identifying features in them, formatting the texts for interviews (i.e., developing the follow-up interview protocol), and conducting interviews with secondary participants.

**Possibilities and Challenges of DBIs**

The terms “text-based interview” and “discourse-based interview” are often used interchangeably. However, text-based interviews are the more general term for the practice of using a text as a prop to elicit writers’ accounts of how and why they produced it. When interviewing people about texts, researchers can ask writers to comment on different parts of the text and how they developed them or on why they made certain decisions; or they can ask the writer to talk through someone’s comments on their writing, explaining what it meant and if and how they revised based on the comment. As I explain below, I often asked these kinds of questions.

Originated by Odell, Goswami, and Herrington (1983), DBIs have allowed researchers to interrogate not just writers’ stylistic understandings but also their practices—and how they interpret their own and one another’s. In Odell et al.’s approach, the researcher collects different examples of a genre by a writer (e.g., business letters sent by the same writer to different people) and notes ways in which the language varies. The researcher then identifies alternatives to a handful of language choices and asks the writer, “Here you do $X$. In other pieces of writing, you do $Y$ or $Z$. In this passage, would you be willing to do $Y$ or $Z$ rather than $X$? What basis do you
have for preferring one alternative to another?” (p. 223). Each linguistic variant, argue Odell et al., is “a sensitive indicator of writers' complex understanding of the rhetorical context and ways for them to achieve their purpose within that context” (p. 231).

In adaptations by Prior (1995, 1998), the language variants often come from earlier or later drafts of a particular text, and “parallel DBI” interviews are used to explore professor and student views on variants (often ones the professor originally suggested). In addition, information about the variant—which draft it was taken from, or whether someone else, like an advisor, actually proposed the variant—is omitted. Prior has shown that DBIs make it possible to examine the relative influence of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses (Bakhtin, 1981). For example, in the case of an advisor suggesting a change and a graduate student accepting it in her final draft, parallel DBIs might reveal that the student has internalized the feedback of her advisor such that she now prefers her advisor’s suggestions to her own original wording, that the student continues to prefer her original wording although she accepted the revision to her text (and hence that the revision is authoritative), that the advisor has internalized the ideas of her student such that she now prefers the student’s original wording to her own suggestion, or that there are complex mixes of authority and persuasiveness (e.g., the writer has internalized the idea but dislikes the style). In some cases, the advisor and writer might not like either version. When the same DBI questions are asked of the writer and the person who comments on the draft, it is possible to see the alignment between them, not only on whether they agree on which version is appropriate but also whether their reasoning is similar or different. Given that different readers might construct different meanings from the same words, parallel DBIs seemed a promising way to investigate the stylistic understandings and practices of co-authors.
To prepare a DBI protocol, I had to de- and recontextualize bits of language from the draft. I printed another copy of the final draft and would handwrite the alternative variant (taken from an earlier draft) above its typed final-draft version (see Figure 2.2, below). The participants did not know which version the language variant came from, nor did they (usually) remember the author. Yet the participants still tried to read meanings related to author and version number into the DBI document.

For instance, Ashley and Claudio both assumed that Ashley was the default author of the text, perhaps given that Ashley was adapting it from her dissertation and because she was the primary author. Even for language Claudio had changed, when Ashley and I were talking about it, Ashley assumed she had written it. In more equally co-authored texts, writers draw from their knowledge of a person’s general “style” to attribute authorship. Given that both Christopher and Dan agreed that Christopher was more of the “stylist,” Christopher assumed that he had authored the alliterative phrase “trappings of truth,” even though Dan had. The alternative phrase, “make a message more compelling,” was my creation, but Christopher attributed it to Dan, commenting, “Dan likes the word ‘compelling’…For that reason, I probably don't like it. Because I feel like he overuses it maybe. There needs to be more variety” (Interview, April 24, 2013).

For Claudio, the formatting of the document seemed to legitimize me as an author. Claudio saw my handwriting and tended to assume that I actually wrote (instead of merely inscribed) the handwritten alternatives, saying “I like the way you’ve written it,” “I think you’re
right on this one,” and “I am so glad that an expert in writing such as yourself is putting down things the way I would have written them” (Interview, April 6, 2012). When he made the latter comment, which was around the end of the interview, I repeated that the language was taken from earlier drafts, some of which he may have authored. Eventually, he got it. He was pleased that he was consistent in his preferences almost two years later, saying, “I guess it’d be bad if I had suggested it and now I can't really tell the difference between which one I liked better.”

The new context of the DBI protocol also created meanings related to what stage in the revision process the piece was in. For example, I showed Sarah a sentence in which “impervious surfaces” was in the typed version (the final-draft version) and “hardscape surfaces” was the handwritten variant from an earlier draft. When I asked Sarah if she preferred “hardscape surfaces” or “impervious surfaces” and why, she said, “I probably would have left impervious there, but maybe I or we were thinking that that might be another term the reviewer might not be familiar with. Either one would describe it fine I think” (Interview, April 3, 2012). Sarah seemed to think that “hardscape” was a revision on “impervious,” leading me to guess that the usual context of handwritten revisions as improvements on a typewritten text had influenced her. Although I had mentioned that the handwritten variants came from earlier drafts, the typical context may have been difficult to dismiss.

Although these moments were occasionally awkward, making me feel like I was tricking the participants, they reveal that all presentations of data are recontextualizations that unleash new assumptions (e.g., the idea that writing is such a masterable skill that I, without any training, could have written the variants in Claudio and Ashley’s text) and occasion new meanings (e.g., it allowed for Dan and Chris to discuss whose style “trappings of truth” was in). Despite the somewhat acontextual nature of DBI documents—in which bits of language and the texts
themselves were presented in isolation from their contexts—parallel DBIs proved to be quite useful, allowing me to formulate situated accounts of writers’ understandings, develop a concrete sense of which discourses are more internally persuasive to writers, learn much more concretely why writers think a piece of writing is good, and gauge the extent to which two writers are aligned.

**Selection of Writing Projects for Follow-Up Interviews**

Participants shared a range of writing projects with me after the literacy history interview. To select which ones to ask about in the text- and discourse-based interviews, I chose those that contained comments, especially at the word and sentence level, by key people in the participant’s writing life. Of the writing projects that primary participants shared, Appendix A indicates, through bold print, which texts I decided to ask about in the follow-up interviews.

When there were a number of different writing projects with comments, I chose texts based on the type of comments. For instance, Debojoy shared a number of course papers from different professors. One professor, who taught a course on the neuroscientific turn in the humanities, commented more globally on Debojoy’s ideas, whereas another (Bob Markley, who taught a course on posthumanism) commented more locally, adding comment balloons or revising the text directly. I therefore chose to ask Debojoy about the texts with Bob’s comments, although it would have of course been interesting to discuss the other professor’s approach to feedback.

An exception to these selection criteria was my interview with Laura. In her literacy history interview, she described different qualities of particular program notes, then sent a few examples. Although there were no comments on these notes, and she sent only the final version, I chose to ask her about them in the follow-up interview.
IDENTIFYING TEXTUAL FEATURES TO DISCUSS

The writing projects I received varied in how completely they represented the writer’s process. Some consisted of a single draft: Laura sent me only published versions of a few program notes. Other writing projects consisted of a final draft with someone’s comments or of multiple drafts with comments. To find textual features to discuss, I therefore followed different procedures depending on the number and types of texts I had received.

Final version with someone’s comments: There were two writing projects for which I had only the final version, which contained someone’s comments: Debojoy’s final course paper with Bob’s comments and Adam’s final course paper with Jing Jing’s comments. For these, I read through the text and identified comments I was interested in getting the writer’s and commenter’s take on. For instance, in Debojoy’s course paper, Bob had highlighted “inherent to them” and commented, “What does ‘inherent’ mean in this context? It seems an un-Derridian idea.” I asked Debojoy for his take on this comment, and his response. (I interviewed Bob but did not have time to ask him about this particular question.)

Two drafts: The majority of texts I received had two drafts, an early draft that someone commented on and the final version. I used Microsoft Word’s “Compare” feature to identify differences in the versions. I then read through the comparison document, which identified all changes made, and marked changes I thought were interesting. The changes tended to be at the word and sentence level, excluding changes that were very small, like the pluralization of a noun, and very large, like the deletion or movement of a whole paragraph. Next, I re-read the comparison document and selected the most interesting revisions, prioritizing them in case I had limited time. (See discussion below.)
**Three or more drafts:** If a writer sent me three or more drafts of an article (e.g., Ashley), I compared the first and second drafts, the second and third drafts, and so on. I marked interesting changes across all drafts, then selected the changes that were most interesting. When there were two, three, or more drafts, I noted how the language for that particular item changed from draft to draft (including changes from one version to another and back again) and who had introduced each change. I also noted if the commenter had made a suggestion that was ignored by the other writer.

Often I had marked so many features that, for the sake of time, I had to cut down the number I would be asking about. This involved being more strategic about which language items were more “loaded” (often a judgment call). For instance, with Dan and Chris, I wanted to ask about technical or more complex terminology, of which there were several examples (“irrelevant” vs. “non-probative,” “visuals” vs. “pictures,” a reference to “psychological jargon”). I did not ask, on the other hand, about variants that sounded relatively similar, such as about the difference between “subjective, gut feelings of knowledge that can drive our beliefs even more powerfully than objective evidence” and “subjective but powerful gut feelings of knowledge that can drive our beliefs in the absence of objective evidence.” I also tried to eliminate duplicate categories. For instance, since I already had two pairs of items on my list that seemed related to concision, I did not ask about the difference between “less familiar minor celebrities” and “less familiar celebrities.”

As an outsider to all of these disciplines, I felt anxious identifying and eliminating stylistic features to discuss at the interviews. Although I was only examining language that had been changed by writers and their respondents, I was unsure how meaningful a change of a word or tweak of a sentence was, especially given that I could not yet ask the writer or reader. Because
of this anxiety, I often re-read the text several times in order to make sure I was not missing anything that might be of interest.

I had to remind myself, however, that my study was not a linguistic analysis of disciplinary styles (e.g., Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2004) but an investigation of writers’ understandings of style. Given the sociocultural approach elaborated in Chapter 1, in which stylistic meaning is not inherent in texts but is constructed by writers and readers, who may have different interpretations, I needed to accept that I was a generalist reader, bringing my own expectations, values, and biases to my reading. Certain bits of language stuck out more than others, and I needed to view this as generative and not worry whether the right bits were sticking out to me (as well as not assume that some right bits existed).

**FORMATTING OF TBI/DBI DOCUMENTS**

As Prior (1998, p. 306) found and my experience confirmed, DBIs were not possible to do in every follow-up interview because I did not have multiple drafts of every writing project. As I mentioned above, for some texts I had only a single draft, along with a professor’s comments in comment balloons. Sometimes, as a result, I asked text-based interview questions (e.g., “Had you received that kind of comment before? What do you think they meant by it? Would you follow it?”) and other times discourse-based interview questions (“Which variant do you prefer, and why?”). To facilitate these conversations, I had to format the text (which I will call the TBI/DBI document) in different ways.

I conducted DBIs on texts for which it was possible and useful to strip information about the author and version number because for these texts, there was more than one version, because more than one person made textual changes, or because each person’s changes were not necessarily accepted by the subsequent person interacting with the draft (e.g., Dan and Chris,
Ashley and Claudio, Ashley and Sarah, Debojoy and Bob on the abstract). To prepare the DBI document, I printed a clean copy of the final draft, crossed out whatever words and sentences I was interested in, and handwrote the appropriate language variants above the lines. (See Figure 2.2, above, for an example.) In Ashley and Claudio’s case, the final-draft language could have been something Claudio suggested and Ashley accepted, or it could have been something Claudio did not like but Ashley kept anyway, or it could have been something Ashley herself was playing with across drafts, with Claudio leaving it untouched. Stripping away this kind of information, as I have argued above, was thus useful in eliciting their perspectives on the language almost two years after drafting it.

In the case of Laura’s program notes for the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, in which she authored the first draft and the final draft contained the edits of Paul, her supervisor, it would not have been possible to strip information about the authors because it was obvious who authored what. I could have shown them the version with tracked changes, created by Microsoft Word’s Compare feature, but the comparison document was difficult to read. Therefore, I printed a copy of her initial draft (not the final draft, as I did above, with Ashley and Claudio), crossed out whatever words and sentences I was interested in, and handwrote Paul’s revisions above the lines. I decided that this version, more intuitive because the handwriting signals later edits, would be least confusing. (See Figure 2.3.) After I explained that the typed version came from an earlier draft and the handwriting represented his revisions, I essentially indirectly guided Laura to comment on Paul’s changes and guided Paul to justify his changes.
When I had only one draft with comments—e.g., a final draft of Debojoy’s course paper with Bob’s comments in comment balloons and tracked changes; Adam’s final course paper with Jing Jing’s comment balloons (and no tracked changes)—I opted to not change the formatting. The comment balloons “gave it away,” so to speak, automatically signaling the author of changes. As a result, I merely highlighted and circled comments I was interested in discussing—or, if I were interviewing someone over Skype, directed their attention to a particular comment. (See Figure 2.4.)

As mentioned above, Laura sent me a text without comments—several different program notes that she felt were in different styles. In her literacy history interview she had described qualities of these notes, so during our follow-up interview I had her review each note and articulate the stylistic qualities she saw in it. In essence, her oral comments functioned as a
sort of comparison with the written text. Other participants sent me texts without comments (e.g., Jing Jing sent me writing samples; Debojoy sent me additional final versions of course papers). With the exception of Laura’s program notes, however, I chose to interview writers about texts for which I had multiple versions, or a version with comments, because there was more to analyze.

Lastly, since all participants sent me multiple writing projects at different stages of completion and with different kinds of comments, I tended to interview using a mix of all of the above formats. For instance, I asked Laura to talk through her doctoral advisor’s comments, discuss her program notes, and answer DBI-like questions about the program notes for the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. I asked Debojoy to talk through Bob’s comments on his course paper and answer DBI questions on his conference abstract.

INTERVIEWS WITH SECONDARY PARTICIPANTS

As mentioned above, secondary participants were people who commented on a primary participants’ manuscript, whether in the role of advisor, friend/mentor, work supervisor, course professor, committee member, or co-author. (The exception is Adam, a secondary participant who was Jing Jing’s student in a graduate seminar.) Of course, roles sometimes blended: Claudio and Sarah were Ashley’s advisors but also her co-authors. In addition, a few people were both primary participants and secondary participants: Dan functioned as both primary participant (with Chris, his co-author, as a secondary participant) and secondary participant (with Corinne and Mary as primary participants). Jing Jing, too, functioned as secondary participant (of Dongxin) and primary participant (discussing her role as a professor and talking through her responses to Adam’s course paper).
To respect secondary participants’ time, I only asked them to participate in one interview. (Secondary participants also signed a general consent form and a date-specific consent form.) This interview began with semi-structured questions about their literacy histories and beliefs about writing style and—if there was time—followed with questions about the text(s) that they had worked on with the primary participant. (See Appendix D for an example of interview questions for a secondary participant, Jing Jing.) These interviews were conducted in person (which I audio- or video-recorded, depending on the participant’s choice), over the phone (which I audio-recorded), or over Skype (which I audio- or video-recorded, depending on the participant’s choice). These interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

Sometimes participants gave me permission to contact secondary participants, but the participants did not respond to my requests; other times, I decided to not contact the person because of my own time constraints and the delay in receiving texts with the person’s comments (e.g., Dongxin’s friend who proofread for her). Other times, because of a lack of time, I was not able to ask all of my DBI questions (e.g., Claudio, Bob) or any of my DBI questions (e.g., Harold). As a result, I was not always able to fully compare primary participants’ responses to my DBI questions with secondary participants’ responses.

With Debojoy, I also elected to interview his advisor and committee member. Although he did not provide texts with written comments from either person, when I met with both of them, we talked about their literacy histories, their experiences working with Debojoy, and their notions of style.

Phase 3: Further Feedback and Conversations
Because of the relationships we had developed or their interest in the project, a few participants—Ashley, Corinne, and Debojoy—were involved in more than one follow-up interview, engaging in more conversations and sharing additional texts:

- In May 2012, Ashley and I met to discuss my initial results and findings from the parallel DBIs; I then shared drafts of my findings as I was revising it for a journal between fall 2012 and fall 2013. During this time, we had several email and phone conversations about it.
- After my November 2012 literacy history interview with Corinne, we met for three short, informal check-in meetings, which occurred right after her meetings with her advisor. Then, we did the follow-up interview, followed by another check-in meeting and another follow-up interview (since she had shared so many texts).
- Debojoy, as well, shared many texts and was generous with his time; the follow-up interview, which I expected to last one hour, stretched to almost four over two days.

Such “cyclical dialogue around texts over a period of time,” bringing with it lengthier engagement and a greater number of data sources, arguably moves ethnography from mere method to methodology (Lillis, 2008).

Videorecording and Embodied Actions

For the past several decades, microanalytic studies of face-to-face interaction within fields like linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics, and science and technology studies have explored the multimodality of human interaction (Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011).
Although there has been an active line of research on writing as situated activity in rhetoric, composition, and technical communication, the role of embodied actions such as gestures and facial expressions in talk about writing has gotten limited attention (but see, e.g., Haas & Witte, 2001; Olinger, 2011, 2014; Prior, 2010; Thompson, 2009; Wolfe, 2005). Attending to embodied actions through videorecordings allowed me to investigate the multisemiotic resources people marshal to communicate (including gestural representations of style metaphors) and take stances on their talk. Videorecording, and the analysis it can afford, can enrich typical views of writers’ talk about texts as “straightforwardly transparent, a simple reflection of a writer’s perspective” (Lillis, 2008, p. 361) by attending to what Lillis (2008) terms the “discourse-indexical” lens, in which the talk about text “index[es] specific discourses about self, writing, academia, etc.” (p. 366).

Not every participant was comfortable with video-recording, however, and it of course was not possible for phone interviews. Since many interviews were done over Skype, I was able to record the person’s image (and my own) using a free Call Recorder application. Unfortunately, after my first Skype interview with Claudio, I accidentally disabled the setting that recorded my own face on screen, so I did not capture myself in the rest of the Skype video interviews I conducted.

Reciprocity

As is common in feminist ethnographic research, I felt that the research should be “mutually beneficial” (Huisman, 2008, p. 374) and sought to find ways to reciprocate. In our initial meetings where I described the study, before they signed the consent form, I would ask participants to think about ways I could help them with their work. Table 2.3 lists the participants I was able to provide some help to, whether on their teaching, research, or writing.
For most of the people listed below, discussions of my feedback were part of the follow-up interview. For others, the request for help came after an interview (e.g., Jing Jing, Debojoy). Regardless of whether I was explicitly able to reciprocate, many participants expressed that they enjoyed reflecting on these topics.

### Table 2.3. How I reciprocated to some of my participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>How I helped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Forwarded requests for proofreading help because his wife is a freelance editor/prooferreader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Bennett</td>
<td>Provided written and oral feedback on partial draft of her article with Sarah and free copy of Joseph Williams’ <em>Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace</em>; answered language and writing questions as they came up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Simons</td>
<td>Provided written feedback on and oral discussion of his writing guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debojoy</td>
<td>Identified additional materials and resources for his Rhetoric classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongxin</td>
<td>Demonstrated how to use online corpora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin</td>
<td>Provided written and oral feedback on partial draft of article and information on English pronunciation resources; demonstrated how to use online corpora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jing Jing Chang</td>
<td>Proofread article manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Provided written feedback on and discussion of personal statement for graduate school; put her in touch with a friend who graduated from a program she applied to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

I used a range of approaches to analyze the data, including inductive data analysis and metaphor analysis. (Chapters 3, 4, and 5 detail the respective analytic strategies I used.) For all of the participants, however, my first step was to roughly transcribe the interviews and include relevant embodied actions such as gestures.

When I conducted parallel DBIs (Ashley and Claudio; Ashley and Sarah; Corinne and Dan; Mary, Dan, and Mikhail; Dan and Christopher; Debojoy and Bob; Laura and Paul), I used a special method of data analysis, constructing “comparison tables” for each change in the document. For each question about a change (e.g., “you wrote ‘people’ in the final version, but would you accept the alternative wording ‘human density’?”), I did the following:

1. copied the alternative and the language in the final draft;
2. traced the “journey” of the particular word or sentence, noting how changed across drafts and rounds of feedback (for people like Laura and Paul, where I had only two versions of a document, each with a clear author, it was simple: Paul was always the author of the handwritten alternatives, and Laura was always the author of the typed language);

3. provided a “rough summary” of the journey that stated who was the source of the “alternative” or the language in the final draft;

4. copied and pasted the transcribed response to the interview question; and

5. noted at the top of each transcript whether the person preferred the alternative or the language in the final draft. See Figure 2.5, below, for an example of this comparison table for Ashley and Claudio.

---

**Figure 2.5. Example of Comparison Table for DBI Question #1, Ashley & Claudio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text in DBI Document</th>
<th>Alternative: The process of urbanization converts areas of natural vegetation and agriculture into landscapes dominated by roads and buildings (McDonnell and Hahs, 2008).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What’s in the Final Draft: The process of urbanization converts areas of natural vegetation and agriculture into landscapes dominated by man-made structures such as roads and buildings (McDonnell and Hahs, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(text from the &quot;Introduction&quot; section)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to What’s in the Final Draft</td>
<td>1. In the first draft, A wrote, “The process of urbanization converts areas of natural vegetation and agriculture into landscapes dominated by roads and buildings (McDonnell and Hahs, 2008).” This is the source of the Alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. In his comments on the first draft, Claudio revised the language to What’s in the Final Draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. A accepted his change. This text underwent no further changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough Summary of Journey</td>
<td>C tracked a change. A accepted it. Another way of saying this: A created the Alt. C revised to create WIFD (by implication A accepted).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley’s Comments</td>
<td>Prefers alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ash: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrea: So would you keep that or get rid of it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ash: I’d get rid of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[10:23:45.21]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrea: Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ash: It just seems unnecessary; it seems extra information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudio’s Comments</td>
<td>Prefers alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: So for the first one, would you accept the original or the change. [00:30:37.25]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: I think I like your change. I’ll tell you why. I can tell you what was going through A’s mind as she wrote this. She was trying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the DBI comparison tables were completed, I counted how many times the participants agreed or disagreed for each DBI question. If there were more than two drafts with clear authors—i.e., if there was opportunities for the primary participant to ignore the secondary participant’s changes—I organized each DBI question into one of three “scenarios”:

1. examples in which the primary participant wrote something, the secondary participant suggested a change, and the primary participant accepted it—making the primary participant the source of the “alternative” and the secondary participant the source of the language in the final draft;

2. examples in which the primary participant wrote something, the secondary participant suggested a change, and the primary participant ignored it—making the secondary participant the source of the “alternative” and the primary participant the source of the language in the final draft; and

3. examples in which the primary participant wrote something and changed it, making the primary participant the source of the alternative and the language in the final draft.

For each of the three scenarios, I then counted the number of times the primary and secondary participant agreed and disagreed.

Data Presentation

Once I had identified which transcript excerpts I would include, I refined the transcriptions. When my analysis included attention to how participants communicated and took stances on their talk—such as with particular gestures, laughter, facial expressions, and intonation—I selected images (if the data were videorecorded) and used a more detailed transcription system adapted from conversation analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).
I also adapted a formatting system from Hengst (2001; see also, e.g., Hengst, 2010), in
which the transcript resembles a musical score, with simultaneous utterances placed on top of
each other. Gestures and other embodied actions are noted with one or more asterisks (*) and
described at the bottoms of the lines. (See Appendix G for transcription conventions.) This
system responds to Goffman’s (1981) critique of analyses that privilege the oral/aural and that
organize discourse by turn, instead of highlighting the complexity of activity, in which many
people may be participating in different ways at once. In Hengst’s system, all speakers in the
space—not merely those who are speaking—have a place on the transcript, ongoing activity is
continually noted, and the researcher does not have to decide when to move the discourse and
action to another line (Hengst, 2001, pp. 88-89). An example of this system is the following
excerpt:
On the other hand, when my analysis focuses on the content of participants’ talk, not on how they expressed it or on my role in co-constructing the conversation (e.g., my own uptake of the talk), I left out details such as pause length, pace, volume, sound stretches, intonation, and any backchannels I produced.

For interview excerpts for which I produced a detailed transcript, the corresponding audio or video clips are available at https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/49320. Each clip has its own URL, which I will provide at relevant points throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

**Role of the Researcher in Data Collection and Presentation**

Lillis (2008), calling for research on the “performative/relational” nature of interviews, asks researchers to look at how the “researcher and researched” construct the interview and the power dynamics between them (p. 366). Indeed, interviews are not neutral interactions where the interviewer disinterestedly asks questions and the interviewee delivers responses but culturally
constructed and situated performances (as argued in, e.g., Briggs, 1986; De Fina & Perrino, 2011; Koven, 2014; Talmy, 2010). For instance, Laura and I negotiated expectations for the interview early into our conversation. After she listed the kinds of writing she currently engaged in, I asked if she received feedback on them. She replied, “thank-you’s, no, program notes, no,” and then stopped herself, asking “how formal or informal should this be,” because if “people are going to see this,” she should “speak in complete sentences.” (This may reflect her experience being interviewed for a promotional video for her non-profit.) I assured her that even though people might be watching excerpts from the video, she should speak informally.

My video-recording practices reflect a tension between wanting to focus on the participant and acknowledging the co-constructed nature of interviews. When I began data collection of literacy history interviews with primary participants and was given permission to video record in face-to-face interviews, I sat behind the camera, as in the following face-to-face interview with Ashley. You can see the top of my head, which is visible at the start of the interview, before I lean back:

![Figure 2.7. Ashley during the initial literacy history interview, with my head poking into view in the bottom left corner](image)

However, when I sat out of the view of the camera for Ashley’s literacy history interview, I felt like I was concealing my involvement. In fact, with this interview (my first), I remember trying
to stifle my back-channeled responses and limit my nodding so my head would not pop into the camera’s view.

Given my discomfort with my concealed position, when I conducted the discourse-based interview with Ashley, I decided to sit next to her, in front of the camera (Figure 2.8). I felt more comfortable this way, partly because it demonstrated the collaborative nature of any interview and partly because the discourse-based interview was a uniquely collaborative task, involving our looking at and pointing to the same document.

![Figure 2.8. Ashley and I during the follow-up interview.](image)

When I met participants in person who were comfortable with videorecording, I continued to conduct video-recorded literacy history interviews behind the camera and TBIs/DBIs in front of the camera; I had not yet reflected that the literacy history interview ought to be treated as equally collaborative. When I finally decided this, I had two more opportunities to record in-person literacy history interviews; both were with secondary participants and so were combined literacy history and text- and discourse-based interviews. In one, I filmed us sitting next to each other, but the participant later changed his mind about allowing video. In the other, I failed to position the camera correctly and, when the participant leaned back in his chair to begin the interview, I ended up capturing only his hands.
Sitting behind the camera not only concealed my presence but also failed to pick up any quieter comments I made, comments that an audiorecorder would have captured. This lack of detail is apparent in my literacy history interview with Ashley. Compare Figure 2.6 above, which was an excerpt from our side-by-side DBI, with the following excerpt from her literacy history interview (with me behind the camera):

---

4 When I videorecorded, I also made an audiorecording as a back-up, but I used the video as the basis for my transcription. For future publications that analyze videorecordings, I plan to return to the audio in order to capture any quieter comments I made that the videocamera may have missed.
When I sat side by side with Ashley, I was able to transcribe my gestures (e.g., nodding) and quiet utterances like “kay” (Figure 2.6, line 7). When I sat behind the camera, however, I was able to transcribe only my interview question (Figure 2.10, line 1).

Compared to my transcripts of the Skype interview with Claudio, which picked up my audio very clearly and also recorded my image, the transcript in Figure 2.10 loses information about how I participated in the interview.

**Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to this study’s methodology—and, it follows, avenues for future research. One is the limited number of face-to-face interactions that I captured; another is my focus on small groups within a range of disciplines.
Limited Observations of Face-to-Face Interactions

Given my interest in writing as literate activity that often happens in face-to-face settings, I had endeavored to follow writers into settings where they were working collaboratively, such as lab meetings, one-on-one meetings, and presentations. As mentioned above, I had a special consent form, “Release for a One-Time Participant,” to allow such “fleeting” participants to assert control over how I used the data in which they appeared. As I mentioned earlier, I only observed three synchronous, collaborative interactions: a lab meeting (in Sarah’s crop sciences lab) and two writing group meetings (Megan’s urban planning writing group; mechanical engineering graduate students who shared the same advisor).  

I was not able to collect much observational data for several reasons: some of the writing projects shared with me had already been completed; some participants were not at UIUC; for some participants, interactions with secondary participants occurred over email and through MS Word commenting and Track Changes features; and for other participants, my quiet presence would have felt a bit intrusive at a possibly stressful meetings. Table 2.4 lists the reasons for not getting (much) observational data with my focal primary participants:

---

5 Megan’s writing group, which I attended one day in late spring 2012, consisted of Megan and two colleagues, although only one colleague was present that day. I observed, took notes (I did not record, as I did not yet have permission), and after the meeting explained my project and handed out a consent form. The colleague consented to be a secondary participant, but the group of three never met again because one graduated that year, and Megan and her friend got busy in the summer and fall 2012. And by then, I had moved to study my focal participants, so I did not follow up with them.

At the writing group meeting of six mechanical engineering graduate students who shared an advisor, I took notes (as I did not have permission to record), and, at the end, introduced my study to the other members. I was able to recruit two other students to the study on that day, for a total of three: Heng, Sunil, and Sevilen. However, that ended up being the last meeting of the group.
Table 2.4. Focal Groups and Reason for Limited Observational Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Reason for Limited Observational Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ecology             | Ashley Bennett (postdoc)  
Claudio Gratton (Ph.D. advisor)  
Sarah Lovell (postdoc advisor) | In the first semester of data collection, I observed and audio-recorded a meeting of Sarah’s lab. However, the lab meetings were held less frequently the semester I collected data (Ashley’s last semester at UIUC), and I was not able to attend any others, or I may not have been notified of them. |
| Film Studies        | Jing Jing Chang (professor)  
Adam (Ph.D. student) | The class that Jing Jing and Adam participated in had been completed by the time of data collection                                                                                                                                  |
| History             | Dongxin Zou (Ph.D. student)  
Jing Jing Chang (mentor) | The writing projects Dongxin shared had been completed already. She then moved to another university.                                                                                                                                 |
| Literary & Film Studies | Debojoy Chanda (Ph.D. student)  
Anustup Basu (advisor)  
Manisha Basu (committee member)  
Bob Markley (course professor) | Debojoy shared course papers for seminars that had already occurred or were nearly finished. He continues to meet with his advisor and committee members, but since he did not share writing that they would be discussing, I have not asked to sit in on meetings. |
| Music               | Laura Usiskin (cello fellow)  
Paul Hawkshaw (supervisor) | By the time I interviewed her, Laura had finished her doctoral work and was living in another state. Her encounters with Paul Hawkshaw had already occurred; any present ones occurred over email. |
| Psychology          | Dan Simons (professor)  
Christopher Chabris (co-author) | The writing projects Dan shared had been completed already. Dan was teaching a three-semester honors thesis seminar (which Corinne and Mary attended), but to observe that class would have required a different IRB. |
| Psychology          | Corinne (college senior)  
Dan Simons (course professor)  
Harold (thesis advisor) | Corinne met weekly with her advisor, but we discussed that it would better fit their relationship if she met and gave me an update afterwards than if I attended each weekly meeting. |
| Psychology          | Mary (college senior)  
Dan Simons (course professor)  
Mikhail Lyubanksy (thesis advisor) | Unlike Corinne, Mary was not meeting regularly with her advisor; most of her feedback was coming from Dan in the context of the course. |

As I describe in the Conclusion chapter, I hope to rectify this imbalance in future projects, studying stylistic processes and negotiations as they are shaped in the moment.
Emphasis on Multiple Disciplines instead of In-Depth Study of a Single Group in One Discipline

Because I wanted to understand the phenomenon of disciplinary style, I deliberately explored multiple disciplines and groups of writers. To some extent, this was at the expense of a more in-depth understanding of style negotiations within a single group. Skimming the surface risks, in Lillis’ (2008) words, providing only “minimal glimpses of writers’ perspectives and understandings” (361). I tried to compensate for this by conducting a literacy history interview, a discourse-based interview, and interviews with at least one secondary participant.

However, given how valuable it was to go into such depth with Corinne, for whom I collected the most data, I see what I have missed by not doing more interviews and text collection with other writers. Not all participants, however, were willing to give me such access; finding a participant who would have allowed such a deep ethnographic approach therefore involves some risk. In fact, one of the reasons I recruited writers from multiple disciplines, almost too many writers, was that I did not know the level of access I’d get to any site, and I did not know if any would drop out or disappear (as some did). However, it would be valuable to conduct future ethnographic studies that examine the process of disciplinary style socialization at the level of detail (or more) as what I collected for Corinne.

Conclusion

This qualitative dissertation centers mostly around 8 focal groups of 18 total participants in ecology, psychology, music, film history, literature, and history. These faculty members, graduate students, college seniors, and postdoc related to one another as advisors and advisees, co-authors, and students and mentors, among other relationships.
With each group of participants, I collected literacy history interviews with primary participants, collected texts (and associated drafts) for writing projects they had worked on or were working on, and conducted text- and discourse-based interviews with primary and relevant secondary participants. Interviews with these 18 participants (along with one observation of a lab meeting) produced just over 33 hours of recordings.

In spite of the limitations described above, this methodology and mix of methods offers a productive way to examine style from a sociocultural lens: interviewing writers about their texts (instead of just analyzing texts), having extended (not one-off) conversations with writers, interviewing the texts’ readers (people who have given feedback on the texts), conducting parallel discourse-based interviews with co-authors to compare accounts, and videorecording participants to capture embodied actions and analyze how these actions, too, enact particular ideologies. All of these approaches have allowed me to explore the embodied, situated histories of participants’ style understandings and practices and the dynamic nature of style in general.
Chapter 3  
Style Ideologies and Practices Across Disciplines

“Because Rebecca was not a licensed Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) yet, she told me that she would give all her reports to her boss, who had a P. Eng. designation, ‘because I ... can’t sign them. He reviews them and then I fix ... them up and they go up the chain.... Now [I receive] a lot less feedback than before. At the beginning, [I had to do] a lot of editing; [I] had to rearrange my whole style.’” (Artemeva, 2011, p. 340)

Reports of literacy experiences often include accounts, like the one above from Artemeva’s research, of styles learned, taught, practiced, or transformed. Although we may not know what Rebecca means by “rearrang[ing] my whole style,” we are likely to believe her, and the fact that she distinguishes it from editing provides further credibility. Accounts like these take representations of styles at face value: writing researchers rarely compare them in a systematic way to the written texts they refer to, which might reveal ways in which the accounts simplify and even erase aspects of messy linguistic reality. Researchers also tend to neglect the language ideologies and ideological processes that shape these accounts, which might shed light on writers’ motivations for talking about styles in such a way.

The assumptions, described in Chapter 1, of disciplinary styles as homogeneous, singular, and stable reflect particular language ideologies that reproduce Saussure’s prioritizing of *langue*—language as a stable, homogenous, synchronous, abstract system—over *parole*—language as shifting, heterogeneous, historical, concrete utterances. In popular and disciplinary accounts alike, there is a tendency to expect agreement, uniformity, and stability among a community of speakers, to assume that there should be no difficulty communicating when language is shared.

These structuralist ideologies drive typical representations of communication expressed in phrases like “your ideas came through well here,” which reflect the Conduit Metaphor of communication (Reddy, 1979). In this metaphor, “language contains meaning; speakers and
writers use linguistic containers to send meaning to audiences; and, at the end of the line, audiences remove the unaltered meaning from its container” (Eubanks, 2011, p. 142). A communiqué whose meaning is “transparent” to the receiver is part and parcel of successful communication according to the Conduit Metaphor. Among writing and communication scholars, the main objection to the Conduit Metaphor is the linear, one-way nature of communication. As Eubanks (2011) puts it, the Conduit Metaphor “is a story of ‘good writing’ in its narrowest conception: writing that flows in one direction only, from writer to readership, and is associated predominantly with values such as factual and grammatical correctness, precision, detachment, and objectivity” (p. 170). In public discourse on literacy and education, the Conduit Metaphor appears in what Collins (1996) calls an ideology of “textualism,” which permeates understandings of literacy in most school contexts. Textualism includes “beliefs in the fixity of text, the transparency of language, and the universality of shared, available meaning” (p. 204).

Serving as an introduction to the two case study chapters (Chapters 4 and 5), this chapter explores the ideological foundations of writers’ style representations. It lays bare the semiotic processes that highlight similarities or differences across or within styles: processes of “adequation,” in which “potentially salient differences are set aside in favor of perceived or asserted similarities that are taken to be more situationally relevant,” and “distinction,” in which “the relation of difference is underscored rather than erased” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 383-4).¹

After describing my methodology for this chapter, I show how these ideologies are at work in writers’ descriptions of good style. Fitting with Irvine’s (2001) view of styles as part of a “system of distinction,” in which it is only possible to talk about styles in contrast with other styles.

¹ Bucholtz and Hall (2004) describe two other pairs of “tactics of intersubjectivity”: genuineness and artifice (“authentication” and “denaturalization”) and legitimacy and disempowerment (“authorization” and “illegitimization”). In addition, “erasure,” one of Irvine and Gal’s (2000) semiotic processes by which ideologies of linguistic differentiation are constructed, applies here.
styles, not “in isolation” (p. 22), my participants continually contrast “good style” with some kind of “inappropriate” other style. Their representations are conceived along an “axis of differentiation” (e.g., Gal, 2012)—plain versus ornamental, clear versus opaque, and linear versus circular—each pair involving a particular metaphor or entailment of the Conduit Metaphor. Such an axis “allocates contrasting values to linguistic forms” and sees these values as “self-evident” (Gal, 2012, p. 23). Crucially, I analyze linguistic but also nonlinguistic representations as performed in facial expressions, intonation, gestures, and other embodied actions. This nonlinguistic material provides not additional but essential information on writers’ representations, as a participant may gesture instead of speak, or enact a particular persona instead of using an adjective to describe it.

I move from describing the ideologies and contrastive notions of styles to showing how these notions emerge and are enacted in participants’ lives. They tend to develop through encounters with intuitional gatekeepers, such as journal reviewers and admissions committees, or through more informal but no less high-stakes interactions with course professors or academic mentors. Through these experiences, writers received training in particular ways of inspecting their writing styles, practices that reproduce and apply textualist ideologies and the Conduit Metaphor’s ideal of clarity. Writers also revealed that they considered their writing development, and envisioned “writing problems,” through the lens of a textualist ideology that assumes the existence of universal qualities of good writing and that expects consistency between styles of writing and speaking.

The final section begins to explore the disjunction between writers’ ideologies and what the writers actually do in their texts, a theme elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5. Using examples from Debojoy and Jing Jing, I analyze discussions we had that center around contradictions
between their representations and the texts. These discussions reveal the semiotic process of adequation at work, making them believe that the styles they described actually looked like what they imagined, and highlight the stakes they have in maintaining this view. Illuminating the connections between styles and the particular kinds of writers my participants hoped to be, this section begins to uncover the political and ideological work of style representations.

**Chapter Methodology**

Although the themes in this chapter cut across the data from all of my focal groups, I devote this chapter to data from groups besides those in ecology and psychology, which are detailed in Chapters 4 and 5. In this chapter, therefore, I draw primarily on stories and texts from the following groups (although I also draw on an interview with one of my non-focal primary participants, Lin, a PhD student in history):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Primary Participant</th>
<th>Secondary Participant (Relationship to Primary Participant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film Studies</td>
<td>Jing Jing Chang (professor)</td>
<td>Adam (Ph.D. student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Dongxin Zou (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Jing Jing Chang (mentor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary &amp; Film Studies</td>
<td>Debojoy Chanda (Ph.D. student)</td>
<td>Anustup Basu (advisor)  Manisha Basu (committee member)  Bob Markley (course professor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Laura Usiskin (cello fellow)</td>
<td>Paul Hawkshaw (supervisor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I prepared for the text- and discourse-based interviews with these focal primary participants, I reviewed their literacy history interview transcripts (studying closely any descriptions of style), read the texts they had shared, and developed follow-up interview questions as well as text- and discourse-based interview questions relevant to type of text (see Chapter 2 for details). If I found any conflicts between representations and practices (e.g., how Jing Jing described Adam’s writing compared to what Adam wrote), or if I wondered how the
writer would talk about a specific text when looking directly at it, as opposed to when talking about it more generally, I made a note to ask.

For instance, in her literacy history interview, Jing Jing raved about Adam’s seminar paper. I was able to receive a copy of it with her comments, and in the follow-up interview she walked me through her comments. As another example, during the literacy history interview, Laura had mentioned how she shifted styles in her program notes depending on the audience and the pieces she was writing about. After the interview, she sent me some examples. In the follow-up interview, I asked her to point out the stylistic features that she perceived in these different notes.

Once I had completed the follow-up interviews and thus could examine transcripts from all of the interviews, I analyzed the transcripts for two main themes: descriptions of styles and issues in the teaching and learning of styles. For descriptions of styles, I began to identify patterns, such as the fact that writers tended to describe good academic writing as easy to follow. These descriptions seemed connected to the metaphor of Communication as a Journey. I therefore began to refer to a widely used metaphor list (Lakoff, Espenson, & Schwartz, 1991) along with other published analyses of writing-related metaphors (Abbott & Eubanks, 2005; Eubanks, 2011). I also identified a pattern in the moves writers made as they described style: the fact that writers tended to position good academic style in contrast to, or in some other relationship with, literary language or creative writing.

For issues in the teaching and learning of styles, I began to identify themes such as “narrative style is not valued,” “red ink experiences,” “training sight,” and “universal characteristics + generalizing to all writing.” Further analysis of these categories occurred as I drafted this chapter. Reflecting on the relationship between these themes, I realized that they all
involved the reproduction of some kind of ideology. I ended up grouping and reworking the first two themes into interactions with schooling or other gatekeepers or mentors that shaped participants’ views of good style, and I grouped the second two themes into particular training in ways of “seeing” language and a tendency to universalize stylistic traits/problems. As I wrote this chapter, I began to see relationships between the categories—e.g., in applying a particular language inspection practice, Laura generalized an aspect of program notes (not using adverbs) to her emails.

**Embodied Style Contrasts**

Ideologies of textualism, as represented in the Conduit Metaphor, shape what we perceive when we look at and think about styles. Our representations of styles are deeply embodied in nature because metaphors, which capture how people understand and experience the world, are based quite literally in the body. For example, Lakoff (1993) observes that we tend to view quantity in terms of verticality (e.g., “The cost rose [or fell] dramatically”) because when we pour liquid into a glass or add objects to a pile, the level rises, suggesting that these real-life correspondences may serve as more or less direct “experiential bases” for varied metaphors (p. 241), including viewing intense emotions as heat (e.g., “They got all fired up”) and ideas as objects (e.g., “Where did you get that idea?”).

This section draws on Lakoff’s approach to analyze how metaphors express writers’ understandings of “good style” as they fall along an axis of differentiation: clear versus opaque, plain versus ornamental, and linear versus circular. Underlying each contrast is a metaphor: respectively, two entailments of the Conduit Metaphor (Understanding as Sight; Language as Container) and Communication as Journey. (I will explain these in more detail below.) I will
show how the elements of each pair—e.g., clear versus opaque—are constructed through semiotic processes of adequation and distinction, in which differences are erased or foregrounded.

Unlike other research on writing-related metaphors (e.g., Abbott & Eubanks, 2005; Eubanks, 2011), I explore the embodiment of metaphors by attending to metaphoric gestures, a subject of growing research (see, for example, the collection by Cienki & Müller, 2008). In addition, I look at how people represent style not only through metaphoric gestures but also through other “embodied actions” like facial expressions, intonation, and body position. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the role of embodied actions has gotten limited attention in writing studies (but see, e.g., Haas & Witte, 2001; Olinger, 2011; Prior, 2010; Thompson, 2009; Wolfe, 2005). Videorecorded interview data, which I collected for some of the primary and secondary participants in my focal group, have allowed me to investigate bodily representations of style.

**Understanding as Sight Metaphor: Clear vs. Opaque**

One entailment of the Conduit Metaphor is Understanding as Sight, or Knowing as Seeing. As Abbott and Eubanks (2005) describe, drawing on Lakoff and Johnson (1999), “Receivers of language are ideally able to see meaning that has been conveyed to them (e.g., I see what you mean)” (p. 192). Other examples of this entailment are “to look at problems carefully” and “to take a different view of things” (Eubanks, 2011, p. 158, italics in original).

Writers primarily talked about ideal writing as “clear,” and only occasionally was the contrastive item on the axis described (e.g., when Bob described “lesser writers” as stringing out points “fuzzily”). Yet “clarity” did not necessarily imply plainness (an enactment of the Language as Container metaphor, explained in the next section). For instance, Lin mentioned that her fellow graduate students at Beijing University had no “aesthetic sense,” describing them
as follows: “the language is quite plain. Too plain…And sometimes their logic is not very clear” (Interview, May 4, 2012). “Clear” logic can, in her view, coexist with aesthetics. Adam, a PhD student in literature, noted that in college, he used to use “flourishes,” which he defined as “something that could be memorable but also capitalize on the argument or make it more clear, or push it in a different direction at the end” (Interview, June 28, 2012). Flourishes, in his experience, are in the service of clarifying an argument.

“Clear” is typically aligned with “plain” and differentiated from plain’s contrastive pair, ornamental (described below). Yet aesthetics and flourishes might, arguably, be associated (by some) with the ornamental. Lin’s and Adam’s representations thus reveal “adequation” at work, erasing differences between different poles of the axis: “clear” in the Understanding as Sight metaphor, and ornamental in the Language as Container metaphor, to which I will now turn.

Language as Container Metaphor: Plain vs. Ornamental

Writers also described disciplinary styles as plain and spare, containing no excess. Underlying this understanding is the Language as Container entailment of the Conduit Metaphor, in which the container of language neatly fits the content: “meaning is put into and taken out of words or texts” and “meaning and the language that contains it have an ideal fit” (Abbott & Eubanks, 2005, p. 192). The implied contrast is some kind of decorative or ornamental addition to language, a noticeable (though not always negative) accumulation of words, sentences, or other elements of writing sometimes understood as “wordiness.” These excess, ornamental, wordy, or accretive traits tend to be associated with bad academic writing, the writing of a different discipline, or an unspecified “other” kind of writing that is inappropriate for the discipline or context.
Sarah, an ecology professor, contrasted “technical” with “creative writing” and defined the latter as “big words, lots of adjectives, all connected, five adjectives for one noun” (Interview, April 3, 2012). Corinne, a senior psychology major, contrasted writing in her discipline with a different kind of writing that is unspecified: she said that writing in psychology was

a very efficient way of writing, which can make it very boring. Because you don’t really have room to add flowery or don’t really have time to add hypothetical examples…you really don’t have time to add any examples or add more words. (Interview, June 10, 2013)

She implied that “flowery” language, hypothetical examples, any examples, or even any more words—all of which index a sense of accumulation—are opposed to psychology writing, that they are an excess that does not fit into the space of that discourse.

Some writers identified this inappropriate “other” as more explicitly negative. Lin, a history PhD student, identified bad history writing as having sentences with “many terms” that are “five lines long” (Interview, May 4, 2012). Dongxin, also a PhD student in history, attributed these qualities to writing in literary studies, as opposed to history. Basing her view on an essay she read in an MLA publication (provided to her by her roommate, a PhD student in literature), she argued that unlike literary scholars, historians “seldom use exotic or very rare words” (that she doesn't need to look up the dictionary). She said, “I appreciate the papers [by] the writers who can express complicated ideas with very simple words, and short sentences” and thought that literary studies had more jargon than history (Interview, April 11, 2012). (This is likely a common view of unfamiliar disciplines. When you don’t know the field, you won’t understand the terminology, so those terms become more marked and are likely to read as jargon.)

However, both Manisha, a literature professor, and Laura, a doctoral student in music, characterized decorative aspects of style in a positive way. Manisha published an article in the
journal *boundary 2* on R. K. Narayan’s *Malgudi*, and she described the article’s “narrative style” as one in which she “inhabit[ed] a style that is as novelistic as the novel I’m looking at,” by “stylistically trying to perform whatever I’m talking about” (Interview, February 19, 2014). This meant “a fair amount of adjectives” and passages describing, say, sensual scenes that themselves tried to effect sensuality. An example of this from her article is the following:

> At their very first meeting for this purpose, Raman’s gaze lingers lazily on Daisy’s slender form (like that of a nubile dancer, he tells himself), pausing at the shape of her nose, her eyes, round and touched up with kohl, and the shades of her complexion, dusky and fair at the same time—as if he were tenderly dallying with the colors and matter of a signboard. (Basu, 2013, p. 221)

Whereas Sarah’s statement, “five adjectives for one noun,” characterized a “creative” style as creating redundancies or unnecessary words, Manisha’s “fair amount of adjectives” actually have a function—to “perform” the content. With such a view of prose as performance, it follows that every word must also count.

Laura, a doctoral student in music, also tried to make the prose in her program notes perform certain effects. She used the term “flowery” to describe a program note she wrote for the piece “Orion and Pleiades” by Toro Takemitsu, in which she tried to enact the “abstract,” “beautifully poetic” nature of the piece. During our text-based interview, she identified a few sentences that she felt achieved this. In the following sentence (in bold), for instance, she “was going for lots of adjectives and descriptive words,” “all those kinds of delicious words” (Interview, September 10, 2013):

> Rather than a literal portrayal of the constellations, Takemitsu’s work is an expressive interpretation of the eponymous characters. The first movement “Orion” is a slow and gestural fantasy, with microtones (notes between traditional Western half steps) and sliding tones expressing uncertainty and indecision. **The orchestra sighs, ripples, and rocks back and forth while the cello sings in an elastic, ever changing manner.** The form of the first movement is an arch, where the opening material, though slightly changed, returns at the end. (bold added)
Another example occurs in the last sentence of the same note. She called this sentence (in bold, below) “self-indulgent,” then corrected herself: “not self indulgent but almost making fun of it”:

About this work, Takemitsu stated, “Whereas the modern Western concept of time is linear in nature, that is, its continuance always maintains the same state, in Japan time is perceived as a circulating and repeating entity”. **One can imagine floating weightlessly amongst the constellations as Orion courts the maidens, existing in a multi-dimensional state where time and space bend, stretch, and evolve in harmonious synchronicity.** (bold added)

When I asked why she saw it as making fun, she said it was because it’s “so chock full of these crazy words. It’s true [i.e., she meant what she wrote] but it’s really- I mean, it’s so flowery” (Interview, September 10, 2013).

The examples of Manisha’s article and Laura’s program note reveal ways in which writers may want language to create certain effects beyond clarity and plainness. Although Manisha and Laura both describe their writing as having many adjectives, they view this bounty as fruitful, allowing them to enact particular stylistic qualities. In this view, all of the words, even the seemingly excess words, have a function. Yet the axis of plain versus ornamental ignores the complexities of this approach, in which every word can matter within a “flowery” style. The semiotic process of differentiation from which these contrasts emerge thus simplifies this more complex relationship.

**Communication as Journey Metaphor: Linear v. Circular**

Another metaphor that appears in the data is that of Communication as a Journey, in which the shared understanding between the speaker/writer and listener/reader is treated as a shared location, and “when [people] continue to understand each other through a shifting sequence of mental states, they metaphorically travel from location to location together, remaining co-located throughout a shared journey” (Sweetser, 1992, pp. 716-717). In academic
writing, this journey should be as short, linear, and “direct” as possible. In the Directionality entailment of the Conduit Metaphor, “language moves along a pathway from one point to another” and “the ideal pathway is the shortest distance between Points A and B” (Abbott & Eubanks, 2005, p. 192).

This metaphor appears when academic writing is being contrasted with another kind of “other”: writing that is endless, nonlinear, and/or circular and that contains run-ons and/or reflects stream-of-consciousness thinking. For instance, Laura combined the Language as Container and Communication as Journey metaphors—but with a twist. Describing how she might shift style to match the piece she’s writing about, she brought up Takemitsu’s piece. The transcript is as follows; see also the video clip at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49331.

| 1 | L: It also depends on the piece. I also try to (0.4) relate it to a piece- I was writing about a very: |
|   | A: |
| 2 | L: (0.5) *um (1.0) abstract, **eh- beau- uh- beautifully **poetic ***Japanese piece. |
|   | A: **looks away and smiles **lifts right hand in a flourish ***raises eyebrows |
| 3 | L: And so I wasn’t gonna write *about it in *a like * Germanic way. You know it was gonna |
|   | A: Cool *slices straight, vertical right hand on horizontal, flat left hand |
| 4 | L: be different. So .hh I knew I needed to *have this sort of |
|   | A: *lifts hands up and rotates them out, as if flowering |
| 5 | L: like *(1.0) **you know (1.0) essen- |
|   | A: *lifts hands up and rotates them out, as if flowering **holds hands in position while thinking |
| 6 | L: three-dimensional *essence |
|   | A: *puts left hand down but rotates right in a flourish |
| 7 | L: to it. (li(h)ke huh huh or so(h)mething. So. |
|   | A: C o(h) o : l |

Figure 3.1. Laura describes a piece by Takemitsu (Interview, December 28, 2011)

In using the term “Germanic,” Laura may have been referring to the stereotypical notion of German culture as strict and regimented, or the notion that Germanic words in English are, in
Jack Lynch’s (n.d.) terms, “more blunt, more straightforward” than Latinate words in English, which are more “elevated” (“Latinate vs. Germanic Diction”). (Examples of the Germanic/Latinate difference are fat/corpulent and near/contiguous, see Glaser, 1999, p. 72). The gesture accompanying “Germanic way” involves straight, taut hands that stab each other:

![Figure 3.2. Laura's "Germanic" gesture (line 3)](image)

This gesture, co-occurring with the phrase “Germanic way” (with its implications of straightforwardness and directness), gives the phrase meaning. Both the gesture and the term “Germanic” by implication reference the Communication as Journey metaphor and the Directionality entailment of the Conduit Metaphor. The linearity of the gesture, and the Germanic way, are also contrasted with softer, more fluid, differently shaped gestures to describe the writing style she used to capture the music’s “three-dimensional essence.” In these movements that I will call “flowering” gestures (lines 4-5, above), she lifts her hands up and out:
Figure 3.3. Laura's flowering gestures (lines 4-5). The text is positioned to co-occur with the gesture it lies below.

These flowering gestures, enacting this “three-dimensional essence,” might embody the ornamental pole of the plain-ornamental axis in depicting not a linear or straight model but a 3-D one that stretches in many directions.

Whereas Laura signified “Germanic” through sharp, taut hands that enacted a short, direct, well-grounded journey, a number of writers used a vertical gesture in which a hand moves from a higher level to a lower level to demonstrate the way a text creates a linear, logical journey in the reader’s mind. (See Claudio’s “flow” gestures in Chapter 5.) For instance, Jing Jing, a history professor who teaches in an English and Film Studies Department, used this kind of gesture to describe, and take a negative stance on, “social science style.” Having noticed differences in the academic writing of history and literature graduate students, Jing Jing found that literature students “write to express themselves” and “want the language, the words, to become beautiful. They want to express an aesthetics.” But history graduate students don’t write like that, she implied, because history is “stuck” between the social sciences and the humanities. The transcript is as follows; see also the video clip: [http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49902](http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49902).
Figure 3.4. Jing Jing describing writing style in history (Interview, May 22, 2012)

The “step” gestures she produced (line 5) when she said “step one, step two, step three” are below:

![Jing Jing's gestures](image)

Figure 3.5. Jing Jing’s gestures as she describes what a “math” style looks like (line 5).

Although it is not apparent in the still images, Jing Jing’s movements are also quick and sharp—they help construct her negative stance toward this style, mirrored in her description of it as “very boring,” “like math.”

A few turns later, however, she performed a similar “up-down” gesture to enact a different kind of style— one that, by smoothly combing her fingers down through the air, she
values more highly. When she does this, she is describing the writing of Adam, a literature PhD student who epitomized this “beautiful” writing and aesthetic sense. The transcript is as follows; see also the video clip at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49937.

Figure 3.6. Jing Jing describes Adam's and her own style (Interview, May 22, 2012)

Jing Jing moved her hand from a higher plane to a lower one—and did so four times (line 1). But her stance toward the writing and “flow” is positive, compared to that toward “social science style.” In the images below, her separated fingers comb the air:

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2 Her interest in an aesthetics mirrors Lin’s complaint, above, that Lin’s fellow history graduate students at Beijing University had no aesthetic sense.
From these two excerpts, we can see that Jing Jing views a good academic writer as someone who transcends such “basics” as transition phrases and markers that signal one’s argument (“this is what I want to prove this is how I’m going to prove it,” Figure 3.4, line 6). Whereas she represented a social science style as having a rigid, abrupt, too-explicit “flow” or an artificial flow created through transitional phrases, she felt that the writing of someone like Adam simply flows naturally, without supports. She described, enacted, and took stances on these different kinds of “flow” through words and the manner of her gestures. While each kind of “flow,” and “journey,” we assume, could be considered linear and direct, Adam’s text flows more smoothly than that of social science style because it is less explicit.
Jing Jing’s dislike of transition phrases, in fact, reveals an extreme interpretation of the ideologies of textualism and the Conduit Metaphor of communication: one in which language that doesn’t directly communicate content but communicates how readers should understand content ought to be eliminated. In this logical view of language, metadiscourse like transitional phrases serves no referential purpose. (In Chapter 4, I describe how Dan’s writing guide takes a similar view in critiquing phrases like “As discussed below.”)

**Style Contrasts as Fully Embodied**

In the examples above, Laura and Jing Jing don’t actually use words like “straightforward”; we must look to their gestures to see how the style contrasts are invoked. But writers weren’t limited to gestures to depict their conceptions of style; they also drew on other embodied actions, such as facial expressions, body positions and movements, and intonation and voice quality and pace. In the next two examples, I will show how Laura enacted stylistic contrasts using different configurations of these semiotic resources. In particular, she invoked the plain-ornamental contrast and the linear-circular contrast, marking the inappropriate word or sentence with “fancier” or “looser” embodiment.

During the discourse-based interview, I asked Laura whether she preferred the verb “catalogued” (her original wording) or “had composed” (an edit suggested by Paul, her supervisor) in the following sentence of her program note on Schumann’s Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op 44:

Boccherini catalogued had composed several piano quintets, but Schumann was most likely unaware of them, and Mozart arranged several of his piano concertos for piano and string quartet, but the works were still principally solo pieces with string accompaniment.
She first read aloud Paul’s edit, “had composed” (Figure 3.8, left image) and then read her original wording, “catalogued” in a marked way, with a smirk, raised eyebrows, and the slight tilting of her head to the three beats in “catalogued” (Figure 3.8, right image):

Figure 3.8. Laura pronouncing the two options: “had composed” (left image) and then “catalogued” (right image) (line 1 below)

Laura then tried to figure out why he changed it, thinking that maybe “catalogued” “isn’t the right word” or “you just don’t use it” (line 2). When I asked her for her preference, she said that “had composed” is “a little clearer” (lines 4-5), but then she revised her reasoning, identifying that “catalogued” had a different meaning—someone else actually catalogued Boccherini’s music—so “composed is better” (line 7). She speculated that she was probably “just being (0.8) fancy. Stupid. You know” (lines 7-8), then mimicking a high-pitched, dumb-sounding voice. I asked her why she said “fancy,” and she pronounced “catalogued” in a high-pitched, British-sounding³ accent while raising her eyebrows and lifting her head:

³ This British accent may index fussiness, an obsession with politeness and decorum, and indirectness—in contrast to stereotypical U.S. values of plain speech.
Figure 3.9. Laura pronouncing “He catalogued” (line 9), with raised eyebrows and a high-pitched, British-sounding accent

She then tried to articulate her reasoning for choosing it, which may have been that she wanted to state that he contributed several quintets to “a library of piano quintets.” (She might be thinking of the meaning of the word “logged” here, in the sense of to attain or accumulate a certain amount of something.) She concluded, though, that “it’s more accurate to just be simpler about it” (line 12). The complete transcript is below; the video can be viewed at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49904.
Laura used her voice quality (high pitch, British-sounding accent), her facial expression (eyebrows raised), and even some body movements (slight movements of her head to the beat of the word) to signal something marked about “catalogued.” She described the word as “fancy” (line 7)—perhaps meaning that she was looking for a more

Figure 3.10. Laura comments on “catalogued” versus “had composed” (Interview, September 10, 2013)
unusual word just for the sake of a varied vocabulary. (Although she showed that she was trying to evoke a secondary meaning of “catalogued,” she didn’t actually see them as synonyms, as she first implied.) With these examples, we can see how a “fancy” and less “simple” (line 12) style are embodied through an array of different semiotic resources.

A more dramatic example occurs a few minutes earlier, when Laura and I were comparing the following sentences (underlined text signifies changes between versions):

**Paul’s edited version:** Haydn is identified as the composer on the manuscript of this charming divertimento, though most scholars believe the attribution is false. The attribution has stuck nevertheless.

**Laura’s original version:** Though Haydn’s name is listed as the composer of this charming divertimento on its manuscript, most scholars believe the attribution is false, though since no one else has been deemed the definitively true composer, the association remains.

After re-reading the sentences on the DBI protocol, she exclaimed, grimacing, “I wrote that sentence? That’s a terrible sentence.” I asked what was terrible about it, and she said, “it’s so long!” I then asked for more detail, and she explained that his version is more “concise” (line 1). She also commented that his was more “straightforward” (line 5) because it didn’t begin with “Though Haydn’s name is listed,” a subordinate clause; it started with the main idea, “Haydn is identified.”

In articulating her reasoning, Laura ascribed different traits to her sentence and to Paul’s sentence. She said that his was more “straightforward” (the Communication as Journey metaphor); spoke Paul’s preferred version, “Haydn is identified,” quickly; and sliced her hand vertically through the air twice, as captured by the following image (line 5):
She then juxtaposed his sentence with hers. When she read the beginning of her sentence (line 6), she enacted a kind of looseness (perhaps recalling the Language as Container metaphor): she waved her hands around her head, wiggled her head, spoke more slowly, raised her eyebrows, and used a voice that was almost arch. In contrast, when she read the beginning of Paul’s sentence a second time (lines 6-7), she kept her body tight, leaning crisply forward, then back. This crisp back-and-forth movement is difficult to capture in still images, but the enactments of looseness can be somewhat; notice the slightly different position of her head in each image and her hand (which she was waving around her head) in the second two images:

The transcript is below; the video can be viewed at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49905.
Laura responds to “Though Haydn’s name” vs. “Though Haydn’s name is listed” (Interview, September 10, 2013)

In this example, as with the above, Laura marshaled voice quality, facial expressions, head and body movements, and gestures to depict the wordier and the more “concise,” “straightforward” sentence.

Although the gestures and other embodied actions do not always fit neatly onto the axes of clear-opaque, plain-ornamental, or linear-circular, both examples reveal the ways that the indexical meanings of writing styles are internalized, felt, and expressed in the body. The connections people often make between writing styles and ways of speaking, thinking, and even carrying oneself seem embodied; the fact that gestures metaphorically index styles also aligns with Lakoff’s larger argument about the embodied character of (metaphorical) cognition. The next section moves from description of these style contrasts to an analysis of how they developed. I explore how encounters with institutional gatekeepers or academic mentors sensitized writers to particular style contrasts and how writers enacted and reproduced the
ideologies of clarity and universality in their own teaching, composing and revising, and considerations of their writing development.

**Development of Style Contrasts and Ideologies through Encounters with Institutions and Mentors**

*How Awareness of Style Contrasts Develops*

The writers’ perceptions of these style contrasts tended to emerge in moments of crisis, contestation, and negotiation. When their style suddenly wasn’t appropriate or good enough, they gained information about how to change it. These moments tended to be encounters with different institutional gatekeepers, like journal editors and reviewers or graduate program admissions committees, although even feedback from academic mentors or course professors facilitated the development of conceptions of style contrasts.

Both Manisha and Anustup remarked that the demands of journal publication challenged the writing styles they had valued as PhD students. Manisha, for instance, described that during her PhD program in literature at the University of Pittsburgh, her committee member and mentor encouraged her to blend a “critical theoretical” style with a “narrative” style. For instance, she was taught “to have my language inhabit a certain thinker” without actually quoting or citing that person. She was encouraged to emulate works like Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, with its light use of citations and almost novelistic qualities. As described earlier in this chapter, “narrative style” also included the creation of an “evocative milieu” (Interview, September 13, 2013).

She said that this style “worked wonders” as a PhD student—she “won every fellowship in town.” “But the moment I left that sanctuary,” she said, “the real world hit, and everyone was like, okay this does not fit an academic journal. So that had to fall off.” Journal editors and
reviewers made comments such as, “Oh, this is way too narrative, this is not critical theoretical. Or, you don’t have enough citations. Or, you're clearly referring to Paul de Man here, how come you don't cite him?” In order to publish, as a result, she had to adjust. “At some point it gets beaten out of you,” she said, “because you do have to get that job, and you do have to publish.” She remarked that “not everyone is Foucault.” But she does still hold onto the goal of blending the narrative with the critical theoretical style (Interview, September 16, 2013). (The mentor who supported this kind of style was an editor for *boundary 2*, which published the article whose excerpt I quoted above.)

Anustup, who also got his PhD at the University of Pittsburgh, reported similar negotiations as Manisha, although they happened during his PhD program (he graduated with 7 publications) instead of after. During his undergraduate and master’s work at Jadavpur University, he said he and his peers wrote essays as Montaigne imagined them—“a process of discovery and constant self-reflection”; writers did not state their main points up front. His PhD program professors did not push him in a particular way or penalize him for writing differently, but journal editors commented on it. He reported that reviewers or editors would say, “this is very impressive, but it's a very strange way to begin an essay.” And then he would go to his professors, and say, “what the hell is going on?” Eventually he got used to negotiating with journals. Since then, “there have been essays where I felt one actually has to begin in the American way. For no particular reason, it's just a feeling. There are other times where I felt completely different.” In a recent essay on Hindi science fiction film, he began “the American

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4 Conversely, Bob remarked that certain clever and creative ways of writing were “beaten out of me in graduate school.” For instance, a few years into his first tenure-track job, he published an article on *Fanny Hill* that began, “Few novels stop in midcourse to tell you how boring they are”—a sentence he “never would have dared to write” coming out of graduate school. “I found that as soon as I stopped trying to write like an English professor, I was much better off” (Interview, October 1, 2013).
way.” In other works, however, he has begun with a story or “emerge[s] from the text” (Interview, September 18, 2013).

For Debojoy, a PhD student in literature who received his MA at Jadavpur University over ten years after Anustup and Manisha did, his awareness of style contrasts was raised when he was rejected from all of the U.S. PhD programs to which he had applied.5 As a result, he got help from his Jadavpur professors and from Anustup when he applied the following year. They taught him ways of writing different from what was valued in exams, suggesting, among other things, that he let his thesis emerge from the text he was analyzing instead of imposing a thesis on the text.

When I asked him if “style” was a relevant concept when he was preparing his new writing sample, he agreed, implying that he changed his style somewhat in the new application essay. (He also said, however, that he had to relocate to Illinois before noticing that his style was inappropriate: “it was only after coming here that I came to realize that no, you need not have a bombastic style. You might use very simple words, very simple style, and still make a brilliant argument” (Interview, April 21, 2012).)

Debojoy described his pre-UIUC writing style as not just “bombastic” but also “stiff” and “stilted” (Interview, September 7, 2013). His explanation of this “bombastic” style was a “British colonial hangover” developed over more than twenty years spent in India—a “linguistic idiom” that he later called “flowery,” “ornamental,” and “archaic” (Interview, September 7, 2013). “We thought,” he said, “the more bombastic you were able to make your English, the

5 Although the curricula they experienced in Jadavpur University’s English Department were significantly different, Anustup implied that his writing sample was likely similar to Debojoy’s initial essay. He attributed Debojoy’s greater difficulty securing admission to the fact that Debojoy had applied to U.S. PhD programs at a more “competitive” and “hyper-professional” moment.
more you were able to use highfalutin’ words in a manner that makes it difficult for the reader to understand, the better it is” (Interview, April 21, 2012). Debojoy also wondered if the pedagogical practice of revering canonical British authors like Shakespeare, Milton, and Defoe, in place since the colonial era, “instilled the wrong notion that the more bombastic your style was, the better it was” (Interview, April 21, 2012). And he felt that the heavy emphasis on exams in his college and master’s degree encouraged wordiness: “There's this notion- the more material you write, somehow, the better it'll be considered, it'll just show you have learned more.” He added, “by extension, the more wordy you are, the better your paper will be” (Interview, September 7, 2013).

In addition to the professors assisting him with his writing sample, a number of other people helped him identify aspects of his style that would be perceived as odd or “bombastic.” One was his cousin, an accountant who had lived in the U.S. since 1989. His cousin suggested that Debojoy send him a draft of his first seminar paper because he knew, according to Debojoy, “there's a certain style of English that is followed in America.” One change his cousin suggested was to shift his use of the passive to the active voice.

Another influence was the professor of his first PhD seminar. One of the things she mentioned was his use of the pronoun “one.” Whereas he had been taught to use “one” to avoid “I” because with “I,” “you're letting your ego surface and highlighting your importance as a scholar in a way that is unbecoming,” he reported that his professor had asked him, “Why do you keep using this impersonal style? It's your argument. So- if you do not mention the first person pronoun I, it's like you're taking away your agency as a scholar. Why should you do that?” He said that this professor also critiqued his use of passive voice, wordiness, and overuse of quotations (Interview, September 7, 2013).
Reflecting on these influences, Debojoy remarked, “So gradually I was inculcated into this idiom which I think makes far more sense” (Interview, September 1, 2013). And Debojoy reported that when he looked back at this first seminar paper after a period of time, “I asked, why am I using this kind of stiff, stilted, English? Why the hell? And wow, that was a bad paper— in terms of form and content” (Interview, September 1, 2013).

Often, the training these writers received through schooling or mentoring inculcated them into particular ways of inspecting their language for the presence or absence of particular style features. By practicing these kinds of inspection, they are reading and writing through the lens of textualist ideologies—and reproducing them.

**Enactment of Ideologies of Clarity**

Many participants enacted textualist ideologies by inspecting written language (their own or others’) for nonreferential, excess meaning. These language inspection practices are part of the technologies, activities, and ideologies involved in what Minick (1993) calls “representative speech,” in which “the meaning of an utterance must correspond to what is actually represented in words” (Minick, 1993, p. 346), and they emerged from experiences that led writers to “see” their writing differently. These experiences may have been directed by a professor who provided

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6 Studying how young children are socialized to understand representational speech through repeated exposure to teachers’ “representational directives,” Minick identifies three steps to following such a directive: “attention to the actual wording of an utterance”; “bracketing of situational sense,” or elements from the shared context that give the utterance meaning; and commitment to a world “isolate[d] from any human interests and concerns” (p. 350). One of Minick’s examples comes from his kindergarten-aged son. When told he would spill his milk if he didn’t move his glass, which was sitting near the edge of the table, his son moved his glass to a different corner of the table. His son thus mischievously “played with the discrepancy” between nonreferential and referential meaning (p. 349).
oral or written comments or suggested some kind of instructional text to read, or they may have been prompted by the writers’ own initiative.

Literature professor Bob Markley, for instance, commented that after his first book was accepted by the publisher, he was asked to cut 10% of the manuscript. He edited his prose line by line, keeping track of the number of lines cut at the bottom of each page, and found this “a useful stylistic exercise” that “kind of beat the last remnants of graduate school prose out of me” (Interview, October 1, 2013).

Bob said that he inspects his graduate students’ papers in a similar way, reading “line by line.” “If you've seen the papers that Debojoy gave you,” he said, “you'll see I'll go through and say, ‘rephrase,’ ‘wrong word,’ suggest other words, underline words, put question marks in the margin- that's pretty typical. I do that to my own work” (Interview, October 1, 2013). Debojoy appreciated Bob’s line edits, finding that his “corrections” and “marginal notes” were as if “he’s preparing a paper for publication” (Interview, September 1, 2013). And, Debojoy said, “once you get exposed to a different way of handling the same language, you automatically find problems in the way you had been using the language so far” (Interview, September 7, 2013). Once writers learn these kinds of inspection practices, they tend to see any text through that lens. Indeed, this was the case for Laura.

Laura described a formative moment in her writing history that involved style inspection: when Paul Hawkshaw, the director of the Norfolk Music Festival, heavily edited the program notes that he commissioned her to write. Laura discovered these edits when paging through the published program and was surprised by how much he rewrote her text. Laura met with him afterwards and learned he “thought my notes were a little fluffy or something, that I wasn’t really- I was kind of circling around ((traces circle with arm)) what I was saying, and I wasn’t
really getting at the heart of it.” She reported that Paul’s recommendations included “taking out all adverbs in order to get to the essence of what one is trying to say” (Interview, December 28, 2011). Laura said that after Paul told her to cut these words out, “I really started to notice other people’s writing, or mine, or even- I couldn’t even write a sentence in an email right after. I was like, Oh my god, what am I saying?!” (Interview, December 28, 2011).

Paul himself received explicit training in this kind of language inspection. He recalled that one of his college professors “took me aside very kindly” and commented on a paper “that I was very proud of.” Paul remarked,

And he just cut it to ribbons. Just ruthlessly, mercilessly- by the time he was done it was about 40 percent the length I had handed in. He just challenged my logical process in every sentence. He made me - as a consequence of that, he made me take a course in symbolic logic in the Philosophy Department. Which I did and for which I will ever be eternally grateful. So everyone whom I try to speak to a little bit about writing, I always say, Rule #1- short. Rule #2- no adverbs, no filler. Rule #3- A implies B, B implies C, therefore A implies C. That's how I write, and that's how I try to teach people. (Interview, October 7, 2013)

Laura remarked to me that although she tries to enact his advice in her current program notes, she no longer scrutinizes her emails for adverbs.

Paul and Laura both performed for me a particular way of inspecting language that involved reciting or looking at a sentence and then asking questions that subject it to logical scrutiny. When I asked Paul what he meant by “flowery language,” a term he had just used, he replied,

Well, um adverbs to which I cannot- which I couldn’t justify from a logical standpoint. In other words, well now I can’t think of one, but you read them all the time in the newspaper. “It was tantalizingly sweet.” You know, what does that mean? It doesn’t mean anything, actually. (Interview, October 7, 2013)

When Laura was describing Paul’s stance on adverbs, she gave a hypothetical example as well:
Well, ‘cause his thing was, “I went to the grocery store quickly.” Well, quickly compared to what. What does that mean? Quicker than usual? The quickest person in the world? What is it? (Interview, December 28, 2011)

Arguably, “tantalizingly” adds new information about the irresistibility of the object, and “quickly,” while not specifying the comparison, also provides additional information. (The anti-adverb argument would likely declare that adverbs are best converted to verbs, which express the same meaning in fewer words; e.g., “I rushed to the grocery store.”) In both Laura and Paul’s examples, the sentence is presented stripped of context, and in its decontextualized form it must contain no ambiguity. With such language inspection practices as these, taught and learned across generations of academic mentors, the ideology of textualism and the Conduit Metaphor of communication are reproduced. The practice of stripping sentences of their context to critique them occurs on a larger scale when writers reflect on their writing development, treating writing and style as decontextualized skills.

*Enactment of Ideologies of Universality*

A pervasive ideology was that writing is a generalized skill that could be developed or transferred across contexts (see, e.g., discussions by Rose, 1985; Street, 1984, 1995). This view appeared when writers reflected on their writing development across many years or mentioned features they incorporated or avoided as they composed. For instance, Laura had initially agreed to write program notes because she felt they would help her improve her general writing skills:

I would say I never felt like I was a very strong writer, and even writing program notes I thought, one of the reasons I wanted to do it was because it was going to be a good learning experience, that I would get better, because I felt writing was always a weakness. (Interview, December 28, 2011)

Laura’s doctoral advisor’s dissatisfaction with her writing—and inability to articulate what was wrong, besides saying that it sounded “informal”—shook her confidence further. But, she then
commented, “I think I'm getting better. I feel pretty good about my grant writing.” Unlike with her doctoral thesis, “at least I know when it's bad” (Interview, December 28, 2011).

Although Laura’s advisor was never specific about what was wrong with her writing, Laura concluded that her main problem—across all types of writing—was precision. She said,

I think my professors probably write that I don’t exactly say what I mean. Somehow I'm a little sloppy about it, or I let it slide- or really that I'm not sure what I'm saying, and so I give an approximation. Sometimes, an approximation being quite a forceful sentence. And then I'm not quite careful enough to think, “is this exactly what I'm saying?” (Interview, December 28, 2011)

Whereas Laura claimed she struggled with “precision” in different kinds of writing, Corinne, the senior psychology major, felt that “concision” has plagued her:

I found that regardless of what kind of writing I do- creative writing, writing on literature, writing in the journal style- I do struggle with trying to be concise. So even though they’re very different styles of writing and I approach them in different ways, I still have that same problem. (Interview, November 2, 2012)

She credited her awareness of the “problem” to an AP English teacher who was “very open to giving me suggestions and pointing out my strengths and where I needed to improve.” Corinne also found that the in-class practice AP exams helped because they “forced you to be very brief”: “you just had 45 minutes to read the prompt and then write it.”

Her quest for concision continued as she worked on her BA thesis. By the time she had graduated, however, she ultimately enjoyed academic writing in psychology. She described this change as follows:

So I really enjoy writing that way now because I realize how concise it is and how efficiently the words are used to make your argument, but it was definitely hard for me to learn that because I tend to be pretty verbose when I write. (Interview, June 10, 2013)

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7 Corinne’s and Debojoy’s different views of exams illustrate the ways genres are deeply embedded in contexts. Exam writing does not universally produce brief or wordy text.
At the same time, she still identified with the habit of verbosity, using the present tense form “tend.” Despite having written a thesis in psychology and feeling that she had mastered this efficient style, as a result, this universalizing tendency persisted.

It was also common for writers not just to identify stylistic problems that cut across many kinds of writing but also to apply more local stylistic principles widely. A number of writers revealed that they tried to transfer a particular style or stylistic feature to everything they wrote—or that this transfer just unconsciously happened. Treating stylistic principles as universal seemed to be tempting because once someone had developed a new way of inspecting their writing, it was difficult to remove those lenses, a point Debojoy made when discussing his new awareness of the bombastic style. When looking at a sentence from her program notes, for example, Laura applied advice from her doctoral thesis advisor: she said that he would “hate” her informality in a particular sentence (Interview, September 10, 2013). Although her advisor’s comments had been confined to her doctoral thesis, Laura was inspecting program notes, written for a public (although highly educated) audience, through his eyes.

A test of the extent to which one is transferring an academic style to other kinds of writing may be whether one uses it (or avoids it) in emails and text messages. Lin, the PhD student in history, described how as a college sophomore in China she followed a schedule where she read works by her favorite Chinese historians and literary scholars, spending about half a month to a month on each. She said that by focusing on one author at a time, “I get a very clear sense about their writing styles. And during that period I have the impulse to imitate them.” She reported that her imitations unconsciously extended to her text messages and emails, and her friends, also history majors, recognized the people she was imitating” (Interview, May 4, 2012).
This generalizing tendency also seems to operate for stigmatized linguistic forms. Writers who were told to avoid particular stylistic features in particular types of writing seemed to transfer these principles to electronic communication. Corinne’s professor, Dan, discouraged the use of adverbs like “very” and “really” in academic and journalistic writing, and Corinne not only tried to follow that advice in her thesis but also admitted she couldn’t help but “feel bad” when she used those words in her text messages (Interview, February 5, 2013). Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, after Paul recommended that she avoid adverbs in her program notes, Laura tried deleting adverbs even from emails.

Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, after Paul recommended that she avoid adverbs in her program notes, Laura tried deleting adverbs even from emails. Sometimes, however, stylistic advice is meant to apply across contexts. A common view is that academic writing benefits from sounding conversational (e.g., Elbow, 2012); this view circulates partly to prevent students, imitating what they think “academic writing” looks like (Bartholomae, 1986), from producing, well, bombast. For instance, Bob, the literature professor, tells his undergraduate students that “you need to write the way you talk.” He reported that he advises, “You don't say, “It was interesting to note that hunger was experienced by me, thus, a pizza was ordered.” If you start talking like that, you’re not going to have very many friends” (Interview, October 1, 2013). Bob shows that academic style (indexed through passive voice and an anticipatory “it” clause) makes conversation sound ridiculous. The inference we are meant to draw is that academic style in academic writing will also sound ridiculous. The analogy between conversation and academic writing operates through the semiotic process of adequation, which backgrounds differences between conversation and academic writing.8

8 Applied linguists (e.g., Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2009) have documented these differences and analyzed their functions. As I mention in Chapter 1, corpus linguists have shown that the unplanned nature of conversation (versus writing) leads conversation to have lots of incomplete utterances.
In our interview, Debojoy enacted a reverse view—that conversation should not sound academic. After discussing elements of the “bombastic” style, including use of the third person pronoun “one,” he caught himself saying “one.” (Specifically, he said, “That’s the kind of phrasing one would come across in—”). He cut himself off, banged his fist on the table, and exclaimed, “third person!” (Interview, September 7, 2013). This self-censorship—which of course may not have happened had we not been discussing the third person earlier in the interview—demonstrated the ideal of uniform or at least consistent language use across speech and writing.

Although Debojoy and Bob both welcomed the influences of speech on academic writing, they disagreed on the inclusion of a particularly rarified word: “contrariwise,” which Debojoy included in a conference abstract draft and Bob changed to “in contrast.” Similar to Bob’s dislike for other academic-sounding elements in academic writing, Bob found “contrariwise” inappropriate; specifically, he called it “bookish.” (The sense of “bookish” Bob invoked is an adverb that means “with reference to speech: in a manner characteristic of books; in an (overly) formal or literary manner,” as in, “Don’t speak bookish” (“bookish, adj. and adv.”).) Debojoy’s abstract—on a topic within the neurohumanities—arguably epitomizes “bookish,” so “contrariwise,” for Bob, likely jarred because it seemed to come from a different lexicon. When conversational style and academic writing style are conflated through the semiotic processes of adequation and erasure, attributes of academic writing—its natural “bookishness”—become inappropriate.

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9 The history of the word “bookish” demonstrates the effects of transferring qualities from one “style” or “genre” or semiotic form to another. The OED definition makes a bookish conversational style sound negative or, at least, marked. Now, however, and quite amusingly, even writing that is “bookish” is negative or marked.
Debojoy, however, was still attached to the word, even though he replaced it with “in contrast” in his final draft. He explained that he had taken “contrariwise” from Tweedledum and Tweedledee in *Through the Looking-Glass* because he didn’t feel that “in contrast” or “on the contrary” fit as well in the sentence and because *Through the Looking-Glass* “is an accepted English canonical text, so why not use it?”¹⁰ He suspected that Bob had deleted it because it looked and sounded “clumsy,” even though “it’s not wrong English usage.” “Everyone in an English Department has read Through the Looking-Glass,” he said, “so what's wrong with ‘contrariwise’?” This argument draws on the universalizing tendency. Why not use literary language (especially from such a canonical English text) in a scholarly paper for a literature course?

This pattern of universalizing cuts across many different practices: generalizing stylistic problems across all kinds of writing, applying stylistic advice meant for one genre or context to another, and treating conversational and writing styles as ideally merged. The ideology that certain principles of good writing are universal thus cuts across many different views and practices. To what extent, however, do writers’ perceptions actually shape their texts? Lin, for example, claimed that her text messages had noticeably conveyed styles of different historians. Given my lack of proficiency in Chinese language, letters, and history, as well as the likelihood that she did not still have that particular phone or those text messages, I was unable to verify this by having her talk through different text messages or having her university colleagues tell me

¹⁰ The implication—that, hypothetically, authors should have agency to include any word they want, even one from a different context—also surfaced in data for my master’s thesis research (Olinger, 2009, pp. 51-52). Three first-year students were coauthoring a paper on the discourse community of taekwondo. One joked that they should include the word “fisticuffs” in their paper. Another protested. A third replied, “well you can, it’s your own writing. I don’t think it’s bad…it’s just not like fieldnotes, like, no one would say that.”
whom they perceived in these messages. It is to this complex relationship between ideology and practice that I now turn.

Conflicts between Ideologies and Practices: The Stakes of Style Representations

Writers’ explicitly articulated perceptions of styles did not always completely describe their stylistic practices. As Silverstein (1981) described, metapragmatic awareness is always partial and is shaped by a number of factors. The more context-dependent the linguistic feature is, for instance, the more difficult it is to describe what is going on using one’s intuition (see also Duranti, 1997, p. 203).

Manisha’s descriptions of her “narrative” style did in fact resemble her practices in the boundary 2 article. A more complex example, however, is Debojoy’s bombastic style. One might assume that he had rid himself completely of the British colonial hangover, but we discussed a number of words in a seminar paper he wrote his third year in the PhD program that could possibly be attributed to it—“contrariwise” as well as “not shorn of,” “aforementioned,” and “cannot but,” which Debojoy felt indexed literary, archaic/biblical, and legalistic/administrative activities, respectively. In addition, when Debojoy showed me a draft of the seminar paper that he had thought epitomized the “bombastic” style that triggered his professor’s suggestions, he had trouble identifying concrete examples of it. As we looked at the draft, he commented, “Actually, I’m not finding that so much in this paper, maybe it's simply because the American influence was beginning to rub off on me, but at the same time I find the occasional use of an idiom which I do not really think was necessary” (Interview, September 7, 2013).

When he came to the following sentences, for instance, he pointed out the redundancy of the word “previous” (see bold text, below), commenting, “The reference to nakedness is obvious because I have referred to it somewhere before in the essay.” He also felt that the repetition of
“countries” was a problem: “colonized countries, these countries- so the word country coming up again and again” (see bold, below). With his scrutinizing every word for excess meaning, we see the language inspection practices at work:

Eliot’s description of Florence as a city which has “since the days of Columbus… seem[ed] to stand as…almost unviolated” (Eliot, Romola 1; emphasis added) also needs some unpacking. The allusion to the possibility of a land’s violation, coupled with the mention of Columbus and the previous reference to nakedness, cannot be dissociated from Renaissance cartography. This is because Renaissance cartography often encoded the rape and plunder of colonized countries like America by figuring these countries as naked women, and colonizers as masters/rapists. The intention behind this representation was to view the nations as Europe’s colonized others by positing them as being passive and, consequently, indolent in their lack of resistance to their European colonizers. (bold added)

After he read the last sentence of the section quoted above, he remarked, “My god what a wordy sentence. What a wordy sentence. Seriously, this is one of those sentences which I think, by the time you get to the end of it, you get a little mixed up.”

A few minutes later, he critiqued another of his sentences (below) for using the word “Europe” three times and including the words “female” and “feminine” (see bold) (“you have the use of female, feminine, similar words, twice”):

The association with the female also calls to mind another dichotomy that Edward Said set up between Europe and her colonized other, the Orient—if Europe had to be masculine, it could only be on the basis of the discursive representation of Europe’s colonized nations as feminine (Loomba 45). (bold added)

He commented that this kind of writing was not “very professional,” and he contrasted himself with Anustup, his advisor, who “hardly ever repeats words within the course of 3 or 4 sentences” and “has got such a mastery on the use of the English language.”
In these examples, Debojoy is applying a type of language inspection to his own writing, finding features objectionable that, to me, were not. Repetition of words, for instance, can also create cohesion and coherence (see, e.g., Williams & Bizup, 2014), but Debojoy marked this kind of repetition as objectionable. His own perceptions seem to be linked to an idealized image of his advisor, Anustup, who “hardly ever repeats words.” (Anustup, he told me in our first interview, was “amazing” in his versatility: “he can make his style as simple and as complicated as he wants” (Interview, April 21, 2012).) This more “professional” style attributed to Anustup, with its presumed absence of repetition, thus generates a kind of inspection practice that Debojoy uses to scrutinize his own writing.

Jing Jing’s representation of Adam’s writing was also a bit different from what actually appeared in Adam’s texts. Recalling her view that Adam did not use transition words, I located a number of transition words in Adam’s paper when preparing for our follow-up interview. During the interview, I pointed her to the following section (see transition words in bold, added for this publication):

Like Flowers of War, Empire of the Sun breaks down the binary of West/East, but it ultimately does not relinquish the Other, nor give up a view of China as either passive victim or thieving rogue. **However,** for most of the film, Morris contends, “Spielberg unreels a solipsistic *vision* of war, involving projection into different positions, rather than any attempt at objective realism” (138). **Therefore,** the film reveals Orientalism to be representations and not reality. Jamie’s personal changes are also connected to the imperial/colonial themes of the film. Jamie’s shattered illusion of control and modernization/maturity parallel Britain’s decline and America’s ascension, respectively. Does the war’s shattering of Jamie’s illusion merely substitute one colonial power for another though? Is another Orientalist illusion

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11 When Debojoy asked if this exercise “helped” me, I commented that I was hoping his past bombastic style would be more visible because I “didn’t really see it.” He apologized and wondered, “Maybe I was judging my own work from the point of view of a Rhet 105 TA”—but then he changed his mind, stating, “but I myself find these sentences just wordy, repetitive, verbose,” and “typically the kind of idiom you would find from an Indian who’s come to the States for the first time” (Interview, September 7, 2013). Debojoy remarked in an earlier interview that his teaching experience has made him a lot more critical of his own writing because he has felt obligated to “practice what I profess” (Interview, April 21, 2012).
adopted in the end? Hopefully Jamie closing his eyes in his mother’s arms signals his embrace of a less discriminatory reality, but the film does not entirely rule out the possibility that Jamie will become just another bureaucrat in the Empire like his father. (bold added)

The semiotic process of erasure may be at work in explaining the seeming invisibility of these words. Perhaps because Jing Jing perceived him as an exemplary writer and felt that such a writer did not need supports like transition words, these words did not stand out or affect her overall impression of his final paper, which she gave an A+.

After pointing out the transition words to her, I wondered aloud that “they must not have been so noticeable” (line 2). She agreed and said she didn’t notice his usage as a problem because he didn’t use the same word. The transcript is below; see also the video clip at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49939.

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1  J: *Yes I see. There’s a lot. In fact. Yeah yeah yeah Yeah
   A: hh hhh .hh But they must have not
   *smiling

2  J: .hh yes because it’s not the same word over and over and over again (3.0)
   A: been so noticeable.

3  J: I have this problem with writing, it’s very bad. (1.0) *uh huh!
   A: of using the same words?
   *nods

4  J: using the same words it’s terrible. *hh
   A: hih hih .hhh What are the sa(h)me words that you use.
   *smiling

5  J: *uh “as such” ** Basically that’s it. ***Mm hm Mm hm
   A: ha ha ha ha really! A(h)s su(h)ch! that’s the I can’t even think
   *smiling **laughing inaudibly ***nods, smiling

6  J: As such, As su:ch, bu- duh duh duh duh duh.
   A: of that- a context of- Oh oh: As su:ch, duh:::

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Figure 3.14. Jing Jing discusses transition words (Interview, September 12, 2013)

Her account for not seeing them, which was that he was not repeating them, thus redefined the figure of an exemplary writer. Instead of being someone who didn’t use transition words at all, this figure was someone who didn’t rely on the same words. In this interview clip, she renewed the contrast between herself and Adam (described in the section on the
Communication as Journey metaphor), for she disclosed her own habit of relying on a single transitional phrase, “as such” (i.e., “in this way”).\(^{12}\) The gravity with which she described her own writing—“I have this problem with writing, it’s very bad.” (line 3)—may illustrate that her perception of Adam’s admirable qualities is highly connected to her own self-perceived flaws. Because she felt she struggled with such basics, she reasoned, a good writer like him surely did not.

A few minutes later, when I asked whether his language was “more sophisticated or different” from that of other graduate students she had taught, she made another connection between the two of them. In his writing, “I hear a voice, I hear his voice. (1.0) Whereas myself included, I I (0.8) am not a good writer” (lines 1-2). The examples she gave that distinguished Adam were not the absence of transitional phrases but the lack of other metadiscourse markers like “According to this writer” as well as of explicit statements about what one’s argument is and how it relates to other conversations and fills a gap in the literature—statements she utters while scooping her voice, as if enacting the rudimentary quality of each turn of phrase.

This kind of writing, she said, transcends the “formula[s],” demonstrates confidence, and challenges “the conventional academic style” (line 13). A transcript is below; see also the video file at [http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49938](http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49938).

\(^{12}\) In fact, in an article manuscript she sent me the following month for copyediting, she used “as such” only twice.
Figure 3.15. Jing Jing describes Adam’s voice (Interview, September 12, 2013)

Similar to the gestures described earlier when characterizing “social science style” as “very boring,” “like math,” she uses step-like gestures to iconically represent this kind of formulaic writing:

J: I hear, I see in his *writing, I hear a voice, I hear his voice. (1.0) Whereas myself

A: *draws a finger through the air like a pencil

J: I included, I I (0.8) am not a good writer. (1.0) Um *Ohhh

A: *puts her head in her hands

J: (I’m) so: struggling with my writing. But I- I I hear I see that he- somehow the first

A: .hhh

J: impression I got when I read that paper or in his class in his other writing (1.0) he I- I don’t

A:

J: see., I don’t hear: um tch oh (1.0) I don’t see so much of this. *Such as ***According to this

A: *makes air-quotes **scoops voice to create simplistic air

J: writer,” “He *said this,” Uh **“There’s this (0.8) limitation of this,” “There’s a gap and

A: **scoops voice to create simplistic air

J: therefore we should look at this. From this way.” The way he writes it is- there is that, but

A:

J: *everything is embeded. **It’s not **sequential. (1.0) Uh **The- **the w- the um tch

A: *circles hand around face **steps right hand down a level

J: It’s not, okay *this is what this writer said, *okay I disagree because there’s something wrong,

A: *steps right hand down a level

J: and this * is the new way. **This is the new perspective. You don’t hear that. You don’t hear

A: Mmm

J: that (2.0) mm formulaic way. You don’t see that formula. It’s it’s it’s something different. It’s

A: *steps right hand down a level **slices hand for emphasis

J: a new- it’s a confidence that I see. In his writing. That he’s willing to even challenge the (2.0)

A: Hmm

J: uh- (1.8) the the conventional academic style.

A:
Figure 3.16. Jing Jing gestures as she describes Adam's style (line 8). The text is positioned to co-occur with the gesture it lies below.

Figure 3.17. Jing Jing gives examples of formulaic moves (lines 9-10). The gesture signified by the asterisk is depicted in the image above each segment of text.

Although these markers and explicit statements arguably shape the reader’s experience and make the text easier to navigate, they are also nonreferential; they do not contribute directly to the content. Her attention to these elements could thus be seen as part of the language inspection practices mentioned earlier, in which any word that does not contribute to the content is seen as disposable and, perhaps, mere interference in the transmission of the message, to recall the Conduit Metaphor.

As with the above example with the transition words, there is again a disjunction between her perception and the reality. Although Adam does not write a statement like “In this paper, I will argue …”, number his points, or use any of the phrases Jing Jing mentioned, he does provide a thesis statement that is “sequential” in that the order of the points in his statement (see bold text
below) mirrors the order of the points as he discusses them in his paper. The thesis, contained in the last few sentences of his first paragraph, reads as follows:

While both Empire of the Sun and Flowers of War feature a white male protagonist in China, the construction and maintenance of Orientalist images in each film are disrupted by the network of power relations in semicolonial modern China, by the transnational aspects of each film, by the significant presence of child characters, and by the dynamic personal changes in each protagonist subject. More specifically, the multiple points of identification for Jamie in Empire of the Sun and the multiple points of view presented in The Flowers of War complicate a clear-cut West/East binary, subverting the Orientalist modes at work in each film. (bold added)

An argument can also be made that Adam’s interactions with sources in this paper are actually less “embedded” and more “sequential” (line 8) than she perceives. In the following section of his paper, part of a paragraph that Jing Jing praised for its “solid understanding of the two texts [Barlow and Said] and the limitations of postcolonial theory,” Adam distinguishes his own points from those of two sources, Barlow and Said:

Barlow explores the difficulties of talking about China as a colony, for as many scholars argue, “China was never really colonized” (368). She suggests the need in postcolonial studies to move away from the predominant England/India colonial model (371). By extension, I would argue that Said’s Anglo-French-American/Near Eastern model of Orientalism does not precisely apply to China, despite his scattered examples suggesting so. In the chapter, “Orientalism Now,” when Said states that “A wide variety of hybrid representations of the Orient now roam the culture” (285), he goes on to mention China and Japan (as well as Indochina, India, and Pakistan). Said never makes clear whether these South and East Asian representations are hybrids of Orientalism, but I would suggest that hybridity is a useful way of thinking about Orientalist representations of China. (bold text added)

If one read only the bold text aloud, the result—“Barlow explores this, By extension I would argue this, Said never makes clear this, I would suggest this”—resembles Jing Jing’s stylized version (lines 5-7, 9-10 in Figure 3.15, above), which Jing Jing intended to represent what Adam

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13 However, the two points presented in last sentence of this paragraph, about “the multiple points of identification for Jamie in The Empire of the Sun and the multiple points of view presented in The Flowers of War,” in fact are subpoints within the section on the presence of children.
did not do. Adam’s “style” is thus not inherent in the text; it is shaped by Jing Jing’s beliefs about what a “good writer” does. Because he is a good writer, we are meant to infer, he likely does not do these things.

Jing Jing’s asides about her own writing experiences as a new tenure-track faculty member provide more insight into the figure of the ideal writer that Adam represents. At the end of our conversation, I reminded her that I was hoping to thank her for her participation by reciprocating in some way—by, for example, proofreading a manuscript. She accepted my offer, admitting that “the key to success” is that “you have to be humble and willing to ask for help,” something she did as a graduate student but had been hesitant to do as a new assistant professor.

She said that in the first year and a half of her tenure-track job,

I was too proud, I did not even show my work to anyone, of course I got rejected [from journals]. I was just so afraid, maybe I felt ashamed of my work, and I had to relearn everything. It's been so long since my dissertation, and it's been a struggle. (Interview, September 12, 2013)

She said that she wanted to show her article manuscript to a native English speaker, and she hoped to not just avoid grammatical mistakes but also get help with “the transitions,” “the logic of my ideas, how they flow,” “how to flow from one paragraph to the next without using ‘therefore,’ ‘yet,’ ‘however.’” She remarked that the stakes are high—publishing a significant amount to get tenure while managing a heavy teaching load—but beyond that, “I don’t want to write something that’s just another line on my CV. I want something that can make a difference.” Jing Jing’s experience of having to “relearn everything” since her dissertation and her struggle to make time for research have thus arguably attached considerable anxiety to this figure of a “good writer.”

In both Debojoy’s and Jing Jing’s cases, the styles they perceived were linked less to what was actually present in a particular text and more to figures of “good writers” that shaped
how they viewed their own writing. For Debojoy, channeling the figure of his advisor led him to perceive three instances of the word “Europe” as a flaw. For Jing Jing, the figure of a good writer, as embodied in Adam, meant that she found explanations for Adam’s use of metadiscourse like transition words. Perceiving growth in writing or style perhaps requires the maintenance of these figures, for they help writers articulate and set goals.

Conclusion

Introducing ideas that will be explored in the two subsequent case studies, this chapter detailed the ideologies of textualism (belief in “the fixity of text, the transparency of language, and the universality of shared, available meaning” [Collins, 1996, p. 204]) and the Conduit Metaphor of communication. These ideologies revealed themselves in participants’ representations of style contrasts, which fell along axes of clear-opaque (enacting the Understanding as Sight entailment of the Conduit Metaphor as well as the ideologies of language as transparent and meaning as shared), plain-ornamental (enacting the Language as Container entailment of the Conduit Metaphor), and linear-circular (enacting the Communication as Journey metaphor). Crucially, I demonstrated that style contrasts were represented not just in writers’ talk but also in their bodies—voice quality, body posture and movements, facial expressions, and gestures. These representations were complex: for example, in Jing Jing’s case, subtle variations on the “up-down” “flow” gesture indexed positive and negative stances toward particular styles and described different textual features. I also showed how these sets of contrasts were maintained through semiotic processes of adequation, distinction, and erasure.

I then turned to how participants’ interviews explicitly and implicitly suggested that these ideologies were learned and enacted. Participants pointed to interactions with gatekeepers such as admissions committees and journal reviewers, as well as with course professors and mentors.
These interactions typically made them realize that their styles were somehow inappropriate and needed to be changed. Writers learned and reproduced practices of language inspection, in which they scrutinized their prose for excess, nonreferential meaning and strove to universalize stylistic problems or features across many different kinds of writing. In the last section, I analyzed the ways in which perceptions of one’s own or another’s styles are linked to images of the people the writers seek to emulate. I argued that these “stakes” explain the phenomenon of contradictions between explicitly articulated stylistic representations and actual practices. Whereas this chapter set out a variety of different ideologies related to style held by writers across disciplines, the next examines how these ideologies work and evolve within a group of interacting writers in the Department of Psychology.
And obviously if we ended up submitting it to a journal then we would just have to look at whatever style was used by the journal. And that won’t be Harold’s [style] or Dan’s [style] or anything. So that’ll just be a whole new can of worms.

(Interview with Corinne, November 14, 2012)

Whereas Chapter 3 examined writers’ language ideologies and style perceptions in a number of fields, this chapter focuses on a group of writers in a single department, psychology. In this chapter, however, I not only describe common representations and ideologies but also show how they change. I argue that although writers’ representations of styles—of “Dan’s style,” “Harold’s style,” “narrative style,” and “stereotypical academic” style—seem to be fixed, they are continually in flux. I also demonstrate several phenomena about the nature of style: the ways in which particular sentences in writers’ texts index different meanings for different readers, the quite contextual nature of seemingly universal style principles, and the grip of particular ideologies about good writing and good writers even among those who appreciate the heterogeneity of stylistic practice. By studying instantiations of styles in writers’ texts, and by capturing writers’ and readers’ interpretations of these stylistic bits, this chapter thus reveals the constantly changing shape of style—in perception, practice, and principle.

Chapter Methodology

Site and Participants

This chapter focuses on three primary participants in various subfields of psychology—Daniel (“Dan”) Simons (a faculty member), Corinne (a college senior; she preferred that just her first name be used), and Mary (a pseudonym; also a college senior)—and their associated
secondary participants—Christopher Chabris (Dan’s coauthor), Harold (a pseudonym; Corinne’s advisor), and Mikhail Lyubanksy (Mary’s advisor).

Dan Simons was my initial contact. I had discovered Dan’s work through Ashley Bennett, another participant who was a postdoctoral student in ecology. Dan had given a workshop to UIUC postdocs, and afterwards one of the postdocs emailed the members some resources, including a link to Dan’s writing guide and to his book, coauthored with Christopher Chabris, *The Invisible Gorilla: How Our Intuitions Deceive Us* (Chabris & Simons, 2010). During our second interview, Ashley showed me Dan’s writing guide and asked some questions about it. After studying the guide and seeing the many examples of popular science writing on Dan’s CV, I emailed Dan to see if he would be interested in participating. When we met to talk about the study, he agreed to participate and expressed interest in getting my feedback on his writing guide. He mentioned that he was currently teaching a three-semester class for undergraduate honors thesis-writers. Since he was giving regular feedback to these students, this class seemed like a good place to recruit additional participants.

After Dan and I met for his literacy history interview (during which I also gave him feedback on his writing guide), he circulated an email message from me to his class. Two students replied expressing interest: Corinne and Mary. Each became a primary participant, and I was able to interview their advisors (Harold and Mikhail, respectively) as well as Dan about their writing. Since Dan was also a primary participant, I interviewed Christopher Chabris in the role of a secondary participant.

*Data Collection Procedures*

**Primary Participant #1: Dan Simons**
A cognitive psychologist, Dan is a professor in the Department of Psychology and the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. He has worked on “the mechanisms of attention, perception, memory, and thinking,” especially visual cognition (Simons, 2010). With Christopher Chabris, he published The Invisible Gorilla (Chabris & Simons, 2010), which became a New York Times bestseller and has been translated into more than a dozen languages (Simons, 2010). In 2010, Dan and Christopher wrote a blog series for Psychology Today called “The Gorilla Guys,” and he and Christopher have each wrote, separately and together, many essays for the popular media that apply research findings in experimental psychology to contemporary issues, or that critically review recently published works by science journalists like Malcolm Gladwell. Dan has also kept a separate blog since 2012, where he reflects on professional issues (e.g., “Direct replication of imperfect studies—what’s the right approach?”) and reviews recently published studies.

First, I conducted a semi-structured literacy history interview with Dan. We discussed his writing experiences in high school, college, and graduate school and his experiences with popular science writing, collaborations with Christopher, and approach to the undergraduate class he was teaching. After about 30 minutes, we discussed my feedback on his writing guide. The interview, which occurred on October 18, 2012 and took place in his office in the Department of Psychology, lasted just under an hour, and I audiorecorded it.

At the end of the interview, we discussed which texts he could share with me that he had worked on or was currently working on, especially texts coauthored with Christopher. He sent me texts for two coauthored, already completed writing projects: an op-ed piece for the Wall Street Journal and an article for PLoS ONE (Simons & Chabris, 2012). Although they have written a number of op-eds for the Wall Street Journal, Dan said he chose this one because it
went through more drafts. Indeed, he sent me six versions: Chris’s original, two with his edits, two with Chris’s edits, and one with a newspaper editor’s edits. (He told me that it was ultimately not published because the Editor-in-Chief did not like it, although there was no explanation.) For the *PLoS ONE* article, he shared an early, incomplete draft and the final version that was accepted by the journal.

I also collected a number of texts: his writing guide, comments on it made by Google Plus users, and blog posts he wrote for his blog and Google Plus profile. One of the blog posts summarized the *PLoS One* article (Simons, 2012).

In preparation for the follow-up interview, I reread the literacy history interview transcript and the texts I had collected. I developed interview questions about the two coauthored texts, one of his blog posts, his writing guide, his work with Corinne and Mary, and I included DBI questions about Corinne and Mary’s texts (to be described below). To prepare questions on his *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, I used Microsoft Word’s “Compare” feature to help me identify differences between each of the six versions. I then reviewed the differences for the most salient and interesting changes, such as ones in which a more technical term was substituted with a more accessible term (e.g., “visuals” versus “pictures”) and ones in which a sentence became longer or shorter. I also looked for instances where he followed or diverged from the suggestions in his writing guide.

Ultimately, for the sake of time, I narrowed the items down to six. I then prepared a DBI protocol by printing out the final version of the op-ed and handwriting earlier versions of words or phrases (or, in one case, a version I generated) above the printed versions. (See Figure 2.2 for an example.)
I followed the same procedure for the PLoS ONE article, but it was difficult to identify relevant changes because so much new text had been added between the early, incomplete version and the version accepted by the journal and because in the text that did remain, the changes were relatively minor. Ultimately, I decided to ask more general text-based questions that related to points Dan had made in the initial interview. For instance, he had said he felt that combining Results and Discussion sections, a practice not endorsed by APA, made the text a lot more readable, so I decided to ask him whether PLoS ONE made any comments about their combined Results and Discussion section in this article.

I was especially interested in the blog post (Simons, 2012) that summarized the PLoS ONE article for a more public audience. As with the op-ed, I looked for examples where he followed or diverged from suggestions in his writing guide. This follow-up interview lasted 48 minutes, took place in his office on March 28, 2013, and was audiorecorded.

On April 24, 2013, I conducted a semi-structured interview with Christopher Chabris over Skype, recording the screen as we spoke. Christopher is Associate Professor of Psychology and Co-Director of the Neuroscience Program at Union College. In addition to his book with Dan and his other scholarly articles, he has authored and coauthored many essays and book reviews for popular media. Since 2013, he has kept a blog in which he analyzes research studies in the news or critically reviews popular science books. My interview with Chris, which lasted an hour, covered influences on his academic writing development, his experiences with popular science writing, his work with Dan, and the same six DBI questions about the Wall Street Journal op-ed that I had asked Dan about.
PRIMARY PARTICIPANT #2: CORINNE

At the time of data collection, Corinne was a senior majoring in psychology, conducting research on narcissism and social rejection. She ultimately hoped to get a PhD in forensic psychology and work with youth in the justice system.

After she expressed interest in the study and agreed to participate, we met for a literacy history interview on November 2, 2012 in a study room at the ACES library, where she worked. It lasted 42 minutes, and I audiorecorded it. I asked Corinne about her writing experiences in high school and various college courses, her experiences in Dan’s course, and her feelings about and experiences with her thesis so far. She revealed that she mainly got feedback from her advisor, Harold, through their weekly one-on-one meetings. I expressed interest in capturing his feedback during these interactions and suggested several options: I could sit in, or she could record for me, or we could speak after each meeting; she chose the latter.

We then discussed which parts of her thesis she could send me. Initially, she sent me texts from the first semester of Dan’s three-semester thesis course, which was in the spring of her junior year (spring 2012). That semester, she wrote a number of drafts of a literature review paper, of which she shared three versions, two of which contained Dan’s and the TA’s comments. She also made a chart for me (Figure 4.3, below) that explained what she saw as the differences between Dan’s and her advisor’s styles.

In the fall of 2012, Dan’s students began condensing their literature review papers into introduction sections of their theses, which would be the length of a journal article. That semester, Corinne began working intensively on the draft with her advisor, Harold, although Dan would also still comment on drafts. She sent me 17 drafts of her introduction and methods sections, including outlines; 9 drafts of her abstract; 6 drafts of her results sections, 10 drafts of
her discussion sections, 7 drafts of her complete thesis; and 4 drafts of a manuscript for a journal that would be based on her thesis—a total of 53 texts. Often, these drafts contained notes she took from her meetings with Harold, comments from Dan, comments from Harold, or comments from the TA. One draft contained comments from a graduate student in Harold’s lab.

After our initial interview and as she started to send me texts, we began to meet after her meetings with Harold so she could summarize what they discussed; I called these “check-in” meetings. We had three such meetings at a campus coffee shop on November 7, November 14, and November 28, 2012 (totaling 22 minutes), and I audiorecorded them. After the fall 2012 semester, however, I did not pursue check-in meetings because I was focused on processing the data I was collecting.

I conducted three text- and discourse-based interviews with Corinne. The first was one on February 5, 2013 (1 hour, audiorecorded) in the English Building. I asked her to elaborate on differences between Dan’s and Harold’ styles (which she had discussed in the initial interview), talk about the chart she had created for me that compared their styles, walk through Dan’s writing guide, and answer text- and discourse-based interview questions about her spring 2012 literature review paper and her initial revision of it in fall 2012. The second one occurred in the English Building on March 1, 2013 (1 hour, audiorecorded) and consisted of text-based interview questions about the most recent results, discussion, and introduction sections as well as text- and discourse-based interview questions about the abstract. The final interview took place on June 10, 2013, after she had graduated. We held it over Skype’s video chat (1 hour), and I recorded the screen as we spoke. I asked her to reflect on the experience of completing an honors thesis, describe her plans for publishing her thesis, and answer text-based interview questions about excerpts from the full thesis and from her revised discussion section.
To prepare the text- and discourse-based interview questions, I followed the same procedure as described above for Dan. I noted differences between drafts (using Microsoft Word’s Compare feature) and selected the most interesting differences. I also selected comments from Dan or Harold that I wanted to get her response to.

I was interested in speaking to Dan and her advisor, Harold, as they were both secondary participants who gave Corinne substantial feedback. When I met Dan for his follow-up interview on March 28, 2013, I asked him about his approach to working with Corinne, and I included some of the same discourse-based interview questions that I had asked Corinne in February 2013, relating to changes she made in her literature review paper in order to better approximate Dan’s style.

On June 26, 2013, I conducted a telephone interview with Harold, a professor in the Department of Psychology, and recorded the audio using an iPhone app. I asked him about his own academic writing development and his experience working with Corinne; there was not time to ask him the text- and discourse-based interview questions.

Primary Participant #3: Mary

Similar to Corinne, Mary was a senior majoring in psychology at the time of data collection. Her thesis research was on the relationship between racial priming and capitalization of racial terms (e.g., White v. white), implicit racial associations, and explicit racial attitudes. After graduation, Mary hoped to enter a master’s program in social work or counseling psychology.

After she agreed to participate in the study, we met for her literacy history interview on October 31, 2012. The interview occurred in a room in the English Building, lasted 51 minutes, and she allowed me to videorecord. We discussed her writing experiences in high school and
various college courses, her experiences in Dan’s course, and her feelings about and experiences with her thesis so far. About 30 minutes in, we discussed my feedback on her personal statement for graduate programs, an activity she had identified as a way I could reciprocate for her participation.

Mary shared 14 drafts of her literature review paper from spring 2012, which included a topic proposal, comments from two peers in Dan’s class, an outline, and drafts with comments from Dan, the TA, and her advisor, Mikhail Lyubanksy. Over the course of the next two semesters, she sent me 10 more drafts of her introduction section, methods section, and complete thesis. She also shared 6 drafts of her abstract—a total of 30 texts.

To prepare the text- and discourse-based interview questions, I followed the same procedure as described above for Dan and Corinne. I noted differences between drafts (using Microsoft Word’s Compare feature) and then selected the most interesting differences. I also selected comments from Dan or Mikhail that I wanted to get her response to. The text- and discourse-based interview occurred on March 25, 2013, in the English Building. It lasted an hour, and she allowed me to videorecord. I asked her text- and discourse-based interview questions about changes in her introduction and lit review sections and her abstract. I also asked about the role of Dan’s and Mikhail’s feedback and Dan’s writing guide.

When I met Dan for his follow-up interview on March 28, 2013, I asked him one of the discourse-based interview questions that I had also asked Mary, relating to a change she made in her literature review paper based on one of his comments.

On April 1, 2013, I conducted a semi-structured interview with Mikhail, a lecturer in the Department of Psychology who received his PhD in clinical psychology and studies racial/ethnic group relations and restorative justice. Since 2009, Mikhail has blogged about race for
Psychology Today in a column called “Between the Lines”; he has also written essays for other news media as well as about racial issues and psychology in popular culture. During the 35-minute interview, which took place in his office and which I audiorecorded, we discussed his experiences with scientific writing in college and graduate school, his popular science writing, work with Mary, and text- and discourse-based interview questions about Mary’s drafts and abstract, which were a subset of the same questions I asked Mary.

Data Analysis Procedures

After I completed rough transcripts and, for the video data (Christopher and Mary), included relevant embodied actions, I constructed comparison tables for every pair to whom I asked “parallel” DBI questions: Dan and Chris; Corinne and Dan (since I did not have responses from Harold); and Mary and Mikhail (although I was able to ask Dan one question that they both answered). These tables juxtaposed the responses of each person to the same question.

From the very beginning of data collection, I was captivated by Corinne’s understanding of Dan’s and Harold’s styles, which she described when we initially met to discuss her participation in the study. I had asked her to elaborate on her conceptions at the literacy history interview, and she had created for me the chart that compared their styles (see Figure 4.3, below). Their styles were topics of conversation in all subsequent interviews with Corinne as well as in my conversations with Dan and Harold. As I began to reread the transcripts and comparison charts, I therefore focused on tracing Corinne’s conceptions of their styles, looking for similarities and differences between Corinne’s statements and practices, Dan’s writing guide, and Dan’s and Harold’s comments about his and Harold’s styles.

With Mary, I traced how she took up Dan’s feedback, and I was able to get both Dan’s and Mikhail’s comments on one particular change Dan commented on, which involves a
“narrative” move she makes in a draft. (I describe this below.) This particular change related to an aspect of Dan’s “narrative style” that Corinne discusses, which is why I include it below.

Just as I was interested in places where Corinne aligns with and departs from Dan’s suggestions, I was also interested in finding places where Dan himself did so. As I reviewed the comparison table of his and Chris’s DBI responses about the op-ed, I was therefore on the lookout for places where he and Chris followed and departed from his advice in his writing guide and statements in his interviews.

Lastly, when I had identified stretches of interaction that I would be analyzing for more than the content—e.g., for the participant’s stance-taking moves—I refined the transcripts of those excerpts, adapting the system of Hengst (2001, 2010), who aligns speakers’ utterances so they can read be like a musical score (described in Chapter 2).

Representations of Writing Style in Psychology

As Corinne read, wrote, interacted with her professors, and revised, and as Dan and Harold read, wrote, coauthored together, talked together, and gave feedback to Corinne, each one was continually (re)formulating metapragmatic representations of academic writing styles. In this section, I describe how Corinne, Dan, and Harold developed understandings of Dan’s and Harold’s styles.

Development of Style Contrasts: Learning to Differentiate “Dan’s Style” and “Harold’s Style”

Chapter 3 described that perceptions of styles emerged in moments of crisis, contestation, and negotiation, particularly when writers realized that a particular style was no longer

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1 As mentioned in Chapter 1, metapragmatic discourse consists of formal and informal accounts of language and its use at varying levels of explicitness and awareness (e.g., Agha, 2007; Inoue, 2006; Silverstein, 1981, 1993).
appropriate. Corinne’s development of the differences between Dan’s and Harold’s styles follows this pattern. After Corinne enrolled in Dan’s three-semester seminar for undergraduate honors theses in psychology, she quickly encountered differences in style preferences between Dan, her professor, and Harold, her advisor.

In the first semester of that course, the goal was to produce a 20-page literature review; in the following two semesters, students were to research and write their actual thesis, which would be the length and format of a journal article. When the course began, Dan distributed a writing guide, “Musings on Writing” (available at http://www.dansimons.com/resources/writing_tips.html). On his website, Dan writes that the guide is for “scientific writing, but the same principles apply to most non-fiction (including journalism).” The eight-page document describes “broad principles of effective writing,” which include suggestions for an engaging opening, “flow,” “structure,” and revision and backwards outlining; these principles are followed by a list of thirty-one “common mistakes and pet peeves”; and the document concludes with a “revision worksheet” that summarizes the guide’s advice in checklist form. In the first semester of the course, Dan asked students to consult the guide as they revised their own writing and to complete the checklist as they reviewed their peers’ drafts during workshops.

In the first semester, Corinne wrote a portion of the literature review, and Harold gave comments on it. She then revised it according to Harold's suggestions and showed it to Dan. But Dan, far from wholeheartedly sanctioning what he saw, had much to criticize. Dan and the course’s TA added 37 comment bubbles in the five-page double-spaced draft, culminating with the recommendation that Corinne “use the revision worksheet more systematically” by editing for items such as passive voice, “X has Y that” structures, and uses of “I think” (Figure 4.1):
Alarmed, Corinne met with Dan and discovered that, as she wrote to me, “this semester was supposed to be an ‘exercise’ in using Dan’s writing style” (“Harold notes” [document], 2012). Subsequent semesters, she learned, would be in Harold’s style, since that would be when the actual experiments would be run and the thesis would be written (and subsequently graded by Harold). To avoid getting conflicting feedback, Corinne decided to stop showing her literature review to Harold for the rest of the semester. She revised the introduction to her literature review using Dan’s comments and received praise from Dan, who cited her “nice job of cleaning up some of the wording issues we discussed” (Figure 4.2):
When Corinne emailed me some of her drafts, she included a chart that represented a “mental image in my head” of the differences between Dan’s and Harold’s respective styles (Interview, November 7, 2012). Essentially, she understood Dan’s style to be more “narrative” (and also called it a “non-journal article style”) and Harold’s to be more “stereotypical academic” (Interview, February 5, 2013). As indicated in the chart below (Figure 4.3), she perceived that differences between Dan and Harold centered around “show, not tell,” the use of “I,” the use of jargon, and sentences that start with “X has Y that”; and she perceived that similarities centered around active voice, brevity and clarity, and avoiding verbosity. Standing in for particular styles, Dan and Harold become distinct “figures of personhood” (Agha, 2005, 2007).²

² It is an open question whether Dan and Harold are “iconic speakers” (Eckert, 2000, p. 217), defined by Mendoza-Denton (2008) as “socially salient individuals toward whom others orient, and who become salient and imitated as a result of their extreme behavior, centrality within their group, and broad social ties. These factors give them greater weight in the definition of styles” (p. 210). They are certainly imitated by Corinne, but it is unclear who else in the “group” (and who this group is) feels this way.
Although Corinne complained that after the first semester of the seminar, “none of it [Dan’s principles] applies anymore” (Interview, November 2, 2012), she also acknowledged, on another occasion, that Harold would agree with most things in Dan’s writing guide because “most are about details, things that most people should know how to do” (Interview, February, 5, 2013).

The text she quoted in the chart comes, directly or loosely, from Dan’s writing guide (e.g., “sound sciencey”; “X has Y that”). But many other conversations and texts contributed to the creation of the chart. On her own, Corinne read *The Invisible Gorilla: How Our Intuitions Deceive Us* and many journal articles by Harold. And she observed Dan’s and Harold’s oral and written comments throughout those three semesters. In addition, everything she was picking up

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**Figure 4.3. The chart Corinne created for me to show differences between Dan’s and Harold’s styles. (I edited the text to replace Corinne’s advisor’s real name with the pseudonym “Harold.”)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dan</th>
<th>Harold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use “narrative style;” wanted us to “show it,” not “say it.”</td>
<td>Do not use “narrative style.” Harold wanted me to “say it,” not “show it.” Perceived “showing” and not “saying” (i.e. using narrative style) as “gimmicky.” Harold also thought that “showing,” as opposed to “saying” something detracted from writing clearly and poignantly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t use “I” (e.g. “I believe,” “I think.”)</td>
<td>Use “I.” Harold would say “It’s your research, and this is what you think will happen in your study, so use “I believe hypothesize.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t try to “sound sciencey;” eliminate “jargon” (“show it, don’t say it”)</td>
<td>Sound sciencey! Harold wanted me to write in “journal article style,” and encouraged the use of jargon because it made my paragraphs and sentences more brief and clear. He said that individuals who read journal articles will know what the jargon means. He didn’t want me to spend several sentences “showing” (i.e. describing what I am referring to) what I could have just said with 1 “jargon” word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t starting sentences with “X has Y that” (e.g. “Research has shown that...”)</td>
<td>Use “X has Y that” (e.g. “Research has shown that...”; Researchers found that...”). Harold believes I need to use these sentences to justify the points I proposed in my literature review. His philosophy is, “If you don’t have support, you don’t have a study.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use active voice</td>
<td>Harold never explicitly mentioned that he preferred active voice, and never caught or commented on passive voice (like Dan did – see <em>Dan Revisions</em>) when I used it. I assume he prefers active voice because using passive voice makes your sentences less clear and wordier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be brief and clear</td>
<td>Be brief and clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t be verbose</td>
<td>Don’t be verbose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
came to be mixed in with, or layered on top of, her past experiences writing for other college courses and writing in high school. For instance, she said that she was told to not use “I” in high school English and to try to be formal by avoiding “possessives” and “apostrophes” (Interview, February 5, 2013).

Not only did Corinne demonstrate a sense of both Dan’s and Harold’s styles, but she also showed that she could speak as Harold as Dan. This voicing or stylization occurred during a discourse-based interview when we were discussing the evolution of her abstract. The final version of the first sentence read, “Studies have found that people with high levels of vulnerable narcissism are sensitive to social rejection, report high levels of shame, and report low levels of self-esteem.” I commented that it was interesting to see traces of Harold in “studies have found” (language that is one of Dan’s pet peeves) but also traces of Dan in the use of “people” instead of “individuals”) (Interview, March 1, 2013). The transcript is below; the audio is available at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49913.
Figure 4.4. Corinne voices Harold voicing Dan (Interview, March 1, 2013)

Speaking in a flat tone, perhaps to convey Harold’s sense of detachment, Corinne voiced Harold who in turn voiced Dan’s preference for “people,” saying, “he’s like well Dan would probably want you to say ‘people’” (lines 7-8). Corinne added that she didn’t know if Harold actually agreed with Dan’s preference for “people” (line 9) or if he simply didn’t see the point of picking a battle about “this one word” (line 10). This example quite clearly illustrates that one test of
whether multisemiotic resources have come to index a style is the ability to speak as the person one is trying to conjure in the prose, or, at least, to be able to guess how this persona would sound.

Accompanying Corinne’s awareness of the differences between the two styles was an appreciation for how they can achieve similar goals. When I asked her how she reconciled the fact that, although Dan and Harold do several things differently, they agreed on the importance of brevity, clarity, and avoiding verbosity, she replied, “I think Dan and Harold want to achieve succinctness in a different way”:

Harold wants you to be brief and clear by using jargon and using, you know, “I think that” and using “Research has shown that,” whereas Dan wants you to be brief and clear by (1.0) being more narrative, using real-life examples, and being more relatable to the common person. […] Harold’s “be brief and clear by using jargon”- you can still do that without being wordy, and for Dan’s, you can still kind of show and not tell without being too wordy. So I think they just have different ways of being brief and clear. (Interview, February 5, 2013)

This nuanced understanding resembles the qualities of Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) Stage 3 student, one who sees order in subdisciplinary differences instead of “a confusing array of teacher preferences” (p. 115). Corinne seems to see both professors’ styles as valid and logical paths to brevity and clarity.

Dan and Harold Differentiate Each Other’s Styles

The conflicting feedback that Corinne experienced from Dan and Harold was a topic of conversation in my interviews with the two professors. Each developed understandings of the other’s styles through experiences coauthoring journal articles and through informal interactions over the three semesters to discuss how Corinne should handle their divergent feedback. Both
professors observed differences, as Corinne did, but they asserted that the similarities were actually greater—and wondered if Corinne might be overstating the differences. ³

For instance, when I asked Dan what differences he noticed between Harold’s writing preferences and his own, he declared,

Dan: We have different styles. I think Corinne, from her perspective, sees bigger differences than actually exist. I actually collaborate with her advisor a lot. Multiple papers together, we edit each other’s writing. On the big stuff we’re in total agreement.

Andrea: Big stuff meaning-

Dan: On how to write concisely, what things belong in a paper and in what places, what makes for a compelling argument. We might approach the same goal/outcome with different directions—I’m more likely to write in a more narrative style. I’m probably more likely to use prose you’d see in a newspaper than he would be. That doesn’t mean he’s doing it wrong, just that we have some slight stylistic differences. (Interview, March 28, 2013)

Dan went on to give an example, remarking that while both recognize the necessity of citation,

they disagree on the specific method:

So I have a fairly strong view on that, which is I never put the researchers’ names in the text of a sentence. And it’s for theoretical reasons and ideological reasons. I think the emphasis should be on the findings, not on the finders. Harold has a completely different perspective on that. He says if a person's work is being credited and you're crediting them for the idea, you need to say it was their idea and they're the ones saying it. So he uses phrases like “according to Smith and Jones, yadda yadda yadda,” whereas I would just say ”yadda yadda yadda (Smith and Jones).” (Interview, March 28, 2013)

Dan then identified some similarities:

But we both agree that first person is fine, which is not necessarily the standard in the field. We both think active voice tends to be better, although we vary in how strictly we adhere. I tend to be more stringent in cutting it out, and he finds places for it. These are all kind of minor differences. (ibid.)

³ Dan wondered if Corinne was frustrated because she was not used to getting conflicting feedback on her writing. I would add that since most courses in primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools have only instructor reading and evaluating student work, there are few formal opportunities for students to make sense of feedback from more than one authority figure. Chapter 6 makes recommendations for training students in how to negotiate divergent responses.
Later on during the discourse-based portion of the follow-up interview, Dan mentioned another example—he thought that Harold would prefer the word “individuals,” whereas he would prefer the word “people.” He argued, “Individuals is just a jargony way of saying people. It’s trying to sound formal when it’s not necessary. It doesn’t make it clearer, it just sounds like you’re trying to be sciencey” (Interview, March 28, 2013). Having a sense of Harold’s style leads Dan to infer what Harold would do about *individuals versus people.* (As we have seen, Corinne similarly tries to predict Harold’s preference for *individuals.*)

Harold produced a similar description of the differences between himself and Dan. He articulated some of their differences as follows:

I think Dan has a very- a somewhat atypical style, writing style, one that I like actually, but tends to be more informal and more written for general audiences. He's more interested in starting a paper with something to grab your attention, which I don't. I focus on clarity and brevity but not necessarily grabbing someone's attention. They read an article of mine in a specialized scientific journal, they're already interested, I don't need to grab their attention. I'm not trying to sell something, grab their attention. If they're interested in this topic, they'll read it. [...] And then there were some other holistic things - there are differences in psychology even in different subfields, how much you'll present, how much detail.4 (Interview, June 26, 2013)

Dan was more specific than Harold in listing particular differences down to the word level, but Harold and Dan aligned in their joint identification of a “narrative” (Dan’s word) or “informal” (Harold’s words) aspect to Dan’s writing.

These conversations indicate that Corinne, Dan, and Harold have developed fairly consistent senses of each professor’s style. I have also shown, in more detail, how Corinne’s representations of Dan’s and Harold’s styles are developed through rounds of responses to drafts and through dialogue with other stylistic advice (e.g., Dan’s writing guide, Corinne’s high school

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4 When I asked Harold for examples of this difference in detail, I mentioned an example Corinne had told me about—whether the names of one’s scales should be listed in the abstract. He said that was a good example because in Dan’s field, “individual differences don’t matter” and “aren’t measured.”
English classes) and argued that Corinne’s ability to voice Harold voicing Dan illustrates that developing understandings of styles involves the ability to hear particular people’s voices in one’s writing—and produce them.

**Style Representations in Flux**

Categorized in Corinne’s chart, these style representations seem fixed. However, I was able to capture many ways in which they were in flux. Indeed, just as Agha considers a “register” “merely a sociohistorical snapshot of a phase of enregisterment for particular users” (2007, p. 170), style representations soon appeared to me to be mere snapshots as well. As Corinne and I met over the course of her senior year and she continued to get feedback from Dan and Harold, her understandings of their styles continued to shift to incorporate the new information she was getting. This section will describe how Harold’s style began to appear more narrative at one point, less narrative at another point, and more stereotypically academic at yet another point. Throughout, I show how these perceptions emerge not just from judgments she makes about Harold’s writing but from, for example, ways of thinking and spoken comments. Information that is semiotic—not simply linguistic—thus drives perceptions of writing styles.

*Harold’s Style Becomes More Narrative*

When Corinne and I spoke a few months after she had sent me the chart comparing Harold and Dan’s style preferences (Figure 4.3), several experiences had made her realize that Harold might embrace a more “narrative style” after all. One was that she noticed a metaphor that Harold used—that of scientific writing as telling a “story”—in conjunction with a comment he made that her abstract shouldn’t be “dense.” This observation came up after I asked her
whether the term “narrative style” was a term used by Dan. She reported that it was and elaborated,

And I guess I’m realizing this more about Harold now, he calls it a “story” so- he says, in your thesis, in your, specifically in the abstract, you want to tell a story and he felt like my abstract was too dense .hh heh so I was like [(uncertain, wobbly voice)] [I think I'm doing it, and then I realize I don't-] Um- And I - had thought that because Harold has a very kind of stereotypical style, um I thought that he wouldn’t have ever been concerned with like the denseness of my abstract, but he was actually really concerned that I wasn't telling a story, and that I was focusing too much on the details and not enough about the main picture. So then I'm like, wait, maybe he's more similar to Dan than I kinda initially thought. (Interview, February 5, 2013)

Because she saw Harold as having a “stereotypical academic style,” she had assumed that “denseness” would be something he wouldn’t perceive or mind, or that if he were going to point out a flaw, he wouldn’t use the term “dense” to do so. Soon after that comment, she added that he said she should show “the forest, not the trees.” This comment, she felt, was uncharacteristically “creative.” These comments show us that to her, a “narrative style” can include not just text that is not “dense” but also how one thinks about writing (e.g., using non-academic-sounding terms like “story” and “creative” metaphoric expressions like “show the forest, not the trees”). Through adequation—associating the use of metaphors and concepts like “story” with “narrative style”—and distinction—opposing them to the more “stereotypical academic” traits of literal language, the concept of “density,” and exposition—it seems that the metapragmatic representations about style that Corinne developed could thus be better described as “metasemiotic” representations (Agha, 2007, italics added).

When Corinne and I met the following month for another text- and discourse-based interview, our discussion uncovered another example of Harold’s hybridity: whether numbering or lettering lists was acceptable. Her first draft of her abstract, which she showed to Harold, had included numbered hypotheses (Figure 4.5):
She said that she had not given the numbered hypotheses a second thought because in an earlier version of her introduction, Harold had added a paragraph that included lettered hypotheses (Figure 4.6):

The goal of the present study was to examine whether: (a) vulnerable narcissism traits predispose individuals to experience more negative self-conscious emotions following social rejection; and (b) whether this disposition is moderated by emotional awareness; specifically, attention to emotion and clarity of emotion. I hypothesized that following social rejection, vulnerable narcissism would be: (a) negatively correlated with implicit self-esteem; and (b) positively correlated with state shame. In contrast, I hypothesized that state guilt, explicit self-esteem, and implicit self-esteem would be unrelated to vulnerable narcissism. I also do not expect to find a relationship between grandiose narcissism and state shame, state guilt, explicit self-esteem, and implicit self-esteem. In addition, I hypothesize that attention to emotion will moderate (a) the negative relationship between vulnerable narcissism and implicit self-esteem; and (b) the positive relationship between vulnerable narcissism and state shame following social rejection.

When discussing Harold’s feedback on her abstract, however, Corinne reported that Harold had said she should not number her hypotheses (and that she also need not state them; she should state just her findings, prefaced by “As predicted” or “Contrary to predictions”). When I asked her why he wanted her to get rid of the numbers, she thought back to his addition of lettered hypotheses and expressed confusion:

Corinne: He was just saying he doesn’t use numbers. Which confused me because if you notice in the last paragraph of my introduction, I have my hyp- “and
further, A blah-blah-blah, and B blah-blah-blah”. He put that in and he’s kept that, so- I don’t really um (1.0) Maybe yeah he just didn’t want me to restate my hypotheses, or no but yeah he just doesn’t like the numbers, so-probably because it it makes it flow less, that’s what I’m assuming. You know, it’s less narrative and more (5.0)

Andrea:  More,

Corinne:  More kind of- hhh I don’t want to say clunky ‘cause I had used that word and he’s like no, that’s not it, just- more sciencey and less (3.0) narrative-like.

(Interview, March 1, 2013)

Trying to describe the effect of numbers, Corinne offered that “it makes it flow less” and that numbers are “more sciencey” and less “narrative-like.” Because she wanted the abstract to be in Harold’s style, doing something more narrative-like would have seemed to contradict this approach.

Although I wasn’t able to ask Harold he directed Corinne to remove numbers from the abstract, he may have felt that numbered hypotheses added just a bit too much detail and structure for a succinct text like an abstract; conversely, he may have felt that numbering would be appropriate in a longer text like an introduction section. In this example, however, we see how easy it is for generalizations to emerge from metapragmatic comments when little to no explanation is attached to them. If Harold had explained why he thought Corinne should remove numbers in her abstract or keep them in her introduction, she may have had a better sense of the affordances of numbers—what effects they create in different contexts.

Simultaneously, “Narrative Style” is to be Avoided

After Corinne mentioned that Harold had used the term “story” when giving her feedback, I commented that the term, even though it is a synonym for “narrative,” probably just means “main point.” She agreed with me and added the following:
Corinne: And I also think that when Dan says “narrative,” he he thinks of more um, like .hh anecdotal hypothetical examples, which is what he used all the time in his books.=Well he used real-life examples in his books, but it- whereas in journal articles that’s called gimmicky.=If you used like a quote from a popular article, or if you make up a hypothetical example, like I've I've seen manuscripts submitted, and then I’ve seen the comments, and one person had a quote at the beginning from a character in- her her article was on narcissism and she had a quote from Barney from How I Met Your Mother, and of course the comment was the, “the first quote that you had in your introduction was gimmicky and we don’t like it.”
(Interview, February 5, 2013)

Corinne defined Dan’s use of narrative to mean “anecdotal hypothetical examples” or “real-life examples”—two things she said appear in The Invisible Gorilla. Corinne then argued that showed such narrative practices are not appropriate: “whereas in journal articles that’s called gimmicky.” Corinne then gives a concrete example from one journal: someone she knew submitted a manuscript beginning with a TV show quotation, and a reviewer said it was “gimmicky.”

Above, her metasemiotic understanding of style viewed “narrative style” as including metaphor use in talk and the conception of scientific arguments as “stories”; here, “narrative style” encompasses disparate elements: the use of a real-life or hypothetical anecdote and the use of a quote from a TV show. The conclusion she seemed to draw is that because the latter didn’t work (at least for one journal or journal reviewer), the former wouldn’t, either. “Narrative style” thus becomes both something Corinne should emulate (to follow Harold’s advice in the above section) and something “gimmicky” that she should stay away from. Similarly, just as Harold’s style expanded to include narrative elements, she also found that it became even more stereotypically academic.
Harold’s Style Becomes More Stereotypically Academic

Corinne’s chart indicated that Dan preferred active voice (which is mentioned in three places in his writing guide) and that Harold probably preferred active voice (Figure 4.7):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use active voice</th>
<th>Harold never explicitly mentioned that he preferred active voice, and never caught or commented on passive voice (like Dan did – see Dan Revisions I) when I used it. I assume he prefers active voice because using passive voice makes your sentences less clear and wordier.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 4.7. “Voice” section of Corinne’s chart. Dan is described on the left and Harold on the right.

But a few weeks after Corinne sent it to me, her understanding had begun to change. We were talking more about the differences between Dan’s and Harold’s feedback, and she commented,

I also realized as I was reading back through some of Harold’s papers that he likes to use passive voice ‘cause it sounds kind of more sciencey and researchy, whereas Dan likes active voice. (Interview, November 14, 2012)

When I asked if this was something Harold talked about to Corinne, or if it was just implied, she replied that it was the latter and added,

See Harold- he still likes to be consistent and and clear, but he’d- he’ll do that in um (3.0) I guess °I don’t° I don’t know (1.0) ‘Cause I just assumed he had used active voice because by nature you’ll- it’s less wordy, but (1.0) Dan had pointed out that Harold likes to use passive voice and when I was looking through some of Harold’s comments when Harold would rewrite a sentence, I was like, oh, wow. (ibid.)

With this example, we see that after observing passive voice in Harold’s papers and his rewrites of her work, and after hearing Dan talk about Harold’s preference, Corinne noticed that Harold actually conforms more to “stereotypical academic” style than she initially thought. Although she was surprised that Harold would choose language that was more “wordy,” she made sense of his behavior because it fit under the umbrella of “stereotypical academic” style. As she said, “he likes to use passive voice ‘cause it sounds kind of more sciencey and researchy.”
Dan’s own account, however, contrasted with Corinne’s secondhand report. As I mentioned earlier, Dan commented that Harold used active voice, though “we vary in how strictly we adhere. I tend to be more stringent in cutting it out, and he finds places for it” (Interview, March 28, 2013). Whether Harold used a lot or a little passive voice, it seemed that to both Dan and Corinne, Harold’s use of passive voice fit in with their view of his style, in which he tends toward more words (e.g., “According to…” instead of just listing the researchers’ names in parentheses) or longer words (e.g., “individuals” instead of “people”).

**Stylistic Meanings Can Be Multiple**

The section above focused on the ways in which Corinne’s understandings of Harold’s and Dan’s styles shifted as she continued to write, get feedback, and revise. In this section, I will move from style representations to style practices, showing that particular linguistic items convey different meanings to different readers. I will focus in particular on a few sentences of a text written by Mary—sentences that Dan initially flagged with the label “X has Y that.”

During his initial interview, Dan confessed that “there are some stylistic elements of academic writing that I find kind of tedious. You’re not supposed to make it interesting, you’re supposed to make it sound rigorous” (Interview, October 18, 2012). One of his writing guide principles that he thought helped counteract this and move colleagues’ and students’ scientific writing from “sounding rigorous” to “actually being rigorous” (ibid.) was the following (Figure 4.8):

18) Avoid starting sentences with “X has Y that...” In most cases, you can cut phrases like “it has been shown that” or “research has found that” and just start the sentence with whatever follows “that.”

*Figure 4.8. Excerpt from Dan’s writing guide.*
Although we didn’t discuss where he first picked up this principle, he mentioned (during an initial informational meeting) that his advisor gave him the tip that researchers should be referred to in parentheticals, not in the body of the sentence (unless you do need to emphasize who conducted the study over the findings). The “X has Y that” principle worked in tandem with how he cited others’ work. In fact, the two principles are listed next to each other on his Revision Worksheet (boxed in Figure 4.9):

![Figure 4.9. Excerpt from Dan’s writing guide; box added.](image)

“Avoid X has Y that” was one principle that he emphasized in the first semester of the honors seminar. Interestingly, the qualification “in most cases” (Figure 4.8) is absent from this revision checklist (Figure 4.9), as well as from the following comment he made, which writers should do this “every time”:

One of the writing pieces that I tell students to look for is a sentence starting with “Research has shown that,” “X has Y that.” In my view you can cut everything leading up to and including the word “that.” Every time. And put the citation at the end. Harold doesn’t agree. So, that's a stylistic difference, it's not like one is right or wrong. It's just a preference. So we differ a little on that. (Interview, March 28, 2013)

Indeed, Corinne recognized this difference between Dan and Harold—she included “X has Y that” high up on her comparison chart (Figure 4.10):
Both Corinne and Mary received “X has Y that” feedback from Dan, especially during the first semester when they were writing their literature review papers and using Dan’s writing guide in peer review activities. On Mary’s revised research proposal, Dan hand-wrote “X has Y that” over the first sentence of her draft, “Many Americans believe that we live in a non-racist society where each racial group treats each other with respect and dignity” (Figure 4.11):

This sentence actually persisted in her drafts that semester. However, when Mary’s advisor, Mikhail, gave her feedback on her literature review at the end of the first semester, he highlighted the first two sentences (“Many Americans today believe that we live in a non-racist society. People often claim they do not hold any racist attitudes or beliefs.”) and commented, “At some point, this will need a reference. I can help you find it. You can leave it for now if you don’t have one.” He highlighted the third sentence, too (“Yet, implicit, or unconscious, racial biases can manifest themselves in everyday interactions”), replaced “can manifest” with
“commonly manifest,” and made a similar comment, “This will need a reference too. Also, it seems to imply that explicit racism is a thing of the past. I’m guessing that is not something you want to affirm right now” (Figure 4.12):

![Figure 4.12. First paragraph from Mary’s introduction/literature review at the end of the first semester of Dan’s course, containing comments from Mikhail, her advisor.](image)

When Mary began to condense her 15-page literature review in the following semester—since the entire thesis had to be the length of a journal article—she deleted the first two sentences and began the introduction with her third sentence, “Implicit, unconscious racial biases commonly manifest themselves in everyday interactions.” To find out why she deleted them, during her DBI, I asked her whether she would add those first two sentences\(^5\) back in front of the “Implicit, unconscious racial biases…” sentence. She replied that she would not add them back in because the example at the end of the paragraph did a better job of “showing” (whereas these

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\(^5\) More specifically, I asked her if she would insert the sentences “Many Americans today believe that we live in a post-racist society. People often claim they do not hold any racist attitudes or beliefs.” The sentences are identical to the version that Mikhail commented on (Figure 4.12), with one exception: the first sentence contains Mikhail’s correction of “post-racist society” (from “non-racist society”).
sentences “tell”) and because the early version was in “a different style,” not “APA style” (lines 7-8). The transcript is below; the video can be viewed at [http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49914](http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49914).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M: Um, I would keep them out, because I think- this goes back to the show don’t tell thing I</th>
<th>A:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>M: think? Um, I don’t need to say that many Americans (.) believe that we live in a post-racist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <em>(nods)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M: society or that people claim &gt;they don't have any racist attitudes&lt; because by saying that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <em>(nods)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M: (1.0) um a White woman *clutches her bag tightly even though she has no intention to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <strong>(nods)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M: discriminate, that essentially says <em>that?</em> um in a ***much more condensed way, so</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <strong>Mmm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mmm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M: I think that that was one reason why we took it out, and then another was just (2.0) when I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <em>(nods)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M: wrote that, that was in our very early intros and that was (1.0) written in a different style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <strong>Mmhm</strong></td>
<td><strong>nods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>M: than it *has to be now, ‘cause we're doing it in APA style, so (1.0) we take out a bit more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <strong>Mmhm</strong></td>
<td><strong>nods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M: of the narrative part and just <strong>hone</strong> in on the**point we're **trying to make, you know.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: <em>(nods throughout)</em>*</td>
<td><strong>pulses hand with fingers loosely spread</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.13. Mary describes why she would keep the sentences out (Interview, March 25, 2013)**

Mary marshaled the term “narrative” for two contrasting points. First, these additional sentences violate “show, don’t tell”; the example of the woman clutching her bag makes the same point “in a much more condensed way” (lines 3-5). “Show, don’t tell,” in fact, is one of Dan’s writing guide principles—to be described below—and one of the characteristics that he feels defines his “narrative” style.” He even mentions it in her revised research proposal (Figure 4.11, above), marking with “show, don’t tell” the “Yet, implicit racist attitudes…” sentence,
presumably suggesting she start with the examples or moving them earlier.⁶ These sentences, in violating “show, don’t tell,” thus seem to be counter to a “narrative style.”

Yet the second reason Mary gave to leave the sentences out is that they do have “narrative” qualities. She says that the sentences are from “our very early intros and that was written in a different style than it has to be now, ’cause we’re doing it in APA style, so we take out more of the narrative part” (lines 7-8). When she says that the current style “has to be” different, she uses two iconic gestures. Slicing through the air with a straight, taut hand, she demonstrates the straitlaced APA style to which this “narrative part” doesn’t belong:

These gestures illustrate her understanding of APA style and position the “narrative part” against it. (See Chapter 3 for more on writers’ linguistic and gestural understandings of “non-academic” or “non-scientific” writing styles and Chapter 5 for an in-depth account of three ecologists’ style gestures.) When Mary explained that APA style involves “hone[ing] in on the point we’re trying to make” (line 9), she also gestured—pulsing her hand with her fingers loosely spread. While

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⁶ She never moved the examples earlier, and when I asked why during our follow-up interview, she declared that she wasn’t sure what happened because it was from so long ago. But she thought that perhaps Dan meant just that she needed to “explain how that would relate to my study eventually” and thought Dan didn’t think she really needed to delete “Yet, implicit, or unconscious racial biases…” because otherwise he would have said something about it—and that sentence had “pretty much been there in all the drafts” (Interview, March 25, 2013).
both sets of gestures create emphasis, the pulses seem to be purely emphatic, as her hand was
looser than in the other gestures, with her fingers spread:

![Figure 4.15. Mary gestures for emphasis, her fingers spread (line 9)](image)

Mary’s verbal and gestural rationales for deleting the two sentences thus show that “Many
Americans believe…” can be simultaneously “non-narrative” (in violating show, don’t tell) and
“narrative.” In both arguments, however, the sentences are treated as text to be deleted—
appropriate for her literature review paper but as inappropriate for her thesis.

The reactions of Dan and of Mikhail, Mary’s thesis advisor, provide additional
interpretations of “Many Americans believe…” Both professors saw the sentences as an attempt
to engage readers, but they valued them differently. When I asked Dan the same question that I
posed to Mary, whether the two sentences should be added or deleted, he replied,

Dan: I don’t like ‘em. Unnecessary. This is the sort of sentence that you will commonly
see in an undergraduate paper for a class that starts too broad. Strikes me as the
kind of paragraph you would write and then cut when you finish the paper when
it's not critical to what you are doing. For a lit review, not for a journal article,
that could be okay.

Andrea: And this was for her lit review
Dan: For a journal article—she's trying to start broad there, bring people in. I don’t like these platitude statements generally, I actually like starting the way she starts here ((points to a later sentence))—jumping right in. (Interview, March 28, 2013)

Dan considered these sentences a “platitude,” but he admitted that they “could be okay” for a literature review paper. Indeed, although he flagged “Many Americans today…” in her revised research proposal, he did not comment on it again, even though she kept it in her literature review. Although I didn’t ask him why it was okay for a literature review, he did tell me that during the first semester of the thesis-writing course, his aim was for students to write for a more general audience (e.g., Scientific American). He said that “I was really emphasizing things like active voice, narrative structure, how you engage people at the beginning of a paper, how you carry that through” (Interview, March 28, 2013).

Mikhail, like Dan a prolific popular science writer, disagreed with Mary and Dan about those two sentences. When I asked him the same question—if he would add or delete those sentences—he replied,

I would add them. The- without it, it works, it's a reasonable place to start, but what it doesn’t do in my view is it doesn’t draw the reader in. The first sentence as it is, without it, is probably the first necessary sentence, but this is a sentence that is more likely to have people engage emotionally with the content. And is this something that- even though this is a journal article like thing, it's still important to engage- to have these sentences that guide the reader in. (Interview, March 25, 2013)

Mikhail continued by commenting that as an undergraduate student, he was bored by his college reading assignments, and when something wasn’t like that, he was “really surprised and excited.” “So why,” he asked, “wouldn’t we all want to write that kind of stuff?”

Where we might expect agreement between two popular science writers and psychology professors (although of different subfields), we find differences of opinion. Both agreed these sentences were attempts to engage the reader, but Dan found them too “broad” and too much of a “platitude” (though still okay for a literature review), and Mikhail found them useful for
“draw[ing]” and “guid[ing]” the reader in. The cumulative effect is that such sentences can take on a variety of meanings, positive or negative, depending on the reader. In addition, given Mary’s view of the sentences as both narrative and non-narrative, these sentences can even take on a variety of meanings within a single reader.

As I have shown, a structure labeled “X has Y that” does not have a stable meaning. Most style guides make it sound like their suggestions are universal and easily applied across contexts, but in reality, metapragmatic style principles immediately get tailored to local contexts. The next section explores how two of Dan’s pet peeves from his writing guide, “avoid X has Y that” and “show, don’t tell,” become tailored to individual circumstances.

The Contextual Nature of Seemingly Acontextual Principles

One would expect Dan’s own writing to have no traces of “X has Y that” structures. When I read the first sentence of his coauthored journal article, however, I was intrigued:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A substantial proportion of the United States public holds beliefs about memory that conflict with well-established expert consensus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.16. The first sentence of Dan and Chris’s PLOS ONE article (Simons & Chabris, 2012)

I noticed a resemblance to Mary’s first sentence, with a collective noun followed by a verb phrase about belief: “a substantial proportion of the United States public holds beliefs,” “Many Americans believe.” In the DBI, I asked him how he would compare Mary’s sentence to this one. He replied that although the structure was the same, the topics were different. In his case, the article is actually about beliefs, but in her case, her thesis is not:

What does believing in a post-racist society have anything to do with her project? Nothing. What she's doing is studying implicit and explicit attitudes about other races,
not beliefs about society. Whereas what we were doing—explicitly focusing on the conflict between the general public and expert beliefs. (Interview, March 28, 2013)

He pointed out that a few sentences later, she did draw a contrast between implicit and explicit beliefs, which is related to her study. In the case of his journal article, then, an “X has Y that” structure is useful because the content is relevant, whereas Mary’s is not useful because it doesn’t encapsulate her main argument or issue.

Although he made an exception for this structure in this particular academic article, one would expect Dan to excise “X has Y that” structures in his popular science writing, given that he felt they contributed to “sounding sciencey.” In an unpublished op-ed piece for the *Wall Street Journal* that he coauthored with Chris, however, an “X has Y that” structure persisted. The language in question is the first phrase that is crossed out in the figure below, “Ms. Newman’s group found that”:

![Figure 4.17. Excerpt from DBI document on the unpublished Wall Street Journal op-ed](image)

Dan commented that he didn’t like “Ms. Newman’s group found that….?” and would delete it because he and Chris mentioned Ms. Newman’s group earlier: he said it’s “not necessary to give it again because it's clear we're still talking about the study. Produced a similar effect- clear. I don't like the “X has Y that” opening. I tend to overuse dashes as well” (Interview, March 28, 2013). But, he then added,

With newspaper op-eds, there's a sense you want to make sure you try and give credit because it doesn’t end up otherwise. Chris is more experienced with that than I am here because you don’t have citations in the standard sort of way. (ibid.)
Chris agreed, feeling that the alternate, handwritten version (“But the truthiness effect isn’t just about pictures—even verbal descriptions of the non-probative information produced a similar effect”) “flows better” than the final-draft version (“But the truthiness effect isn’t just about pictures—Ms. Newman’s group found that even verbal descriptions of the irrelevant visual information produced a similar effect”). However, Chris did feel that the final-draft version “might be more necessary to make sure that the reader understands that we're still talking about the results of that study” and that this additional language “mark[s] the transition between what they found and what's our speculation” (Interview, April 24, 2013). Although both Dan and Chris would prefer to delete “Ms. Newman’s group found that,” they agreed that it needed to be included to help readers understand they are still talking about the Newman study.

Dan finds *X has Y that* okay for Mary’s literature review; appropriate for his coauthored journal article, and useful for his newspaper op-ed. Recall that on his website, Dan noted that his writing guide is for “scientific writing, but the same principles apply to most non-fiction (including journalism).” A seemingly universal suggestion like “avoid X has Y that” is, in practice, constantly being tweaked to a local context. In what follows, I give another example of the contextual nature of “show, don’t tell.”

One of the suggestions in Dan’s writing guide is more common than “avoid X has Y that,” passed down over the centuries by teachers and textbooks: show, don’t tell7 (Figure 4.18):

> 30) Don’t say something is interesting without explaining why it is interesting. Better yet, don’t say it—show it.

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7 Corinne found this to be a salient aspect of Dan’s approach to writing. In her chart comparing Dan’s and Harold’s styles, she attributes this to Dan and gives an example of “jargon,” commenting that Dan would rather explain the jargon (“show”) than use it (“tell”) and noting that Harold would prefer to use a jargon term.
This principle is also the last “pro tip” on the checklist (see Figure 4.9 above).

To reciprocate for his participation, I had agreed to give Dan feedback on his writing guide. I wrote up a one-page list of suggestions and also annotated the guide. One of my overall suggestions was the following:

You state on your website that this guide also applies to nonfiction, especially journalism. That could be something you describe in more detail. For example, I am familiar with “show, don’t tell,” but I wonder if it works differently in journalism than in scientific writing. Does it? A more nuanced account of how some of your suggestions differ in scientific v. in public writing would be interesting.

When we arrived at this suggestion, I summarized it, saying that I was wondering if he was talking about popular science writing, scientific writing, or both, or whether the principle applied in one type more than the other. I said that although I understood how this principle functioned in journalism, I “was dying to know” how it applied to scientific writing. He replied that it “applied to everything” and then gave some examples, one from a personal statement and another from something more academic. The transcript is below; the audio is available at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49935.
Figure 4.19. Dan explains “show, don’t tell” (Interview, October 18, 2012)

With these two hypothetical examples—“I developed outstanding insights into clinical populations” and “Interestingly”—Dan showed how this “classic mantra for journalism” (line 6) applied to personal statements and analyses of data.
After that interview, I examined the texts that Dan had shared with me and also began reading his blog. I noticed that the scholarly article, “Common (Mis)Beliefs about Memory: A Replication and Comparison of Telephone and Mechanical Turk Survey Methods” (Simons & Chabris, 2012), happened to be subject matter for a blog post, “The Demographics of Surveys: Phone vs. Mechanical Turk” (Simons, 2012). As I was examining the post, I found two instances in which he seemed to be veering from the “show, don’t tell” principle:

In writing the paper and re-weighting the samples, I discovered something interesting about who responds to these sorts of surveys. Although both could be weighted to a nationally representative sample, the raw demographics of the samples were vastly different. They were roughly comparable on most dimensions (e.g., income, education, region of the country), but their ages differed dramatically.

For me, this figure was eye opening. I wasn't surprised that an online Mechanical Turk sample would be disproportionately younger, and I assumed that phone surveys would oversample the elderly, but I had no idea how extreme that bias would be. What that means is that any national survey conducted by phone is mostly contacting older people. Unless the sample is adequately large, the number of young respondents will be minuscule, meaning that the weighting for those respondents will be huge. If a small survey happened to get a few oddball younger respondents, it could dramatically alter the total estimate.

To be fair, Dan explained why the findings are “interesting” and why the figure is “eye-opening” immediately after he used the words. Still, in the follow-up interview, I wanted to learn his take on his usage; after all, he had outlined a rather strict policy to “show, don’t tell,” where it’s preferable to “let [readers] come to that evaluation” (line 10) instead of doing the work for them. Would he call these sentences an “easy transition” (line 11) and thus better off deleted, like “interestingly”?

He responded that these evaluative terms were intentional and that he used them for a few reasons. First, blogs are a different genre. “Blog style” has “more personal narrative content to it.” His blogs, he said, are “a bit more opinionated and have a bit more of a, you know, sort of
The writing guide makes “show, don’t tell” sound like it applies universally, and it seems to prefer never telling to first telling, then showing. But this principle, we see, is not attuned to nuances of context and genre. Dan’s comments about his blog entry indicate that “telling” can be quite appropriate—indeed, may be essential—in the blog context. As described in Chapter 3, the ideology that there are universal principles governing “good writing” is pervasive and hard to shake. Indeed, in the next section, Corinne and I demonstrate that one can acknowledge the complexity of stylistic practice while still holding on to particular structuralist ideologies of good writing.

Ideologies of Universality and Consistency: Belief and Resistance

The grip of these ideologies revealed themselves when we were discussing exceptions to some of the principles in Dan’s guide. As Corinne and I were paging through it, I asked her if

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8 The language in Dan’s blog entry is a good example of one component of what Greg Myers (1990) calls the “narrative of nature.” Myers examined scientific articles and popularizations of them in Scientific American and New Scientist. He shows that, among other things, the popular accounts emphasize the discovery process.

9 This occurrence is strikingly similar to what I describe in the final section of Chapter 3. When I showed Debojoy and Jing Jing instances where actual stylistic practices did not necessarily align with their representations, information emerged about the ideologies that were connected to these
there was anything there that she didn’t understand or “never really got or [was] confused by.”

She said that she “pretty much understood most of it” and began mentioning a few different principles that she knew already or that made sense. One of the principles she hadn’t heard but liked was pet peeve #28:

28) If you ever find yourself saying "As noted above" or "As discussed earlier" you need to reorganize your paper.

Figure 4.21. Excerpt from Dan’s writing guide.

After stating she liked this principle, however, she acknowledged that Dan didn’t always follow it, especially in his coauthored book, *The Invisible Gorilla*. The transcript is below; the audio is available at [http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49933](http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49933).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C: I liked this too, the &quot;as noted above or as discussed earlier&quot;- like if you talk about that- that A:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C: means--but &quot;I've seen Dan do that in his book.&quot;° Oh yeah A: Oh REALLY!* Ha! I- see- I really have *hangs hand on table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C: Yeah A: trouble with that because I do it a lot and I feel like *I’m making a connection! *whiny voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>C: But it’s- no, yeah! It it- yeah and I mean- a lot of these things are contradictory. If you want A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C: to be succinct, you kind of- you don’t want to have to reintroduce that whole example, A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>C: so it’s just easier to do. So no, Dan totally did that in his book. You know like “With the- A: hhh hhh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>C: with the example at the beginning of this *chapter” I was like “OHHHHH!” hahaha haha A: hahahaha hahaha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.22. Corinne reflects on “as noted above” (Interview, February 5, 2013)

representations—in their cases, I learned that their perceptions of the styles were linked to the images of good writers that they measured themselves by.
When I had first read this pet peeve, I had disagreed with it, and I confessed that to Corinne. Together, we delighted in catching this inconsistency: Corinne whispered her admission, “but I’ve seen Dan do that in his book” (line 2), and when she revealed this, I banged my hand on the table and exclaimed, “Oh REALly! Ha!” (line 2). When she retold her discovery (“I was like ‘OHHHH!,’” line 7), she spoke in a breathless voice, and we laughed together (line 7).

Corinne acknowledged that such writing principles (be concise; avoid “as noted above”) often contradict each other: phrases like “as noted above” can be useful because, as she put it, “if you want to be succinct,…you don’t want to have to reintroduce that whole example” (lines 4-5). Yet despite this nuanced understanding, at the moment of her discovery and of her reporting it to me, it seems as if we both think that he should have been consistent, that he should have applied that principle to his popular science writing. In the process of catching an expert break his own rules, so to speak, we ascribe to the belief that this principle could or should have been universally applied.

The above discussion reminded Corinne of another principle in his writing guide concerning the word “very” (Figure 4.23):10

![Figure 4.23. Excerpt from Dan’s writing guide.](Figure 4.23. Excerpt from Dan’s writing guide.)

The conversation below occurred immediately after the previous one. The transcript is below; the audio is available at [http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49934](http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49934).

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10 This quote is actually famously misattributed to Twain. The “Quote Investigator” website links it to William Allen White, a Kansas newspaper editor working in the early to mid 20th century. (Quote Investigator, 2012).
Figure 4.24. Corinne reflects on “very” (Interview, February 5, 2013)

Although she acknowledged that many of the principles in his guide were “contradictory” (Figure 4.23, line 4), and she understood why a phrase like “as noted above” might be helpful, she did try to apply at least one of Dan’s principles universally—by treating the word “very” like a swear word and, presumably, trying to avoid it as much as possible. The result is that whenever she used it, even in text messages, she felt “bad” (line 1). When she revealed this, I let out a groan (“Ohhhh”), and she mirrored it (“Uhhhh,” line 1), admitting that this guilt, or her habit, is “terrib” (she cuts off) (line 2).

As with the discussion of “as noted above,” this example demonstrates that even though one might recognize the contextual nature of such principles, it’s easy to want to apply them universally. In addition, this example shows the results of the heightened awareness one gains from learning the pet peeves of an authority figure. For Corinne, once she learned about them, they haunted her: she noticed whenever she broke them (even in genres not addressed by Dan’s guide), and she felt bad as a result.

The practice of excising words from her vocabulary to follow a teacher’s preferences also happened in high school. Corinne mentioned to me that on the first day of her freshman honors
English class, the teacher reviewed “writing guidelines” and told everyone not to use possessives. Corinne reported her response to this arbitrary dictum as “okayyyy,”—spoken in a shaky, tentative voice as if she’s shrugging her shoulders and accepting the teacher’s command—and she told me that she “hated apostrophes from then on.” Although I didn’t ask her how serious she was about her enmity toward apostrophes and “very,” Corinne admitted she always sought to “please” teachers (Interview, February, 5, 2013). Following an instructor’s guidelines to the “t,” perhaps, is one thing in her control. As a result, when she was confused by one of Harold’s comments—a situation when he said that “for example” should only be used when there is more than one example, but she did have more than one—she reported that she just started avoiding the phrase (Interview, March 1, 2013).

The principles in Dan’s guide also seem to take on the status of a legal document, in which the writer and reader must abide by what is printed—but only what is printed. When Corinne reported Dan’s explanation that “real” (or “really”) is like “very” (Figure 4.24, above), she teasingly implied that he didn’t have the authority to make that statement because “that wasn’t in your sheet” (line 3). By whispering this statement, she treated the revelation as something he might be embarrassed about and, perhaps, avoided assertively critiquing his authority.

As I discussed in the previous section, style principles—no matter how universal they seem to be—are contextual: telling can be appropriate in “blog style”; “as noted above,” which seems unnecessary, can help you be concise. But my conversations with Corinne illustrate that

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11 Corinne recalled this memory when we were talking about how she’s “still kinda getting used to active voice” because she was taught in high school English “to never use possessives.” We will never know what her teacher actually said, but one possibility is that the common injunction to be formal by avoiding contractions got reinterpreted as avoiding possessives, as well as that Corinne came to associate formality with passive voice. The result seems to be that formality, passive voice, and avoiding possessives blended together and entailed one another.
that it is very tempting to treat them, or want to treat them, as universally applicable, even when understanding that they are not. This comes up most strongly in the fact that Corinne “feels bad” when she uses “very” and more subtly in our delight at witnessing Dan use a structure similar to “as noted above.”

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I showed how Corinne, Dan, and Harold developed metapragmatic representations of the two professors’ styles and how these representations, seemingly reified, are actually considerably in flux. For instance, Corinne’s representations became metasemiotic ones when she viewed particular ways of thinking and speaking (e.g., metaphor use) as part of Harold’s writing style and thus came to understand Harold’s “stereotypical academic” style as more narrative. I moved on to depict the dynamism of stylistic meaning by exploring Mary’s, Dan’s, and Mikhail’s interpretations of an “X has Y that” structure, “Many Americans today believe that we live in a non-racist society.” This sentence was flagged by Dan as a platitude, valued by Mikhail as engaging the reader, and disliked by Mary because it tells instead of shows (is less narrative) and also because it violates APA style (is too narrative).

Having traveled from representations to practices, I then followed two of Dan’s writing guide principles, “avoid X has Y that” and “show, don’t tell,” throughout a variety of texts. Conversations with Dan and Chris identified places where veering from these principles (e.g., telling before showing) was quite appropriate, and I used this as evidence of the contextual nature of style principles.

The flexibility of style representations, stylistic practice, and style principles complements Blommaert’s (2010) theory of a “sociolinguistics of mobile resources.” Instead of seeing language as being “tied to a community, a time and a place,” Blommaert argues that we
should move to a view in which “language exists in and for mobility across space and time.”
This perspective, he asserts, “forces us to consider linguistic signs detached from their traditional
focus of origin...and instead re-placed, so to speak, in a very different loci of production and
uptake” (p. 181). Despite the need to attend to linguistic and semiotic mobility, it is also
important to focus on the ideologies that, arguably, travel alongside stylistic forms. In the final
section, I returned to the generalizing, universalizing impulse presented in Chapter 3. Although
Corinne perceived the heterogeneity and dynamism of style, both of us still looked for
consistency in advice and practices and expected universal characteristics of good writing.

The next chapter also explores the tension between writers’ fairly stable style ideologies
and quite variable style practices, but it highlights the embodied nature of style representations, a
theme introduced in Chapter 3. In addition, whereas this chapter challenges the notion that an
individual’s representations of style are stable, Chapter 5 contests the idea that a discipline has a
shared, agreed upon style.
Chapter 5
Common and Conflicting Metaphors and Practices in Ecology

When asked how he understood “style” in scientific writing, entomologist Claudio Gratton laughed, commenting that scientific writing seems almost “style-less” because it “all kind of read[s] the same way.” Journal editors in ecology and entomology, he said, certainly don’t allow um embellishments in the language, it’s pretty kind of dry language, it’s pretty straightforward, and uh, you know, parenthetical comments are not very much seen, clauses are discouraged, so it’s- again, how do you say, in the most efficient way- how do you say what you need to say.

He then contrasted it with “creative writing,” where “you kind of weave this yarn that springs surprises on people.” He enjoys reading it, he declared, but advises students to forgo it in their scientific writing.

Claudio characterized scientific writing with adjectives like “dry” and “straightforward” and distinguished it from “creative writing,” which occasions features like “embellishments” and “parentheticals.” Underlying his representations of style are metaphors and other figures. “Dry,” for instance, is a metaphor that compares the writing to physical qualities (not wet) to indicate absence of emotion or adornment. The transcript above is not the whole representation of the interaction, however; it omits information like intonation, facial expressions, and gestures. When Claudio called scientific writing “dry,” he flattened his right hand and glided it from his left to his right side (Figure 5.1):

1 Most of this chapter, and small portions of Chapters 1, 3, and 6, was previously printed in “On the Instability of Disciplinary Style: Common and Conflicting Metaphors and Practices in Text, Talk, and Gesture,” Research in the Teaching of English (Olinger, 2014). Copyright 2014 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted with permission.

2 Claudio’s remarks that “clauses are discouraged” reveals adequation at work (see Chapter 3). He likely means “long” or “many” clauses, but his statement simplifies this reality.
He repeated this gesture for “straightforward.” This gliding-flattened-hand gesture itself conveys multiple figures: his hand becomes the dry text and/or his mind experiencing the text, and the gliding motion and flattened surface indicate smoothness and lack of disturbances or surprises in the reading process. With figurative gestures like these, which, scholars of metaphor and gesture argue, embody an individual’s knowledge of the world, Claudio is enacting his experiences with style and his beliefs about how texts should communicate.

Students in Claudio’s lab, researchers whose manuscripts Claudio reviews, and writers of all ages and settings will, at some point, receive “style” comments containing terms and gestures like these. Often, these judgments are mystifying. What does “dry” mean, exactly? When shown a particular stretch of language, would Claudio and his readers agree on its dryness? Would they consider the gliding flattened hand gesture an accurate representation of dryness and straightforwardness? To what extent are such style descriptions agreed upon, and uniformly practiced, in a particular disciplinary community?

In the data I will present, Claudio, Ashley (Claudio’s former Ph.D. student), and Sarah (Ashley’s postdoc advisor) described “scientific writing style” in similar terms (e.g., “clear”) and with similar gestures (e.g., depicting linearity), revealing common metaphors and, thus, shared understandings of how communication should work. But all three disagreed over many stylistic choices in their co-authored manuscripts, justifying their positions with these terms and gestures.
Moreover, it became apparent that Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah disagreed with *themselves* about stylistic decisions they had made earlier. To be fair, experts in the same field often have different, even conflicting, opinions about the same text (e.g., Jeffery, 2011). Should we, then, dismiss the fact of these differences as less important than the fact of shared general stylistic understandings? Claudio, Ashley, and Sarah are three scientists in overlapping subfields of ecology, with lengthy histories of interaction and co-authorship. If a stable, agreed-upon notion of disciplinary style were to be found somewhere, it would be here, in a small group with an extensive history of interaction. Instead, my analysis finds the absence of clear norms and the presence of shared metaphors, verbal and gestural, that writers deliberately or unwittingly inflect in practice according to their individual notions and situated dispositions. The stylistic flux this analysis uncovers thus complicates popular notions that a discipline has a “writing style” widely shared among insiders and that a person’s knowledge about style is stable and definitive.

First, I present the chapter’s methodology and methods. I then turn to the results, showing how Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah share broad notions of scientific writing style, particularly visible in the metaphors that underlie their verbal and gestural descriptions. As my analysis shows, however, their agreement is much more limited in practice. I examine the nature of their disagreements and suggest explanations for them. Finally, I discuss the implications of stylistic instability, especially as embodied in metaphoric gestures, for our understandings of style.

**Chapter Methodology**

*Site and Participants*

This chapter focuses on three academics in related fields of ecology: Ashley Bennett, a post-doctoral research associate in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC); Claudio Gratton, an associate professor and Ashley’s Ph.D.
advisor in the Department of Entomology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Sarah Lovell, an assistant professor and Ashley’s postdoc advisor in the Department of Crop Sciences at UIUC. Ashley and Claudio specialize in entomology, Sarah in crop science. I focus on this group because they were interested in the project and provided rich data and because, as experts in related fields who co-authored together, they provided a useful test case for understanding shared notions of disciplinary style. Ashley lived in my neighborhood, and we met soon after I moved to town. After she learned what I was studying, our conversations sometimes veered to scientific writing. Once I began data collection, I invited Ashley to participate.

Data Collection Procedures

First, I conducted a semi-structured literacy history interview with Ashley to learn about her experiences with academic writing and style. We discussed her writing experiences in high school, college, graduate school, and her postdoc, especially with various advisors, and her understandings of a disciplinary “writing style.” This interview took place in December 2011 in her office. She allowed me to videorecord it.

At the end of the interview, we discussed which texts I might “follow” that she had worked on or was currently working on. Ashley shared texts from four projects. Two were articles co-authored with Claudio—one published, one under review—based on dissertation chapters. For both articles, she shared a draft with Claudio’s comments, a revised version that was submitted to the journal, and comments from journal reviewers; for the published article, she also shared her revision based on reviewers’ comments, her cover letter to the editor, and the published article. The other two manuscripts she shared—a successful $10,000 grant proposal
and article manuscript-in-progress—were co-authored with Sarah; she shared drafts and Sarah’s comments.

I read all of these texts in preparation for discourse-based interviews with Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah, choosing one piece of writing from each pair. For Ashley’s work with Claudio, I chose the published article because Claudio made more line-by-line changes on the draft (versus global comments or drastic reworking of sections) and because Ashley had mentioned that this article had involved a considerable amount of back-and-forth, with each person preferring his or her version. For Ashley’s work with Sarah, I chose the grant proposal because it had been completed and Sarah had commented on three separate and complete drafts, as opposed to one incomplete draft.

To prepare for the DBIs on those two writing projects, I used Microsoft Word’s “Compare” feature to help me identify differences between the “final draft” and early versions, especially changes triggered by Claudio’s or Sarah’s comments. For Ashley and Claudio’s article, what I am calling the “final draft” is the draft that was accepted by the journal after revision based on reviewers’ comments; it was not yet copyedited, proofread, or typeset. For Ashley and Sarah’s grant proposal, the final draft was indeed the final version that received the award.

After examining the differences between the drafts, I began identifying changes that I wanted to learn more about. On the co-authored article with Claudio, I made a list of 18 changes to ask Ashley and Claudio about; on the co-authored grant proposal with Sarah, I made a list of 10 changes to ask Ashley and Sarah about. The changes were at the word and sentence level, excluding changes that were very small, like the pluralization of a noun, or very large, like the deletion of a paragraph. On the final drafts of both texts, I crossed out the 18 or 10 “final
versions” of a wording and wrote the version from the earlier draft above it. Occasionally I needed to slightly reword this alternative so it would make sense in context. See Figure 2.2 for an example of what these documents looked like.

I conducted separate DBIs with Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah. The interviews with Sarah and Claudio began with semi-structured questions about their formative writing experiences in college, graduate school, and professional settings; their approaches to giving feedback; and their understandings of a disciplinary “writing style.” Because of lack of time, I only asked Claudio about 12 of 18 changes for the DBI portion. (I was able to ask Sarah all 10 questions.) Ashley’s DBI was videorecorded in her office; Claudio’s interview was conducted over Skype, and I recorded the screen as we spoke; Sarah’s interview was audiorecorded and conducted in her office. After I had transcribed and analyzed the DBIs, I met with Ashley to share the results with her, and I audiorecorded that conversation. With the five interviews, I collected just over 5 hours of interviews.

Data Analysis Procedures

First, I produced rough transcripts of the interviews and included relevant embodied actions such as gestures, facial expressions, and laughter; the result was 116 single-spaced pages of transcript. I then analyzed the transcripts in two ways: how Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah described writing styles and the extent of their agreement in the DBIs.

To analyze their descriptions of style, I followed the procedure described in Chapter 3. I coded the transcripts inductively, noting places where style was described in both talk and

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3 As I analyzed the data, I realized that I needed to eliminate 2 items I had asked Ashley and Sarah about because they pertained to an inconsistency in the text. This left a total of 8 items.
gestures. I then began to identify patterns in these descriptions. All three writers, for instance, talked about how good scientific writing was easy to follow: Ashley commented that “you want someone else to kind of be able to follow—read your methods and exactly replicate your study,” Claudio said that “your mind never wanders,” and Sarah said that the writer shouldn’t be “taking you around in circles.” These descriptions seemed connected to the metaphor of Communication as a Journey. Noticing the prevalence of metaphors like these, I reviewed the places in the transcripts where style was described and coded deductively for metaphors describing “mental events.” As I did, I referred to a widely used metaphor list (Lakoff, Espenson, & Schwartz, 1991) along with other published analyses of writing-related metaphors (Abbott & Eubanks, 2005; Eubanks, 2011).

To analyze the extent of their agreement in the DBIs, I examined each person’s response to the DBI questions. I identified if their response (whether they preferred the alternative, the language in the final draft, had no preference, or preferred something different entirely) resembled or diverged from their action in the final draft over a year and a half later (Ashley and Claudio’s article) or a year later (Ashley and Sarah’s grant). I then compared their responses, counting the times Ashley and Claudio, and Ashley and Sarah, agreed and analyzing their justifications for their preferences. (If someone expressed a preference and the other had no preference, I counted this as disagreement.) Ashley’s response to my preliminary findings helped me better understand the results and provided further examples of style descriptions. When I had identified the stretches of interaction that I would be focusing on here, I refined the transcripts of those excerpts, adapting the system of Hengst (2001, 2010), who aligns speakers’ utterances so they can read be like a musical score. Lastly, as I was revising the paper, I shared drafts with Ashley and had several telephone and email conversations with her.
Shared Understanding of Scientific Writing Style

Like the technical communication practitioners and instructors in Abbott and Eubanks (2005), Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah had similar ideas about the qualities of good scientific writing and, to describe them, relied on similar metaphors. In this study, the metaphors were Communication as a Journey and several entailments of the Conduit Metaphor—Directionality, Language as Container, and Understanding as Sight.

The writers frequently interwove multiple metaphors in their talk and gestures. For instance, when I asked Sarah if she noticed any style differences in the interdisciplinary journals she writes for, she invoked both the Communication as Journey metaphor and the Directionality entailment of the Conduit Metaphor (with its positive valence, Directness). Sarah commented that journals might differ in jargon (although they “try to avoid any particular disciplinary jargon”) but that “they still all push a direct approach, and not, you know, kind of taking you around in circles to get ((circles wrist)) to the answer, and kind of a straightforward writing approach.”4 Sarah’s adjectives “direct”5 and “straightforward,” her comment about not “taking you around in circles,” and her wrist-circling gesture all involve the metaphor of a writer’s creating a linear path for the reader whose “progression should be uninterrupted or predictable” (Abbott & Eubanks, 2005, p. 193).

Claudio and Ashley also combined Communication as a Journey with a few entailments of the Conduit Metaphor. Claudio, for instance, felt that his own postdoc advisor was “one of the clearest writers” he had met. Claudio described the effect of reading his papers as follows. The

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4 As our interview was audiorecorded, this gesture comes from my field notes.
5 “Directness” has also become associated with people who say what they mean. This association hints at age-old metonymic stereotypes: femininity with ornament, loquaciousness, circularity; masculinity with simplicity, brevity, strength (Baron, 1986, pp. 65, 68).
transcript is below (Figure 5.2); the video clip can be viewed at [http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49915](http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49915).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C: And if you read those papers, your mind never *wanders,</th>
<th>*floats palm from high to low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A:                                                                       | **
| *floats palm from high to low                                           | **nods** cascades palm from one level down to another |
| C: You- you read,* and you just go from ***paragraph to paragraph,        | **nor nods**                     |
| A:                                                                         |                                           |
| *floats palm from high to low **nods ***cascades palm from one level down to another |
| C: and it's just the *flow is so clean, (0.2)                            |                                           |
| A:                                                                         | **sweeps palm in two diagonal lines from high to low **A-Okay gesture **A-Okay gesture **A-Okay gesture |
| C: and if you *look at how they're written, the **topic sentences are always ***spot on.= | **A-Okay gesture **A-Okay gesture **A-Okay gesture |
| A:                                                                         |                                           |
| *A-Okay gesture **A-Okay gesture ***A-Okay gesture                      |                                           |
| C: =Wow.* *nodding **A-Okay gesture                                       |                                           |
| A: =Wow.* *nodding **A-Okay gesture                                       |                                           |
| C: *if you don’t have that first sentence right                           |                                           |
| A: Mmmmmmm *nodding                                                      |                                           |
| C: and then have that *paragraph be cohesive around that first sentence, (.) ***forget it. | **
| A:                                                                         | **nods*** throws hands out |
| C: You know, you're- you don’t have (1.0) you're gonna *lose (1.0) uh the reader | *sweeps right hand out to the side |
| A: Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm *draws finger in s-shape *nods ***nods ***nods |

**Figure 5.2. Claudio describes his postdoc advisor’s style (Interview, April 6, 2012)**

Claudio described a writer controlling the reader’s mind, guiding it on a linear, logical journey so it “never wanders” (line 1) and so the reader can “follow you” (line 10) and you do not “lose” him or her (line 9). Claudio’s repeated floating and cascading of his palm from a higher to lower position (lines 1-3, 8) and sweeping of his palm in diagonal lines from high to low (line 4) demonstrate this smooth, linear path (Figure 5.3):
Claudio’s response echoes Sarah’s comment, and corresponding gesture, about the writer “taking you around in circles.” When he warned about what happens when the writer’s thoughts are not clear, he swept his right hand out to the side (line 9) and drew his finger in an “s” shape (line 10), implying that curving, non-linear thoughts sidetrack readers.

When I asked Ashley how she would describe the style of the different journals she has published in, she said they had a similar “format” (introduction, methods, results, discussion) and “style.” I then pressed her to be more specific. The transcript is below (Figure 5.4); the video clip can be viewed at http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49916.
Like Claudio, Ashley felt the reader should “be able to follow” the writer (line 7), and she floated her hand from shoulder-level to lap-level (Figure 5.5). This fluid movement seems to depict reader following writer, or writer guiding reader:

Figure 5.4. Ashley describes scientific writing style (Interview, December 19, 2011)

Figure 5.5. Ashley floats her hand from shoulder- to lap-level while saying, “You want someone else to kind of be able to follow.” (line 7).
The idea of a direct and linear journey is often embodied in gestures that illustrate precision of language, which is an entailment of the Conduit Metaphor, Language as Container. For example, when Ashley remarked that the methods section should be “straightforward” (line 5), she clapped the back of her right hand onto her left palm (Figure 5.6):

![Figure 5.6. Ashley claps the back of her right hand onto her left palm while saying, “it’s just (.) very straightforward” (line 5).](image)

Visually and aurally, this gesture enacts compression and “fit” of meaning. The motion of one hand landing atop the other might also signify a solid, well-grounded conclusion to the journey.

In addition, when she said that scientific writing is “very concise,” Ashley represented concision by touching her thumbs and fingertips together. Characteristic of “ring” hand-shapes (Kendon, 2004), this gesture indexes precision in the fine movements required to complete it and visually forms a container (Figure 5.7):
Similarly, Claudio observed that his advisor’s topic sentences were always “spot on” (line 5), which implies a precise location being reached. His repeated use of the “a-okay” gesture (Figure 5.8) indicates his approval of “spot-on” topic sentences, but it also resembles Ashley’s “concise” gesture. With thumb and index finger delicately touching, he depicts the idea of meaning precisely achieved:

The other Conduit Metaphor entailment appearing throughout is Understanding as Sight. For example, amid references to Communication as Journey, Claudio said that thoughts needed to be “clear” (line 10), and Ashley asserted that topic sentences as well as scientific writing in general should be “clear” (lines 3, 6).
Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah’s talk and gestures thus demonstrate that understandings of style are deeply shared in mind and body. As with Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) faculty, however, shared terminology often conceals conflicting practices. “When our informants use similar terms to refer to their goals and expectations for student writing,” they write, “we can’t be sure that they share the same values or are actually talking about very different things” (p. 59). When looking at the writers’ practices as made visible during the DBIs, it becomes clear that Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah did indeed enact this shared style quite differently.

**Different Enactments of Shared Stylistic Understanding**

Ashley and Claudio spent over a year and a half working on the article, each making many sentence-level changes along the way. After Ashley and I had completed the DBI, Ashley told me that she thought Claudio would favor his own wording because, as they revised the manuscript, they tended to prefer their own, different versions of particular sentences. Indeed, the DBI results confirm Ashley’s and Claudio’s continued disagreements. For the 12 pairs of items that I queried their preferences on, they disagreed 8 times, or two-thirds of the time. Six (6) of these disagreements involved language that Claudio had suggested but Ashley had not accepted in the final draft. In addition to disagreeing when writing the article, therefore, they continued to disagree on some of the same language over a year and a half later. Ashley and Sarah also disagreed on a number of DBI items, albeit fewer than did Ashley and Claudio. In the 8 pairs of items I asked about, Ashley and Sarah disagreed 4 times.

For a number of examples, disagreement was masked by use of the shared terminology reported in the above section, like “direct.” In the following example (Figure 5.9), Ashley’s preference—which, she argued, achieves directness—conflicts with Claudio’s preference—which, he argued, helps the reader follow the writer:
**Ashley’s preference (the version in the final draft):** In contrast, arthropod abundance was positively affected by flower diversity, a local landscape variable. Local habitat manipulations such as the addition of flower plantings are known to benefit insects by providing them with pollen, nectar, protection from predators, and over wintering habitat (Tscharntke et al. 2007).

**Claudio’s preference (an alternative version):** On the other hand, local characteristics of the environment, such as flower diversity within a property, were positively associated with increases in beneficial arthropod abundance. Local habitat manipulations such as the addition of flower plantings are known to benefit insects by providing them with pollen, nectar, protection from predators, and over wintering habitat (Tscharntke et al. 2007).

*Figure 5.9. The underlined sentences are two versions of a topic sentence from the discussion. Ashley preferred the final-draft version, whereas Claudio preferred the alternative.*

Ashley said she preferred the final-draft version, which she had written, because “it's simple ((slices right hand across chest)), it's easier ((repeats slicing gesture)), it's more direct ((repeats slicing gesture)) topic sentence.” The alternative, she said, is “more wordy.” In her talk and gestures (Figure 5.10), she produced a number of metaphors. The phrase “more direct” uses the Directionality entailment, and her slicing gestures—flattened hand cutting through the air at chest-level—also depict communication moving in a straight line:
Figure 5.10. Ashley slices her hand at chest-level while describing her preference.

In addition, “easier” likely implies “easy to read/follow,” meaning that information quicker to receive or process is preferred (Conduit Metaphor). And contrasting her preference with the “more wordy” version conjures the Language as Container entailment, in which language is tightly compressed.

Claudio acknowledged that the final-draft version was a “clean” topic sentence: “at least it can stand alone and… the paragraph after it can be justified.” “Clean,” here, might exemplify Language as Container, in that the topic sentence is tidy, neatly fitting the paragraph it precedes and lacking extraneous information, as well as the Conduit Metaphor, in that a transparent medium is required to send the message.⁶ However, he still preferred the alternative version,

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⁶ This metaphor also brings to mind Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) signal-noise metaphor. A “clean” signal (or message) would have little to no noise.
which he himself had proposed in an earlier draft. The paragraph preceding the passage in Figure 5.9 was about a broad-scale characteristic, landscape diversity, and the alternative sentence starts with “local characteristic” instead of closing with it. The alternative, he implied, made the contrast between the paragraphs more apparent. When “local landscape variable” comes at the end, he said, “you’ve kind of *lost the reader *((draws horizontal line in front of his face with pinched fingers)) or you just haven’t quite given the reader a reason to **read that sentence ***((repeats gesture)).” Describing his preference, Claudio used Communication as Journey in talk (“lost the reader”) and gestures (Figure 5.11):

![Figure 5.11. Claudio draws a horizontal line with pinched fingers.](image)

With thumb pinching forefinger, he drew an imaginary line from the left to the right side of his face. This line seems to signify the work of readers trying to follow the writer’s logic despite their being “lost.” Claudio then repeated the gesture when uttering the phrase “read that sentence,” as if depicting the sentence’s straight line.

In this example, Ashley and Claudio disagreed on the best sentence but used similar metaphors—Communication as Journey, the Conduit Metaphor, and its Language as Container and Directionality entailments—to justify their preferences. Notably, they both used a straight-line gesture, connoting “directness” (Ashley) and a linear journey (Claudio). These verbal and gestural metaphors, indexing shared notions of style, thus obscured conflicting beliefs and practices.
Ball, Dice, and Bartholomae (1990) argue that when professors use terms like “clear” they “cloak” disciplinary writing from students (p. 351), implying that successful communication employs generic skills, not disciplinary knowledge. In my data, such terms indeed hid more than they revealed. Yet the fact that disciplinary experts were using these terms complicates this picture, suggesting that experts’ own understandings of disciplinary style may be “cloaked.” I would argue that individual biographical trajectories are likely responsible for diverging practices and that DBIs can reveal glints of the experiences from which they develop.

Seemingly mundane disciplinary terms, for instance, occasionally indexed different meanings for each person. One such instance cropped up over the appropriateness of “techniques” instead of “management practices.” Whereas Sarah preferred “techniques” (or “approaches” or “strategies”) because its semantic field goes beyond that of “management,” Ashley favored “management practices” because “technique,” for her, indexed laboratory work—e.g., in molecular biology—that goes beyond “management” and because “management practices” was the more common term. Similarly, Ashley and Claudio disagreed over the suitability of “landscape variables” versus “landscape characteristics.” Ashley found no difference between the terms, whereas Claudio preferred “characteristics” because he felt that “variables” “is a jargony term that comes out from the statistical analysis” and that this “statistical baggage” was unnecessary. In cases like these, terms that one might assume have shared meanings do not. A person’s sense of the discipline’s patterns of use seems to vary with their life experience.

These responses, then, hint at Ashley, Claudio, and Sarah’s distinct histories of exposure to particular words. Their ongoing encounters with language naturally led some words to feel more comfortable than others. For example, in the grant proposal coauthored with Sarah, Ashley
preferred the alternative version (Figure 5.12). (Note that Ashley was the author of the
alternative version; she then revised that language to create the final-draft version.) Sarah had no
preference, calling both sentences “pretty similar”:

| **What’s in the Final Draft:** We anticipate our results will highlight the potential urban green
spaces have for utilizing IPM plans that enhance beneficial arthropods and the services they
provide. |
| **Ashley’s preference (an alternative version):** We anticipate our results will highlight the potential urban green spaces have for using IPM strategies that enhance arthropod conservation and the provisioning of arthropod mediated services. |

Figure 5.12. Two versions of a sentence from the grant proposal. Underlined text indicates where the two versions differ.

“Utilize,” which appears in the final draft version, has long been critiqued in popular usage guides as an unnecessary complication of “use.” The language in the alternative version could be characterized as more complex and technical, however, because it is slightly longer and adds two nominalizations, “conservation” and “provisioning.” Still, Ashley preferred it, commenting that whereas Sarah usually used “provision,” she herself favored “provisioning.”

In the DBI, Ashley added that “the services they provide” was “a little awkward.” The transcript is below (Figure 5.13); the video clip can be viewed at

http://hdl.handle.net/2142/49917.
Ashley explains why she prefers the alternative. (Interview, April 2, 2012)

When pushed, she explained that she preferred it because it was “a little clearer, more direct.” Ashley thus marshals the Conduit Metaphor entailments of Understanding as Sight and Directionality to support what felt more familiar. These disagreements reveal that such language ideologies, although expressed in shared metaphors, are inflected by preferences stemming from writers’ distinctive life histories and encounters with words.

Individuals’ Shifting Judgments about Style

Some of the disagreements that Claudio and Ashley had in their DBIs were the same disagreements they had posited over a year and a half earlier, when they were revising the manuscript. At the same time, changing one’s mind was routine in these data, especially for Sarah and Ashley. All eight items that I asked about in the DBI started out as language that Ashley had drafted. When Sarah gave feedback on the grant proposal, she proposed revisions to
three of them—revisions that Ashley accepted in the final draft—and Ashley revised her own language in the remaining five items. During the DBI, however, for all eight items, Sarah either preferred Ashley’s original version or had no preference. Ashley was happy with the final draft versions of three items, but she preferred her original version or had no preference for the remaining five.

By contrast, Claudio and Ashley changed their minds less often. Out of the 12 DBI items I asked about, 7 contained “alternatives” that Claudio had suggested and Ashley had ignored when producing the final draft. For these 7 items, Claudio preferred his suggestions all but once, and Ashley preferred her final draft language all but twice. However, they still did change their minds. Most strikingly, for three DBI items representing Claudio’s changes that Ashley had accepted in the final draft, both Claudio and Ashley preferred Ashley’s original language in two uses.

In such examples, in-the-moment stylistic decisions prove especially difficult to access. With the phrase “landscapes dominated by man-made structures such as roads and buildings,” for example, both Claudio and Ashley agreed that “man-made structures” was redundant. However, it was Claudio who had added “man-made structures” and Ashley who had accepted it. Why had Claudio added it? That version may have been slightly more internally persuasive at the time. Or it may have been a mistake—a quick reaction to a fast read.

I recognize that the DBI method may also have shaped some of these changes of mind. The interviews occurred over a year after the manuscripts’ completion, and because of time constraints, participants could not reread the whole manuscript, which might have altered their senses of context. Also, the DBI document was a typewritten manuscript with handwritten changes that resembled editing suggestions (see Figure 2.2 for an image). I explained that the
typewritten manuscript was a final draft and that the handwriting contained language from previous drafts, but this format may have been counter-intuitive. Nevertheless, all three writers made and accounted for their different style judgments. At minimum, their changes of mind demonstrate the instability of both individual writers’ style expertise and of a discipline-specific style. If discipline-specific style preferences were established and stable, one would expect increased convergence, not disagreement, over time.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that these three co-authors share beliefs about the characteristics of scientific writing style. But it also documents differences in what they prefer when they examine actual bits of language, differences that seem to stem from distinctive life histories, and it identifies changes of mind over time. These findings complicate notions of a shared discipline-specific style and of the stability of an expert’s knowledge about style.

Although this case study has a small sample size, its purpose is not to delineate the discipline’s style but to examine the phenomenon of style. Studying such small, interacting groups, as a result, affords close analyses of talk and text, essential to understanding micro-level stylistic processes. If there were strongly shared discipline-specific styles, small groups such as this one should show high levels of stability and agreement. The findings of this dissertation as a whole, in fact, suggests that the dynamism of style applies beyond this particular group.

For writing researchers, the presence of metaphoric talk and gestures raises intriguing questions about style knowledge. Talk and gestures, with and without metaphors, blend in a variety of ways in these data. There might be a verbal metaphor but no gesture, as when Claudio called the sentence in the final draft (Figure 5.9) a “clean” topic sentence without moving his hands. Or, gestures might merely emphasize beats in the metaphoric talk, as when Ashley said,
“it’s very clear, it’s very concise,” raising and lowering her open palms at “clear” (Understanding as Sight) and “concise” (Figure 5.4, line 3). Alternately, a metaphor might be gestural but not verbal, as when Ashley said “it’s simple” while slicing her hand across her chest (Directionality entailment, Figure 5.10).

Moreover, metaphors in talk and gesture might align, as when Sarah said while circling her wrist that the journals she publishes in do not promote “taking [the reader] around in circles to get to the answer” (both signaling Communication as Journey). Perhaps most interesting, different metaphors sometimes overlapped in talk and gesture, as when Claudio said, “when your thoughts aren’t clear” (Understanding as Sight) while drawing his finger in an S-shape (Communication as Journey) (Figure 5.2, line 10) or when Ashley said, “you want it to be very concise, very clear (Understanding as Sight)” while making a circle with her thumb and fingertips and raising and lowering that gesture (Language as Container). (Note that Ashley’s gesture here, in emphasizing the talk and depicting a metaphor, exemplifies the quite natural multifunctionality of gestures and blending of metaphors.)

Does the existence of different metaphors in talk and gesture provide special insight into stylistic understanding and practice? Although researchers should not expect consistency or simplicity in metaphor use (Gibbs, 2008), a few interesting questions emerge. Does the co-occurrence of different metaphors in talk and gesture mean that the speaker sees these different metaphors as bound up together, coalescing around a single ideology about what good scientific writing looks like? Or, does it hint at each person’s individuated understandings of generic “clarity”—thus presaging disagreement between co-authors during the DBIs? Alternately, does it hint at the instability of each person’s understanding of style—presaging those changes of mind? The data in this chapter do not answer these questions, but they certainly point to the
potential of analyzing metaphor and gesture for researchers interested in the nature of writing knowledge.
Chapter 6
Conclusion

And I try to be straightforward. I don’t try to be flowery.
(Interview with Christopher Chabris, April 24, 2013)

I began this dissertation by pointing out the homogenous, singular notions of disciplinary style in WID and by arguing for rhetoric and composition research to attend to style as a dynamic, co-constructed activity. In seeking to understand how disciplinary styles were understood, practiced learned, and taught, I asked the following questions:

• How do academic writers represent styles in talk, text, and embodied actions?
• How do groups of interacting writers negotiate style in their composing activity?
• How stable are these representations and practices within individuals, within groups, and across groups?

In Chapter 3, which ranged across my data, I presented writers’ style representations by examining the metaphors underlying style contrasts, illustrating the value of attending to metaphoric gestures and embodied actions and showing how these representations were constructed through processes of adequation, distinction, and erasure. I described how writers developed understandings of the style contrasts and received training in the ideology of clarity connected to the Conduit Metaphor, training that showed them how to inspect their written language through a lens that valued only referential meaning. I also illustrated how writers saw their writing development and imagined “writing problems” through a textualist ideology that assumed the existence of universal characteristics of good writing and consistency between styles of writing and speaking. And I glimpsed the ways in which style perceptions were wrapped up in images of a “good writer,” against which writers measured themselves.
Chapter 4 examined style representations and practices at work within a group of writers in psychology. I showed that Corinne’s representations of Dan’s and Harold’s styles emerged through processes of adequation and distinction and were also in flux, shifting to accommodate new information she gleaned about Dan’s, Harold’s, and her own practices. I demonstrated the co-constructed nature of stylistic practice when analyzing how a sentence in Mary’s text elicited divergent responses from Mary, Dan, and Mikhail. In addition, I pointed out contextual nature of seemingly universal principles like “show, don’t tell,” in tension with the pervasiveness of the ideology of universality, introduced in Chapter 3, that there are particular principles and practices of “good style” that cut across all kinds of writing.

Whereas Chapter 4 challenged the notion that an individual’s representations of style are stable, Chapter 5 contested the idea that a discipline has a shared, agreed upon style and highlighted the embodied nature of style representations, a theme introduced in Chapter 3. Analyzing a group of three coauthors in ecology, I demonstrated that despite shared verbal and gestural representations of good scientific writing in ecology, the ecologists tended to disagree with one another and with themselves about particular stylistic choices in their texts, using similar style principles (e.g., “clarity”) to argue for their varied decisions. These disagreements stemmed from individual writers’ distinct life histories, including their exposure to particular words.

Overall, the data show the pervasiveness of variability as well as inconsistency in the stylistic practices of groups of disciplinary writers, as even disciplinary insiders do not agree on whether a particular sentence is “clear,” may change their minds about stylistic choices over time, and may apply so-called universal principles like “show, don’t tell” differently across genres, texts, or even portions of texts. Current style theory, research, and pedagogy in rhetoric
and composition fail to explain such phenomena. Sociocultural theories, on the other hand, expect such heterogeneity.

Drawing on these theories, I contributed a definition of style and a theoretical framework that challenges views of style as a static artifact; emphasizes the dynamic, co-constructed, multisemiotic, heterogeneous nature of style; attends to the complex ways in which ideologies coincide with stylistic practice; and adds much-needed structure to the disparate or loose definitions of style in rhetoric and composition. In addition, I offered a methodology for studying the embodied, situated, histories of styles and their co-constructed, dynamic meanings: extended conversations with writers instead of just text analysis, parallel text- and discourse-based interviews with writers and the people they worked with on their writing, and the use of videorecording to capture embodied actions like facial expressions and gestures. This work has allowed me to challenge deep-seated conceptions of styles, such as that a discipline has a style uniformly shared among experts and that a person’s style knowledge and practices are stable.

In the remainder of this chapter, I describe a number of implications of this work for style research, theory, and writing in the disciplines pedagogy. Throughout but especially at the end, I note areas for future research.

**Implications and Further Research**

*Adjusting Terminology: From Styles to Stylistic Bits*

Innumerable articles and chapters in rhetoric and composition refer to “a student’s writing style” or “styles.” Even in the plural, the term treats students’ written language as indexing a singular style, as if each text is written in a particular style (recalling the low, middle, and high styles of classical rhetoric). As I have shown, a text does not index a single style; it comprises countless bits of semiotic resources—what I called “stylistic bits” in Chapter 1—that
themselves index stylistic meanings, and not necessarily singular ones. Stylistic repertoires, I would argue, are similar to Blommaert’s (2010) semiotic repertoires in their heterogeneity, partiality, and dynamism.¹

Corinnee, for instance, wrote many a hybrid sentence drawing on both Dan’s and Harold’s preferences. In her sentence “Studies have found that people with high levels of vulnerable narcissism are sensitive to social rejection, report high levels of shame, and report low levels of self-esteem,” she used a structure preferred by Harold (“studies have found that”) as well as a word favored by Dan (“people” instead of “individuals”). As Bakhtin (1981, 1986) has articulated, all utterances are polyvocal. But the phrase “a student’s style(s)” erases the heterogeneity and flux of the stylistic bits. In addition, whether these bits accrete into a distinguishable “style” depends on the perceptions of the reader or interlocutor.

Understanding the Resilience of Style Representations

Finding that writers’ representations of style may be misaligned with actual stylistic practices, this dissertation demonstrated that explicit metapragmatic awareness is inherently partial and incomplete (e.g., Duranti, 1997; Silverstein, 1981). Moreover, even when I brought writers face to face with these contradictions, they held on to their earlier representations. For Dan, the presence of “telling” in blog posts did not invalidate “show, don’t tell”; for Jing Jing, the presence of transition words in Adam’s text did not mean that she stopped trying to remove them to strengthen the “flow” of her writing. And even our vocabulary for discussing styles, mentioned above, conceals the bit-like nature of stylistic practice.

¹ See also Rymes (2014) on “communicative repertoires.”
Why might these representations be so resilient? Not only have they and their underlying ideologies become ingrained throughout our lifetimes (see, e.g., Minick, 1993, for an illustration of how young children are trained in what I call language inspection practices), but also, according to the phenomenological social science of Alfred Schutz, typifications of everyday experience are both ubiquitous and necessary (Kim & Berard, 2009). In addition, the stakes of maintaining such style representations are worth considering. In Chapter 3, I argued that Debojoy’s and Jing Jing’s perceptions of particular styles were linked to images of “good writers” whom they sought to emulate. Both of them measured their development against idealized images of Anustup and Adam, respectively. For other writers, the belief in a “disciplinary style,” albeit imagined, may be similarly important to maintain. Writing in this “style” allows writers to perform their membership in a particular community (itself also an imagined one) in order to achieve particular ends, which may include getting published, presenting at conferences, securing employment, and receiving tenure or promotions. In this way, the language ideologies and metapragmatic representations are not simply incomplete and partial; they are also generative and productive, allowing for people to produce texts that—they hope—will gain them membership in the communities they desire.

Reframing Notions of Writing Development and Expertise

The inherent incompleteness of explicit metapragmatic awareness challenges the view that advanced writers have a nuanced awareness of disciplinary style practices, present in Thaiss and Zawacki (2006)’s model of disciplinary writing development. This model has three stages. First, when a student enters college, she “bases a sense of disciplinary consistency on writing experience in very few courses with criteria in these courses generalized into ‘rules.’” For
instance, a student might start college thinking that she should never use “I” because that’s what a high school teacher instructed. Second, as the student begins to take classes, she “encounters different exigencies in different courses, and the sense of inconsistency, sometimes interpreted as teacher idiosyncrasy, supplants the perception of consistency.” The student perceives each teacher to have different expectations and may read them as idiosyncratic pet peeves. Third, once the student has taken a number of writing-intensive courses in her discipline, however, she begins to “[understand] the differences as components of an articulated, nuanced idea of the discipline” (pp. 109-110).

Corinne’s development, described in Chapter 4, allows us to test this model. I would argue that she doesn’t advance smoothly from stage one to two to three; she skates across them all simultaneously. Sometimes, she falls into stage one, overgeneralizing by feeling guilty about using “very” in her text messages. Frequently, she seems to be operating in stage two: writing in psychology seems to be very much about Dan’s style versus Harold’s style; the people, not the disciplines, reign. All the while she works in stage three, recognizing that following one principle often forces a writer to break another.

Corinne, however, is not the only challenge to this model. I contend that even the professors do not display what Thaiss and Zawacki call an “articulated, nuanced idea of the discipline,” although as successful writers they certainly enact it. And as the previous chapters articulated, even seasoned writers assumed that stylistic principles from one context should and could be transferred to another. This habit of generalizing and simplifying, which Thaiss and
Zawacki (2006) attribute to “stage one” writers entering college, applies to newcomers and experts (including me, the researcher) alike.\(^2\)

To what extent, then, can an “articulated, nuanced” idea of disciplinary writing be developed? Bazerman (2009) has noticed that some “smart, accomplished” faculty in sociology have little vocabulary for discussing writing beyond the corrective grammar they learned in high school. Although they have learned the genres of their profession and are successful in them, their reflective ability to manipulate them is limited because of a lack of linguistic and rhetorical vocabulary and analytical methods. (p. 289)

Other faculty in sociology, on the other hand,

have become very thoughtful about writing in their field, have read a lot in language as well as the sociology and history of science—they are articulate about their writing and how they mentor their students in writing, and approach those tasks in a self-conscious professional way. (ibid.)

How can we move faculty from the latter category to the former? And what are some examples of faculty in the latter category?\(^3\) And where would one place someone like Dan, a professor who has spent a great deal of time reading, thinking, and writing about science writing, as well as teaching undergraduate and graduate students about popular and scholarly communication in psychology?

WAC researchers have long pointed out the problems with vague terms such as “clear,” “argument,” and “thesis” because they conceal disciplinary differences (e.g., Ball, Dice, & Bartholomae, 1990; Giltrow, 2000; Lea & Street, 1998; Nowacek, 2009; Russell & Yañez, 2003; Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006). WAC instruction thus seeks to elicit faculty members’ situated knowledge of what they perceive a good thesis statement to look like in, say, a particular pedagogical genre in film studies. Practices for eliciting faculty members’ situated knowledge of

\(^2\) See also Lingard and Haber (2002), who found that medical students could overgeneralize doctors’ quite contextual feedback, applying the suggestions arhetorically.

\(^3\) See also Paré (2011), who analyzes doctoral thesis supervisors’ struggles to articulate the writing-related problems with dissertations and suggests that supervisors familiarize themselves with scholarship in writing studies and WAC.
style thus deserves further study. (See, e.g., Harwood’s (2006) heuristic for combining discourse-based interviews with disciplinary writers with linguistic analysis of their texts.)

**Teaching Situated Style Knowledge and Practice**

What implications does instability in stylistic practice within a discipline, and within individual writers, have for WID researchers and teachers? I do not mean to suggest that disciplinary writing is completely idiosyncratic and that, as a result, we ought to dispense with any notion of disciplinary style. Rather, I believe that instead of seeing WID as a matter of universal “rules,” whether generic or discipline-specific, researchers and teachers should work to understand how situated, embodied, and distinctly individual knowledge permeates disciplinary writing and how that writing comes to be perceived as writing “in the style of the discipline.”

What would such a pedagogy look like? Instead of devoting his writing guide and instructional time to decontextualized principles like “show, don’t tell” and injunctions against the word “interesting,” Dan could walk his students through excerpts from his articles and blog entries and discuss the complex blend of showing and telling that he performs in each genre. This instruction might include a discussion of different ways students can mark attitudinal stance (e.g., variations on “interestingly”) in different genres. As another example, at a Writing Across the Curriculum workshop on source use and citation for Business PhD students, the UIUC Center for Writing Studies facilitators projected excerpts from business professors’ research

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4 Agha (2007) sees “mutual coordination,” not uniformly shared style understandings and practices, as the requirement for “orderly” interaction. He writes, “The orderliness of social life around the existence of register formations does not depend on facts of uniform sharedness but on possibilities of mutual coordination, namely on the extent to which partially overlapping models yield orderly forms of interaction among users” (p. 183).

5 Corpus linguistic studies of language use—whether linguistic patterns in particular sections of genres or particular genres within or across disciplines—have advanced this work considerably. The danger, of course, is if such findings get reified into “rules.”
articles and asked the professors to talk through their decision-making. (E.g., Why did they quote instead of paraphrase here? Why did they cite these particular people here?) Such “live” text-based interviews foregrounded for students the rich, situated knowledge that the professors drew on. A citation, for instance, might be motivated by the need to advertise a particular person’s underappreciated work (see, e.g., Harwood, 2009). The students saw that expert citation and source use was much more complex than such notions as citing to “give credit where credit is due” and citing anything that’s “not your own idea.”

Another implication for disciplinary discourse socialization might involve normalizing the practice of conflicting responses. Dan, for instance, wondered if Corinne was so frustrated by the disparate feedback because she was not used to getting it—especially from two authorities. (Perhaps she was used to getting it from multiple peers, or from a peer and a teacher, but possibly not from two teachers.) As writing response and assessment literature has long shown (e.g., Jeffery, 2011; Straub & Lunsford, 1995), readers read differently, and writers should not expect consistency in response. Thus, an implication for the socialization of undergraduate and graduate students might involve practice negotiating disparate responses to one’s work. If student writers expected that readers might construct varying interpretations of particular stylistic choices, how might that change their revision process? Of course, the Conduit Metaphor’s ideology of transparent communication, as Evans (2003) shows, is assumed even by those who have been exposed to ideas about the pervasiveness of divergent meanings and miscommunication. The best ways to help writers expect and negotiate conflicting feedback certainly deserves further study.

In addition, one of Dan’s goals in having his students review their texts using a “revision checklist” was, arguably, to promote their linguistic flexibility. Indeed, language inspection
practices as described in Chapter 3 generally seek to promote enhanced sensitivity to the effects of language and a stronger ability to manipulate it. Joseph Williams’ work on style, a common text in writing classes, is an example of this—it often reads like a rule book and prescribes exercises that, he argues, make sentences inherently more clear. In what ways is the construct of linguistic flexibility dependent on the ideology of universal characteristics of good writing or of general or basic skills? How can linguistic flexibility be developed through situated style instruction? Such questions also warrant further study.

**Quasi-Shared Style Dispositions**

Dialogic and practice theories understand style acquisition apart from so-called “rules.” In dialogic theory, utterances are fundamentally situated in our life histories. What people speak and write comes not from decontextualized words in a dictionary and abstract sentences generated by grammar but from living, breathing utterances from actual speakers throughout history—our own histories and others.’ Given that individual encounters with styles pervade shared disciplinary styles, the latter could be described as not wholly but “quasi-shared” (Prior, 2001, p. 64).

Life experiences that are different but also quasi-shared lead to different but also related and routinized ways of communicating, interpreting, and interacting in the world, which can explain Ashley’s and Claudio’s continued style disagreements. Bourdieu (1977) defines habitus as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions” that structure representations and practices “without in any way being the product of obedience to rules,” assuming intentionality, or requiring mastery (p. 72). Hanks (1996) turns to Bourdieu to account for genres’ combination of recognizability and variability, arguing that as “a set of enduring dispositions to perceive the world and act upon it in certain ways,” genres “are among the best examples of habitus” (p. 246).
Styles, I suggest, might also be examples of habitus. If stylistic practices are dispositions shaped by individuals’ life experiences, then we can see how easy it is for stylistic interpretations to differ consistently by individual. On the other hand, as evidenced by individuals’ changes of mind, these dispositions may be less “durable” than practice theory might posit. We need to expect variation not only between but also within people over time.

Bourdieu sees habitus as embodied, and the occurrence of shared ideologies in metaphoric gestures may exemplify embodiment. Yet the gestures are not just metaphoric but also metonymic/synecdochic, in that the hand is an extension of the reader’s or writer’s mind. With such gestures, people are in essence performing stylistic effects and interpretations. Attention to the complexity of gestures can highlight the fact that, although stylistic representations may look and sound universal, they are also deeply embodied and personal.

Further Research

In addition to the research questions noted above on the development of situated style awareness of students and instructors and the linguistic flexibility of students, there are a number of ways in which a sociocultural approach to style, in theory and methodology, can be applied to additional groups of writers and locations.

When I describe my research, people often ask about differences I’ve noticed between broad disciplines, such as between the STEM fields and the humanities. Although Manisha and Laura both tried to fashion their styles in an article and program note after the style of the novel or the music they were describing, in general, the humanities writers valued a “clear,” “plain,” and “linear” style as much as did the ecology and psychology writers. Nonetheless, it would be valuable to investigate this further by recruiting more STEM writers. I initially reached out to
writers in math, mechanical engineering, geology, and urban planning, but I have not continued
data collection with those participants.

Second, it would be worth more deeply exploring the relationship between style and other
languages and dialects. Only a few focal primary participants grew up learning English as an
additional language (Dongxin, Jing Jing) or speaking a non-Anglophone variety of English
(Debojoy). Future research might seek to explore a number of possible ideologies about style
and other dialects and languages, such as that only “native speakers” have style, that styles
should or should not transfer across language varieties, or that a “non-native speaker” only
develops style after achieving grammatical correctness. This work might also investigate how,
say, different readers construct stylistic meanings in code-meshed texts or how digital
technologies (e.g., using Google to identify the more common expression based on comparing
numbers of hits) mediate participants’ understandings of style.

Third, given the increasingly multimodal nature of popular and academic communication,
from video abstracts to podcasts to TED talks to websites, it would be worth pursuing this
research with writers who compose such texts. A number of my focal participants blogged or
designed websites—Dan, Chris, Mikhail, Laura—or created posters for conferences—Corinne,
Mary, Ashley—but I did not focus on what happened to style when it moves to a non-print and
non-linguistic medium. Three digital composers, all professors in writing studies, were among

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6 Four of the non-focal primary participants also grew up learning English as an additional
language or speaking a non-Anglophone variety, and all participants likely had some competence
in other languages. Arguably, my own bias as a researcher contributed to the lack of data on style
in multilingual writing. When speaking with primary participants who were born and raised in
the U.S. or Canada and for whom English was a first language, I asked about other languages,
but I tended to not probe deeply to see if writing in other languages influenced their notions of
style. Now, thinking about the view that all people are to some extent multilingual, with ever-
shifting, partial repertoires (Blommaert, 2010), I wish I had done otherwise.
my initial interviewees, but I have not continued data collection with them. Data from such participants are even more relevant because references to the term “style” in the multimodal composition literature are few and far between. It may be that “design” has replaced style. Is this the case? If so, why? Alternately, in the long-standing dichotomy between style and substance, form and content, and medium and message, style may have become subsumed in discussions of affordances. What do we lose from this? How would multimodal composition pedagogy change if style were brought back as a keyword?

Fourth, given that styles are perceived through contrasts, encounters with other disciplines are particularly fruitful for refining these perceptions. Indeed, a number of participants worked on the borders between disciplines. For instance, Jing Jing received her PhD in history, taught a course in postcolonial theory and film (among others), and worked in an English and Film Studies Department (which would be evaluating her for tenure). Ashley received her PhD in entomology, but she was collaborating with Sarah, whose PhD was in agronomy and who then received an MA in landscape architecture. (In fact, Sarah’s lab was quite interdisciplinary, but I was not able to recruit lab members beyond Ashley and Andrew.) Had I asked the participants if they considered themselves interdisciplinary, I wonder how many people would have assented. Indeed, disciplines have always been heterogeneous spaces (see, e.g., Klein, 1990, 1993); the term “interdisciplinary” is arguably redundant.

It would, however, be worthwhile to examine the effects on notions of style of explicitly interdisciplinary encounters, such as by recruiting participants who contribute to interdisciplinary research teams like Sarah’s or institutes like UIUC’s Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, “an interdisciplinary research institute devoted to leading-edge research in the
physical sciences, computation, engineering, biology, behavior, cognition, and neuroscience.”

As another example, Thaiss (2001) suggests that WAC has neglected “so-called ‘interdisciplinary specialties’ that correspond to emergent professional descriptions in the workplace: e.g., law enforcement, recreation and leisure studies, career counseling” (p. 313). Other rich sites would be teaching and assessment settings in which writers from different backgrounds must come to consensus on elements like style, such as team-taught classes with instructors from different fields (e.g., Nowacek, 2009). And from their analysis of focus group data, reflective essays, and student questionnaires, Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) found that undergraduates with double majors, or those who had done significant work in two majors, “were more quickly able to describe differences and convergences; they could pinpoint how the methods of one field might be useful in meeting the exigencies of another” (p. 106). All of these sites would yield insight on the development of metapragmatic awareness of styles and style contrasts.

Fifth, a focus on co-authorship and style would be valuable. The metapragmatic awareness developed through co-authorship—identifying distinctions between styles, articulating influences of the other’s style, perceiving the two styles to be blended or a hybrid style to be created, or not being able to tell who wrote what—make this a fruitful site for scholarship. A few of the participants in my study are long-term coauthors—Dan and Chris, and Ashley and Claudio—and it would be interesting to follow them for a longer period of time and do additional text analysis to understand the influences, perceived and actual, on each other’s writing. In addition, it would be valuable to ask similar questions of groups (not just pairs) who write together, often working in research teams and labs.

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7 See http://beckman.illinois.edu/about.
Lastly, as mentioned in Chapter 2’s limitations section, the bulk of the data I collected consisted of interviews. Given this project’s emphasis on style as a negotiated activity instead of an artifact, it would be worthwhile to seek to capture style negotiations in situ by, for instance, following a lab group over time, observing, and, when possible, videorecording its meetings, presentations, and even hallway conversations.

Longitudinal videorecorded data would allow for analysis of gestures over time. Prior (2010) observes that few studies approach gesture dialogically by examining how gestures develop and “trac[ing] histories beyond the immediate interaction” (p. 227). He documents how a “box gesture” consistently reappeared at meetings of an art and design group that spanned 11 months and asks “whether this series of gestural acts attained a coherent, reusable sense and function in a history of situated use” (p. 228). It would be valuable to examine metapragmatic gestures in groups of collaborative writers. As a group refines its sense of the text’s style(s) over time, to what extent do gestures embodying styles change?

Researchers have also examined gestures around and about writing. Haas and Witte (2001), studying the production of a standards document, analyzed how city employees and consulting engineers not only possessed distinct types of embodied knowledge but also used different pointing gestures particular to their knowledge differences. Style gestures could receive similar work. To what extent do they reveal different understandings of collaborating writers? Alternately, like the term “direct,” to what extent do these gestures conceal different understandings?

Butler (2008) impels rhetoricians and compositionists to “recuperate stylistic theory and practice in composition because they offer untapped tools to writers and teachers.” He warns that “in abandoning this important arena of study, the field has lost theoretical knowledge about how
writers learn to deploy [these tools]” (pp. 13-14). Laying a foundation for future theory, research, and teaching on style, the sociocultural approach undertaken here rises to Butler’s challenge.
References


about Language and Society, 41-53.


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Howard, R. M., Beierle, H., Tallakson, P., Taggart, A., Fredrick, D., Noe, M. et al. (2002). What are styles and why are we saying such terrific things about them? In C. R. McDonald & R. L. McDonald (Eds.), *Teaching writing: Landmarks and horizons* (pp. 214-228).
Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.


# Appendix A: Participants and Data in Focal Groups

## ECOLOGY

| Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection | Primary Participant:  
| | • Ashley Bennett, postdoc in Department of Crop Sciences, UIUC  
| | Secondary Participants:  
| | • Claudio Gratton, Ashley’s PhD advisor and Associate Professor of Entomology, U of Wisconsin-Madison  
| | • Sarah Taylor Lovell, Ashley’s postdoc advisor and Assistant Professor of Crop Sciences, UIUC  
| Writing Projects Shared by Ashley (bold: subject of discussion during interviews) | 1. Article co-authored with Claudio, published in *Landscape and Urban Planning* (draft with Claudio’s comments, partial draft with feedback from Sarah, revised version sent to journal, reviewer comments, revision and cover letter to editors, published version)  
| | 2. Article co-authored with Claudio, under review at *Ecological Applications* (draft with Claudio’s comments, revisions sent to journal, reviewer comments [Note: DBI had occurred before receiving reviewer comments])  
| | 3. IPM Minigrant Proposal co-authored with Sarah (3 drafts, each with Sarah’s comments; final version)  
| | 4. In-progress partial draft of article co-authored with Sarah (one short draft with Sarah’s comments)  
| Interview Data (Total: 5 hours 6 minutes) | Literacy history interview with Ashley, in-person video, 63 minutes, 12/19/11  
| | Follow-up interview #1 with Ashley, in-person video, 82 minutes, 4/2/12  
| | Follow-up interview #2 with Ashley, in-person audio, 75 minutes, 5/9/12  
| | Interview with Claudio, Skype video, 53 minutes, 4/6/12  
| | Interview with Sarah, in-person audio, 33 minutes, 4/3/12  
| Other Data Shared or Collected | Collected by Andrea  
| | Field notes from informal conversations with Ashley  
| | Audiorecording of one of Sarah’s lab meetings, 35 minutes  
| | PDF of Ashley’s dissertation  
| | Shared by Ashley  
| | Email she received containing writing resources from Dan Simons  
| | Shared by Claudio  
| | Claudio’s writing guide  
| | Article on “pitch” in ecological writing  
| | Masterful article by his advisor  
| | Co-authored article  

## FILM STUDIES

| Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection | Primary Participant:  
| | • Jing Jing Chang, Assistant Professor of English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier U  
| | Secondary Participant:  
| | • Adam (pseudonym), PhD student in Jing Jing’s graduate seminar, Wilfrid Laurier U  

250
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Projects Shared by Jing Jing</th>
<th>Adam’s paper with her comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(bold: subject of discussion during follow-up interview)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Data</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interview with Jing Jing, Skype video, 80 minutes, 9/12/13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Total: 2 hours 13 minutes)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interview with Adam, Skype audio, 53 minutes, 6/28/12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Data Shared or Collected</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shared by Jing Jing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>syllabus from her graduate course, “Identity Politics in Film”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>two published book reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>five UIUC course papers/response papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>writing sample for PhD program admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Shared by Adam</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adam shared writing for “Identity Politics in Film” course taught by Jing Jing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• two film analyses with Jing Jing’s comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• paper proposal with Jing Jing’s comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• final paper without Jing Jing’s comments</td>
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</table>

**HISTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Participant:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Dongxin Zou</strong>, PhD student in history, UIUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Participant:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Jing Jing Chang</strong>, Dongxin’s friend, fellow graduate student, and mentor while at UIUC; currently Assistant Professor of English and Film Studies at Wilfrid Laurier U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Projects Shared by Dongxin</th>
<th>1. First-year paper (draft with comments from Jing Jing; final version)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(bold: subject of discussion during follow-up interview)</strong></td>
<td>2. Statements of purpose for PhD programs (three drafts, two with comments from Jing Jing and proofreader/friend)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. SSRC proposal (three drafts, two with advisor’s comments)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Course paper (draft with proofreader-friend’s comments, final version—received after discourse-based interview)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Data</th>
<th>Literacy history interview with Dongxin, in-person audio, 73 minutes, 4/11/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Total: 4 hours 10 minutes)</strong></td>
<td>Follow-up interview with Dongxin, in-person audio, 77 minutes, 5/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview with Jing Jing, Skype video, 100 minutes, 5/22/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Other Texts Shared or Collected | N/A |

**LITERARY & FILM STUDIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Participant:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Debojoy Chanda</strong>, PhD student in English, UIUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Participants:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Robert (“Bob”) Markley</strong>, Debojoy’s instructor in English graduate seminar on posthumanism and Professor of English at UIUC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Writing Projects Shared by Debojoy (bold: subject of discussion during follow-up interview) | 1. Writing sample that got him admission to UIUC  
2. Course paper on Eliot’s *Romola* for his first seminar course (early draft and final draft, sans professor’s comments)  
3. Course paper on *The Birds* for posthumanism seminar (final version with professor’s comments)  
4. Conference abstract on posthumanism (version with professor’s comments; final printed version)  
5. Neuroscience course (7 reading responses with professor’s comments; proposal with professor’s comments; final paper with professor’s comments)  
6. Psychoanalysis course (book review; explication)  
7. Independent study with advisor (book review; seminar paper) |
|---|---|
| Interview Data (Total: 9 hours 2 minutes) | Literacy history interview with Debojoy, in-person audio, 100 minutes, 4/21/12  
Follow-up interview with Debojoy, in-person audio/video, 232 minutes, 9/1/13 & 9/7/13  
Interview with Bob, in-person video, 56 minutes, 10/1/13  
Interview with Anustup, in-person audio, 78 minutes, 9/18/13  
Interview with Manisha, in-person audio, 52 minutes, 9/16/13  
Follow-up interview with Manisha, in-person audio, 24 minutes, 2/19/14 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Texts Shared or Collected</th>
<th>Articles by Spivak and YouTube videos featuring her</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection | **Primary Participant:**  
• **Laura Usiskin**, doctoral candidate in music, Yale University; cello fellow, Montgomery Symphony Orchestra; director, Montgomery Music Project, Montgomery, Alabama  
**Secondary Participant:**  
• **Paul Hawkshaw**, Laura’s supervisor and director of the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival; Professor, Yale School of Music |
| Writing Projects Shared by Laura (bold: subject of discussion during follow-up interview) | 1. Doctoral thesis (draft with advisor comments; final version)  
2. Selection of 4 program notes in different styles  
3. Program notes for the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival  
• 2010 festival: five sets of program notes + Schumann article (including draft with Andrea’s and Jonathan’s comments), submitted version and published version of each  
• 2011 festival: 6 sets of program notes, submitted versions and published version of each)  
4. Article on her nonprofit, the Montgomery Music Project |
| Interview Data | Literacy history interview with Laura, in-person video, 51 minutes, 12/28/11 |
| (Total: 2 hours 33 minutes) | Follow-up interview with Laura, Skype video, 46 minutes, 9/10/13  
Interview with Paul, telephone, 56 minutes, 10/7/13 |
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Texts Shared or Collected</td>
<td>Laura’s email to Paul Hawkshaw using adverbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PSYCHOLOGY

**Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection**

**Primary Participant:**
- **Dan Simons,** Professor, Department of Psychology and Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, UIUC

**Secondary Participant:**
- **Christopher Chabris,** Dan’s coauthor and Associate Professor of Psychology, Union College

**Writing Projects Shared by Dan (bold: subject of discussion during follow-up interview)**

1. Co-authored op-ed piece with Christopher (five drafts + final version edited by *Wall Street Journal* editor)

2. Co-authored scholarly article with Christopher (one draft + final version)

**Interview Data**

(Total: 2 hours 44 minutes)

- Literacy history interview with Dan, in-person audio, 56 minutes, 10/18/12
- Follow-up interview with Dan, in-person audio, 48 minutes, 3/28/13
- Interview with Christopher, Skype video, 60 minutes, 4/24/13

**Other Texts Shared or Collected (bold: subject of discussion during follow-up interview)**

Collected by Andrea
- Field notes from initial conversation
- Copy of *The Invisible Gorilla,* by Dan and Chris
- Dan’s writing guide and responses on Google Plus
- **Dan’s blog entry on the Mechanical Turk research**
- Chris’s blog entries on Jonah Leher and popular science writing/ethics

Shared by Dan
- Syllabi for three-semester honors seminar

### PSYCHOLOGY

**Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection**

**Primary Participant:**
- **Mary** (pseudonym), senior psychology major, UIUC

**Secondary Participants:**
- **Dan Simons,** Mary’s professor in three-semester thesis-writing course and Professor of Psychology, UIUC
- **Mikhail Lyubansky,** Mary’s thesis advisor and lecturer in Psychology, UIUC

**Writing Projects Shared by Mary (Many of these texts were discussed during follow-up interview)**

1. Spring 2012 writing (9 drafts of the introduction/literature review, 6 of which had comments from Dan, the TA, Mikhail, or a peer)

2. Fall 2012 writing (2 drafts of the intro/methods, with comments by a peer and Dan/the TA)

3. Spring 2012 writing (7 drafts of the intro/methods and/or complete thesis, four of which had comments from Dan/the TA and Mikhail; 5 abstract drafts, two of which had comments from Dan and Mikhail)

**Interview Data**

- Literacy history interview with Mary, in-person video, 51 minutes, 10/31/12
- Follow-up interview with Mary, in-person video, 53 minutes, 3/25/13

253
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Total: 2 hours 19 minutes)</th>
<th>Interview with Mikhail, in-person audio, 35 minutes, 4/1/13  [Mary’s writing was discussed with Dan during Dan’s own follow-up interview, listed above]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Other Texts Shared or Collected | Shared by Mary  A draft of her personal statement, which I commented on  

Collected by Andrea  Photograph of poster from Undergraduate Research Conference |

**PSYCHOLOGY**

| Participants’ Relationships and Occupations at Time of Data Collection | **Primary Participant:**  
- Corinne (preferred just her first name be used), senior psychology major  
**Secondary Participants:**  
- Dan Simons, Mary’s professor in three-semester thesis-writing course and Professor of Psychology, UIUC  
- Harold (pseudonym), Corinne’s thesis advisor and psychology professor, UIUC |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Writing Projects Shared by Corinne  (Many of these texts were discussed during follow-up interviews) | 1. Spring 2012 writing (two drafts of literature review with Dan’s comments, final version)  
2. Fall 2012 writing (5 drafts of introduction with comments by Harold, Dan, and the TA; 5 drafts of outlines, two of which had Harold’s comments)  
3. Spring 2013 writing (4 drafts of introduction, two of which had comments by Dan and Harold; 9 drafts of the abstract, three of which had comments by Dan and Harold comments; two more outline drafts with Harold’s comments; 5 results section drafts, 3 of which had Harold’s comments; 6 drafts of the discussion, five of which had comments from Dan, Harold, the TA, and a graduate student in Harold’s lab; 6 drafts of the full thesis, 3 of which had comments from Dan/the TA, Harold, and the graduate student)  
4. Summer 2013 writing (2 drafts of a manuscript, one of which had Harold’s comments) |
| Interview Data  (Total: 4 hours 32 minutes) | Literacy history interview with Corinne, in-person audio, 47 minutes, 11/2/12  
Check-in meeting #1 with Corinne, in-person audio, 10 minutes, 11/7/12  
Check-in meeting #2 with Corinne, in-person audio, 7 minutes, 11/14/12  
Check-in meeting #3 with Corinne, in-person audio, 13 minutes, 11/28/12  
Follow-up interview #1 with Corinne, in-person audio, 62 minutes, 2/5/13  
Follow-up interview #2 with Corinne, in-person audio, 42 minutes, 3/1/13  
Follow-up interview #3 with Corinne, Skype video, 64 minutes, 6/10/13  
Interview with Harold, telephone, 17 minutes, 6/26/13  
[Corinne’s writing was discussed with Dan during Dan’s own follow-up interview, listed above] |
| Other Texts Shared or Collected | Shared by Corinne  Comparison chart of Dan’s and Harold’s preferences  
Department of Psychology thesis guidelines  

Collected by Andrea  Photograph of poster for Undergraduate Research Conference |
Appendix B
General Consent Forms for Primary and Secondary Participants

Informed Consent for
Styling Academic Identities: Case Studies of Advanced Writers

Purpose of the study
You are invited to participate in a study that I (Andrea Olinger, a Ph.D. student in the Department of English) am conducting. This research is part of my dissertation project, directed by Dr. Paul Prior, the Responsible Project Investigator. I am conducting research to develop case studies of what it means to learn and employ particular styles of writing in academic disciplines. I am especially interested in getting detailed stories and images of how writing styles are learned, taught, practiced, evaluated, and edited in academic writing and publishing. The goal of this research is to enrich our understanding of how writing styles are learned and of the role of style in academic writing.

What the study involves
I will ask you to participate in one or more interviews (typically 45-90 minutes each) about the kinds of writing you do, how you collaborate with others on your writing, and your beliefs about and experiences with style. I will also ask you to provide copies of some of the texts you are working on and to talk through some of your stylistic choices with me. We will negotiate if and how interviews are recorded (e.g., audio, video) and documented (e.g., photographs), how many interviews will be involved, and what (if any) texts you provide.

I may also ask you to consider participating in additional research activities, specifically:
- I may ask you if it’s possible to observe you in, and/or possibly photograph or audio-or video-record, selected other activities (e.g., attending courses, lab meetings). We would decide together on the specific activities to study.
- I may ask you if I can contact other people you interact with around writing, such as advisers or editors. My contacting anyone would depend on your consent. (I have a separate permission form for that.)
- I may invite you to participate in the project after the interviews have been completed by giving me feedback on my analysis of the interview data.

Publication and Identifiability
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Use of my name:
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________________________  _______________________
(signature)               (date)

________________________
(print name)

AUG 20 2014

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I may also ask you to consider participating in additional research activities, specifically:
- I may ask you if it’s possible to observe you in, and/or possibly photograph or audio- or video-record, selected other activities (e.g., meetings). We will decide together on the specific activities to study.
- I may ask you if I can contact other people you interact with around style and language issues, such as proofreaders. My contacting anyone would depend on your consent. (I have a separate permission form for that.)
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(date)

(signature)

(print name)

AUG 20 2014

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Informed Consent for

Styling Academic Identities: Case Studies of Advanced Writers

Purpose of the study
You are invited to participate in a study that I (Andrea Olinger, a Ph.D. student in the Department of English) am conducting. This research is part of my dissertation project, directed by Dr. Paul Prior, the Responsible Project Investigator. I am conducting research to develop case studies of what it means to learn and employ particular styles of writing in academic disciplines. I am especially interested in getting detailed stories and images of how writing styles are learned, taught, practiced, evaluated, and edited in academic writing and publishing.

You have been identified as someone who responds to and/or writes with another participant in this research, and that participant has given me consent to contact you and discuss your involvement with him or her. The goal of this research is to enrich our understanding of how writing styles are learned and of the role of style in academic writing.

What the study involves
I will ask you to participate in one or more interviews (typically 45-90 minutes each) about how you work with your collaborating writer on his/her style and language choices. We will negotiate if and how interviews are recorded (e.g., audio, video) and documented (e.g., photographs), how many interviews will be involved, and what (if any) texts you provide.

I may also ask you to consider participating in additional research activities, specifically:
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(print name)   

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

AUG 20 2014

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You have been identified as someone who mentors another participant in this research and/or edits his or her work, and that participant has given me consent to contact you and discuss your involvement with him or her. The goal of this research is to enrich our understanding of how writing styles are learned and of the role of style in academic writing.

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_____________________________  ________________________________
(signature)  (date)

_____________________________
(print name)

AUG 20 2014

CONSENT FORM FOR SECONDARY PARTICIPANTS: MENTORS AND EDITORS

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Appendix C
Release for the Recording of an Event

Styling Academic Identities: Case Studies of Advanced Writers

As part of the research I agreed to participate in, I am agreeing to allow audio-recording (Yes No) and/or video-recording (Yes No) and/or photographing (Yes No) to be used for this research interview or observation.

If you checked yes in any case above, then this recording was made on (date) at (location) . It is an interaction where you were (brief description of interaction). 

Specifically, I agree

- that my verbal comments may be played, quoted, or paraphrased in publications or presentations (Yes No).
- that the videotaped record may be excerpted as still photographs in publications or presentations (Yes No) and may be selectively replayed in electronic publications or presentations (Yes No).
- that any photographs permitted may be described (Yes No) or presented (Yes No) in publications or presentations.
- that I may be identified by my real name in relation to any of the data on this tape (Yes No).

__________________________________________ (signature) __________________________ (date)

__________________________________________ (print name)

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Andrea Olinger (847-732-0715, olinger3@illinois.edu), or Dr. Paul Prior (217-333-3251; pprior@illinois.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (528 E. Green Street, suite 203, 217-333-2670; irb@illinois.edu).

APPROVED
AUG 21 2013
UIUC INST REVIEW BOARD
Appendix D
Examples of Interview Questions

Example of Initial Literacy History Interview Questions for Primary Participant (Debojoy)

Personal History
- What is your language history— in what order did you learn which languages?
- Do you do academic writing or speaking any of those languages?

College
- When did you realize you wanted to study literature?
- Where did you go to college?
- How much writing was assigned?
- Major influences on your academic writing or training in writing for literature?
  - Particular professors, books, explicit courses in which writing was taught?
  - Was “style” a relevant concept for you back then?
  - “impersonal writing”— talk about this concept in your life as an academic
  - “use of theory”— back then?
- Did you write a thesis? What was that experience like?

UIUC
- How did you decide to go to graduate school?
- How did you choose UIUC?
- Major influences on your academic or discipline-specific writing here?
  - Particular professors, books, courses, friends?
  - Has “style” been a relevant concept for you these past three years?
  - Has it been explicitly taught?
  - How have you seen your writing change from your first year to now? Due to what influences?
  - “impersonal writing”— talk about this concept in your life as an academic
  - “use of theory”— back then?

Style
- Would you say you write in a particular style in literature?
- How would you describe it/them?
- Would you say there’s something individually distinctive about your style/s?
- Are there any writers— academic or nonacademic— you try to emulate?
- When in the writing process do you think about style?

World Englishes
- English in India is a bit different from American English— definitely in accent and some word choices;
  - how would you describe writing— are there any lexical, linguistic, textual/formatting, rhetorical, stylistic etc. differences?
  - What about in academic writing?
• What is your stance toward these differences? Does it feature into your unique style? Do you integrate them, or scrub them out? (Some scholars in writing studies are calling for the “meshing” of multiple varieties of English....)

• How have readers of your writing responded— professors, other grad students? How demanding are people like advisors of a certain native American English?

• As a TA, how demanding are you of native-like English of your students?

Rhetoric and Lit Courses
• Besides Rhet 105, what courses have you TA’d for?
• Do you teach or enforce anything related to “style” in those courses?
• How would you describe undergraduate’s style?
• Do you think your students respond to you differently because you’re from India?
  o Grad ss
  o Profs
• I remember meeting you your first year and hearing that you hadn’t studied in the US before. What was your first year like teaching (mostly US) students when you had never studied in the US?

Research Interests/Current Writing Projects
• What are your research interests?
• What kind of writing projects have you been working on most recently? (course papers, special fields proposal?)
• Have you gotten/will you be getting any kind of feedback? (e.g., course paper)

NEXT STEPS
• Upcoming writing projects I could follow (with drafts) OR past writing projects I could follow (with drafts) (e.g., those early course papers)
• Secondary participants: people you interact with around writing? (e.g., keep in touch with any college profs?)
• Summer schedule for int #2
• Rhet 105 brainstorming?
• Other primary p’s— Indian grad students; students of lit

Example of Follow-Up Text- and Discourse-Based Interview Questions for Primary Participant (Laura)

DMA Thesis (April 2009)
• Your advisor’s final feedback on your thesis— you said it still included a caveat about the style. Do you have those comments? Were they written or mailed to you?
• First page of DBI document— sample page from advisor’s notes.
  o It’s impossible to glean what you said, that he wasn’t happy w your writing. He seems to give comments on musical analysis as well as circle spelling/grammar errors and circle words he doesn’t like or think are appropriate. The “big picture” re global comments is missing. How did he deliver that? in person?
Did he tend to give comments to you before you met, or did he hand them to you in a meeting? It looked like you met with him and asked questions where you couldn’t make out his handwriting— was that accurate? Was that how you generally worked?

- **DBI Questions (pp2-7 of PDF)**

1. (p10 of final draft) compositional techniques permeate (WIFD) v tonal and rhythmic language nearly saturate (ALT). (Michael circled “language” and “ly saturate”)
2. (p14 of final) variation (WIFD) v variant (ALT) (Michael circled “variant”)
3. (p16 of final) It is less accurate to call…; the two motives are rather inextricably linked (WIFD) v It is thus not accurate to call…; the two motives are inextricably linked” (Michael put a bracket and wrote “not entirely”)
4. (p20 of final) decorative scales (WIFD) v rising scales (ALT) (Michael circled “rising scales” and wrote “ornamental or decorative”)
5. (p23 of final) leading to a climax at measures 1043-1059 (WIFD) v leading to a climax of a sea of harmonics at … (ALT) (Michael circled “sea” and put a question mark)
6. (p41 of final) lush, expressive departure from the blurred texture (WIFD) v lush, expressive retreat from the blurred texture (ALT) (Michael circled “retreat” and put a question mark, and he wrote “contradictory response”— why?)

**Program notes**

- I interviewed you in December 2011 (the day you got engaged)— you had written two sets of PNs for Norfolk. You then wrote a third set. How much/heavily did Paul edit?
- Have you written any more for them?
- Have you written any more for other groups?
- How do you go about writing PNs? (if time)

**First program note (Mozart String Quartet (p8 of PDF)— same piece as Norfolk ‘11**

- Is it common for an author to reuse notes?
- What was the first PN for (audience)? Any difference between that and the Norfolk audiences?
- **TBI Qs (p8 of PDF)**
  o What makes it “nice and elegant”?
  o What would “nothing stringent/controversial”— what would this look like?
  o “A little quirky”— where are those places?
- **DBI Q: p 9 of PDF:** “..has a remarkable opening motive…that alters forte and piano dynamics with each note” (first PN) v “gives an unusual theme….that alters loud and oft dynamics with each note” (Norfolk ’11 – 6)

**Takemitsu (p10 of PDF)**

- Audience?
- You had said this one has 3-D qualities— tries ? anything besides the last sentence?
  o Sighs, ripples, rocks back and forth? Elastic, ever changing manner (third para)?

**Alex Ross (p11 of PDF)— The Brahms Klavierstucke**
Particular sentences you’d point out? (In last interview, you’d said he was great with descriptive words and metaphors. Where are they in your PN?)

Norfolk 2010: DBI Qs
1. First two sentences— does she think the revision is choppier?
2. For himself (WIFD) v to be played by himself (ALT)
3. Each of the first movements is scored for… (WIFD) v The instrumentation is such that each of the… (ALT)
4. One of the few with a glimmer of hope (WIFD) v one of the few movements of the cycle offering hope (ALT)
5. Knocking in the bass (WIFD) v knocking in the low register (ALT)
6. Boccherini had composed (WIFD) v had catalogued (ALT)
7. …provided the impetus for the establishment of an entirely new genre (WIFD) v significantly contributed to the development of the genre (ALT)
8. The finale both stands (WIFD) v The last movement both stands (ALT)
9. The principal subject (WIFD) v the opening theme (ALT)
10. It is a majestic close to a magnificent work (WIFD) v It is a fittingly majestic close… (ALT)

Example of Interview Questions for Secondary Participant (Jing Jing)

Relationship with Dongxin
• How did you meet Dongxin?
• When and how did you start giving her feedback?
• Who offered?
• Do you still give her feedback?
• Did she ever give you feedback or reciprocate in another way?
• How do you think your experience in graduate school differed from hers? Was similar to hers?
• How do you think your experience with writing in grad school differed from hers? Was similar to hers?

Your experiences with historical writing
• What is your academic history? (e.g., Where did you get your BA? MA? Did your study in the US before your PhD?)
• BA, MA, PhD— what period was most formative for you in terms of improving your academic writing?
• How would you say you developed as an academic writer?
  o Courses
  o Books
  o mentoring from people (e.g. did you have a “Jing Jing”?)
  o academic or nonacademic writers you try to emulate?
• What were your advisors’ approaches to giving feedback? Did they rewrite sentences, or were they more hands off?
• Are there certain things you will always remember from these different advisors? (e.g., my hs English teacher— never put However…; boyfriend, “declare”)
Your approaches to feedback

• What was your approach to giving feedback on Dongxin’s writing? Do a lot of rewriting? Or not?
• What do you think she struggled with most at the beginning?
• She mentioned long sentences with subject separated from object, confusing pronouns...
• What did she improve on?
• How would you describe her style?

English v History and Style

• If someone asked you to define “style” of historical writing, what would you say?
• How you describe your advisors’ style?
• How would someone (e.g., your advisor) describe your style?
• Have you gotten comments about your style from others recently? (e.g. journal editors)
• You’re in an English Dept now, right?
  o Are you advising students?
  o What courses do you teach?
  o Have you noticed any differences in style?
  o What kinds of feedback do you give those students on their writing?
  o Similar to or different from the feedback you give Dongxin?
• How demanding have your advisors been of a certain level of native-like English?
• How demanding are you of a certain level of native-like English?

Text-Based Interview Questions

Statement of Purpose

• What do the different colors mean?

First-Year Paper (for each of Jing Jing’s comment bubbles, ask:

• Why did you suggest this here?
• Where did you pick this up?
• Is this something you tell your advisees now?
Appendix E
Release for a One-Time Participant

Styling Academic Identities: Case Studies of Advanced Writers

Today, during audio- and/or videorecording for a research project, you will be (or were) included in a segment of the recorded interaction. The researcher is seeking your permission to use that segment for research analysis and presentations.

Purpose of this research
I (Andrea Olinger, a PhD student in the Department of English) am conducting a study to learn more about how writers learn how to write in particular academic writing styles. This research is part of my dissertation project, directed by Dr. Paul Prior, the Responsible Project Investigator.

What you are agreeing to do
If you sign this release, you are agreeing to allow the following audio and/or videorecordings of you to be used in this project. This recording was made on (give date)____________________, at (give location)____________________. It is an interaction where you and the participant(s) of the study were (give brief description of interaction)____________________.

Participation is voluntary
Your agreement to have these recordings included in this study is completely voluntary.

How the results of this research will be used
The results of this research may be published in conference presentations, a dissertation, and print or electronic academic publications. Although a different name may be used for you, the researcher may quote from or describe the recording in presentations, use still images from videorecordings, or selectively play sections in presentations or electronic publications. Thus, even with a different name, you might be recognized by someone reading or hearing a report of the research.

The researcher will do several things to safeguard your identity during the analysis and presentation of this research, including using a pseudonym for you, at your request and manipulating still images or video so your face is not recognizable. The recorded tape will not be used for any purposes other than those of this research and will not be shared with others for other purposes.

Benefits for you
You will not receive any payment for your time or contribution. It is possible that the information obtained through this study will be helpful to the primary participant in this research.
Consent to participate

I have read the above information about this project. I have also had the opportunity to talk to Andrea Olinger about this study and to have her answer any questions about how the tapes will be used.

I am at least 18 years old and am volunteering to participate at one of three levels checked below. I have received a copy of this form for my own records.

☐ I consent to let the audio- and/or videorecording of me be used fully as outlined above. I would like to be identified by my real name in relation to any of the data collected (Yes ___ or No—please use a pseudonym__). Also, I would like my face in videorecordings to be unaltered by a video-editing program. (Yes, you can show images of my face___ or No, please alter images of my face__).

☐ I consent to let the recording be used in analysis, but I do not want transcripts or videorecorded segments of me to be used in any research reports. Other segments on the tape can be used as long as my words and face do not appear.

☐ Now that I understand the research project, I do not want the recording with me on it to be used for research. Erase the segments where I was included.

_________________________          __________________________
Signature of participant              Date

_________________________
Printed name of participant

_________________________          __________________________
Signature of witness              Date

_________________________
Printed name of witness

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Andrea Olinger (847-732-0715, olinger3@illinois.edu), or Dr. Paul Prior (217-333-3251; pprior@illinois.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (528 E. Green Street, suite 203, 217-333-2670; irb@illinois.edu).
Appendix F
Permission to Contact a Secondary Participant

Permission To Contact Someone You Work With On Writing
Styling Academic Identities: Case Studies of Advanced Writers

Note: Please fill out one form per person. You can rescind your permission at any time.

I, (print name) ________________________________, give Andrea Olinger permission to contact the following person, (print name) ________________________________, to see if she/he might be willing to be interviewed. The person has the following relationship to me (e.g., adviser, proofreader, journal editor): ________________________________. If the person agrees to be interviewed, I give permission to Andrea to discuss any relevant texts (Yes_____ No______) or other data such as interviews or observations (Yes_____ No______). If there are specific topics from my interviews with Andrea that I do not want her to introduce, I will tell her. Andrea has my permission to share this form with the person.

__________________________________________  (signature)
__________________________________________  (date)

__________________________________________  (print name)

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Appendix G
Transcription Conventions

In the system adapted from Hengst (2001; see also, e.g., Hengst, 2010), the transcript resembles a musical score, with simultaneous utterances placed on top of each other. (Spaces between words or letters may be added in order to more accurately represent the overlap; see, e.g., Figure 3.1, line 7.) Gestures and other embodied actions are noted with one or more asterisks (*) and described at the bottom of the line. In addition, the following transcription conventions are adapted from conversation analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C: spot on= A: =Wow</td>
<td>Equals signs indicate the utterances follow one another without a pause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[(uncertain, wobbly voice)] [I think I'm doing it, and then I realize I don't-]</td>
<td>In the less-detailed transcript excerpts, italicized text within double parentheses describes gestures, and brackets indicate where the gestures overlap with the talk. (In the more detailed transcripts, gestures are noted with an asterisk and described below the lines.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(draw the right idea) (it’s so)/(I’m such a)</td>
<td>Single parentheses indicate the transcriber’s best guess at what was said. Sometimes two versions are proposed, with a slash between each set of parentheses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...]</td>
<td>In the less-detailed transcript excerpts, bracketed ellipses indicates that utterances were not transcribed. (In the more detailed transcripts, talk and interaction are not ellipted.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>Numbers in parentheses indicate the duration of a pause in seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>A period within parentheses indicates a micropause, about one-tenth of a second.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°This is my writing°</td>
<td>Degree signs around an utterance indicate that it was spoken at a lower volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Using IPM strategies”</td>
<td>Text within quotation marks is read aloud from a written text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;word&lt;</td>
<td>Greater-than and less-than signs around an utterance indicate that the utterance was rushed compared to the surrounding talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wor-</td>
<td>A hyphen indicates cut-off speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wo:rd</td>
<td>One or more colons indicate a sound stretch—the more colons, the more prolonged the sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word?</td>
<td>A question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word.</td>
<td>A period indicates falling intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word,</td>
<td>A comma indicates rising-falling (“continuing”) intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word</td>
<td>Underlining indicates a stressed syllable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hah, heh, hih</td>
<td>Hah, heh, and hih mark laughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wor(h)d</td>
<td>H’s within parentheses mark utterances infiltrated by laughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.hh</td>
<td>A period plus one or more h’s indicate that the speaker has inhaled. The more h’s, the louder and longer the in-breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh</td>
<td>One or more h’s indicate that the speaker has exhaled. The more h’s, the louder and longer the out-breath.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>