TEACHING OUTRÉ LITERATURE RHETORICALLY
IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

by

Manuel Matthew Hinojosa

_____

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN RHETORIC, COMPOSITION,
AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2 0 0 5

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation

prepared by Manuel Matthew Hinojosa entitled Teaching Outré Literature Rhetorically in

First-Year Composition and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation

requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____ Date: <u>May 3, 2005</u>
Thomas P. Miller

_____ Date: <u>May 3, 2005</u>
Theresa Enos

_____ Date: <u>May 3, 2005</u>
Edward M. White

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's
submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and
recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

_____ Date: <u>May 3, 2005</u>
Dissertation Director: Thomas P. Miller

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Manuel Matthew Hinojosa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledging all of the people in my life who contributed to my thinking about, writing, and defending this dissertation would take more space than I have. Instead, here are but a few people.

I thank my parents, Manuel and Shirley Hinojosa, who encouraged my abilities and supported me through twelve years of higher education.

I also acknowledge the friends who inspired me to achieve all that I could. In particular, I salute Gryffindors Anna Marie Amezquita and Yasmin Levinson for helping me become the reader, thinker, and writer that I am today.

Thank you to the Sunnydale High teachers who motivated me to keep learning: Jane Morel, Barbara Coakley, Arthur DeForest, Tim Myers, and Anne Crane.

I thank my proofreader, Michael Dunk, who agreed to take on the tedious task of untangling the grammatical knots that I often create. Any remaining errors are my burden, not his. May the Force always be with you, Master Dunk.

Finally, a warm thank you to my committee—Theresa Enos, Ed White, and Tom Miller—who agreed to work with this outré topic. Their comments, questions, patience, and guidance helped me finish this project on time.

Thank you all.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my ancestors who left Spain and Germany centuries ago for a better life in the new world. When they arrived they farmed land, tamed horses, picked cotton, laid bricks, rolled steel, washed dishes, and kept house. Their hard work and determination made it possible for me to achieve my dream of intellectual pursuit in higher education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS — *Continued*

TABLE OF CONTENTS — *Continued*

ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that using rhetorical approaches to outré literature gleaned from popular culture within the context of first-year composition helps students become critical readers, thinkers, and writers. I suggest that if instructors privilege texts their students are likely to be familiar with in English 101, then they can more readily introduce unfamiliar concepts like rhetorical analysis; by the time students arrive in English 102, they can apply the now familiar concept of rhetorical analysis to new texts such as academic discourse. Thus, in designing this curriculum I draw on the Harry Potter novels, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *Star Wars* graphic novels to present nine rhetorical strategies that can be used not only for literary texts such as these, but can also be transferred to a variety of novel situations students are likely to encounter in college and in the everyday world. In the end, the dissertation makes arguments not only for using literature to teach composition, but also for using rhetorical analysis as a means to teach reading, thinking, and writing, and also for keeping first-year composition as a required part of the curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

I begin with Lloyd Bitzer's ideas about the role of discourse in rhetorical situations because this dissertation is discourse within a rhetorical situation. Bitzer notes that "discourse indicates the presence of a rhetorical situation" but that discourse does not give the situation existence (2). In other words, a rhetorical situation can exist without the presence of discourse because "it is the situation which calls the discourse into existence" (2). He further elaborates on the role of discourse this way: "a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance" (4). The situation and the discourse are brought together by what he calls an exigence, "an imperfection marked by urgency" (6) or an "urgent and well-posed problem" (Consigny 176). My "well-posed problem" follows.

But if I am being a bit playful and naughty, I might argue that the "specific condition" that invites the utterance of this dissertation is simply a requirement by the University's graduate college. I am writing this piece of discourse because I have to in order to get my doctorate. The rhetorical situation, then, is artificial because it satisfies only a check on a long list of activities a graduate student must accomplish to be judged worthy for inclusion into a professional community. The dissertation is only a rite of passage.

However, if I look beyond the scope of University requirements, this dissertation responds to very real and specific issues within college composition. It is born out of experience in the classroom, has an audience of writing instructors in mind, and is situated in different contexts. It not only speaks to what I know at the present moment,

but it also speaks to what I hope to do in the future. The overall message reverberates in the present as well as for the future. People can consult this dissertation for ideas about how to teach reading, writing, and thinking rhetorically in first-year composition.

The remainder of the introduction is divided into two sections. In the first section, I address the rhetorical situation of the dissertation by examining its exigence, purposes, audience, and contexts or situatedness. In the second section, I discuss the dissertation chapter by chapter, paying special attention to the rhetorical strategies I use in each chapter as a way to foster reading, thinking, and writing about outré literature.

Rhetorical Situation of the Dissertation

I want to spend a few moments discussing the exigence that calls this dissertation into being. Bitzer argues that an exigence or pressing problem is required to bring discourse into a rhetorical situation—something must provoke a response. The "something" here is how first-year college composition should be taught. I will not argue that current methods are inadequate (although I believe some are), nor will I call for a universal purpose for the course. Instead, I want to offer another way to teach composition using what I call outré literature. Although I define *outré* in chapter one, for now let it mean unusual or eccentric. I see first-year composition not as an end in and of itself but rather as a place for students to learn an interrelated set of skills (reading, thinking, and writing) that will help them through other textual situations in college and in their own lives.

The dissertation has several purposes. One, it outlines rhetorical models for

teaching literary texts in first-year composition. The assumption is that literary texts can be a useful way to teach reading, thinking, and writing—skills embedded within a first-year writing curriculum. Two, it navigates the line between theory and practice by explaining how to analyze a text and by actually analyzing three case studies. Three, it examines the ways in which students are asked to learn about texts by proposing they adopt a rhetorical perspective. Because students will read a variety of texts in college, first-year composition is useful when it teaches students ways to read that can be applicable to texts within the larger university curriculum. This becomes possible when first-year composition presents a rhetorical framework of reading, thinking, and writing strategies. Four, it seeks to make first-year composition and its pedagogy rhetorical entities. There is always a risk that something in the course does not quite fit. For example, the purpose of the course clashes with its audience, or the chosen textbooks conflict with the goals. I hope to smooth out any ripples rather than create tsunamis so that first-year composition remains competitive in a budget-conscious era.

The most practical audience for this dissertation is first-year composition instructors who want to use literary texts but want a rhetorical framework in which to read, think, and write about those texts. I consider myself to be a part of this audience and often use the pronoun "we" to describe my audience. I need not remind readers of how difficult it is to adopt a new approach to first-year composition. We develop certain pedagogical habits that range from using the same readings and assignments to relying on the same classroom methods. While this dissertation cannot respond to every habit imaginable, I do suggest different readings, different strategies for interpreting those

readings, and different writing assignments. As I will show, these "different" ways may not seem particularly new, especially if instructors have a rhetorical background. However, they may seem new within the context of first-year composition, a site that does not often encourage a rhetorical study of imaginative outré literature. My intent is to provide as much detail as is needed to inspire other first-year composition teachers to use the case studies (or ones similar) and the rhetorical strategies to create a learning space that motivates students to read, think, and write about texts.

In addition to purpose and audience, I also identify seven contexts or sites for my dissertation. To begin with, my dissertation is situated in rhetoric because the overall design of the courses I propose is rhetorical. A rhetorical approach to literature is useful in first-year composition for several reasons. First, a rhetorical approach can bridge the two required courses in first-year composition, especially if the other course is rhetoric-based (that is, based on an argumentative or expository approach). Second, students are likely to have encountered literature in English classes in high school and may have been introduced to traditional ways of reading and thinking about literary texts such as analyzing character, theme, symbol, point of view, etc. A rhetorical approach asks students to think about how a text works as a part of their world. Students read rhetorically in order to see how authors use texts to communicate with an audience.

Rhetoric is also the theory that teachers and students are asked to practice in the first-year course. Ann Berthoff notes, "Becoming critical, developing a method, is the best way, I think, for teachers and students to learn from one another" (45). Her vision of theory, or as she calls it "developing a method," is essentially rhetorical because she

recognizes that learning happens bidirectionally between students and teachers. As I

point out in chapters one and five, learning is also *multi*directional in that students learn

from students, from the reading materials, the classroom, etc. One cannot escape

rhetoric, for the entire enterprise of first-year composition is a rhetorical entity, a premise

I examine in greater detail in chapter five.

First-year composition is another site for this dissertation. Instructors who have

used Joseph Williams's *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* will be familiar with my

dissertation's basic principle of old-to-new. Williams's two-punch maxim is this: "Begin

sentences with information familiar to your readers" and "End sentences with

information readers cannot anticipate" (81). Although the advice is intended for the

microscopic level of sentence writing, it can also be applied to the macroscopic context

of first-year composition. I argue in chapter one that the dissertation is situated in the

first-semester course of a two-semester course sequence in required first-year

composition. When two semesters of writing are required, one of the courses typically

has a literary theme while the other typically has a rhetorical theme. If the literature

course is first in the sequence, then Williams's maxim can be realized effectively. The

courses I outline in chapters two, three, and four analyze outré literature from popular

culture (texts that are old in the sense that they will be familiar to students) from a

rhetorical perspective (something new). If, then, students continue into English 102, they

will be asked to do rhetorical analysis (now something considered old) of academic

discourse (something new), thus making the cohesion between the two courses easier for

a writing program administrator (WPA) to see.

The realm of popular culture is another place where the dissertation is situated. Using texts from popular culture is not new in English departments. Although other writers like Leslie Fielder came earlier, John Cawelti's *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* speaks directly to the type of outré literature I draw from in this dissertation. He argues that his book "is a study of popular story formulas, those narratives and dramatic structures that form such a large part of the cultural diet of the majority of readers, television viewers, and film audiences" (2). He believes these "popular formulas to be of a more complex artistic and cultural interest" than had previously been considered in the domain of English scholarship (2). His pedagogy showcases ways for instructors and students to read and think about these "new" texts. But his book is not necessarily useful for *writing* assignments, nor does it contain explicitly rhetorical strategies for working with these texts.

Cawelti's research opened up avenues for some of us to write about using popular culture in our courses. Mary Poovey links the use of popular culture texts to cultural criticism, suggesting a relationship between the evolution of literary criticism and texts being taught. Poovey argues that "for most of our undergraduates, the experience of MTV, television, and rock and roll constitutes an important part of the training they have received in how to read before they enter our classrooms" (616). Current instructors must remind themselves that many students entering college in 2005 were born in 1987 and thus grew up with texts from the 1990s. Reflecting current trends, Dombek and Herndon add: "teaching effective writing begins with recognizing the forms in which students already think" (107). They argue, "given that shopping, instant messaging,

channel and web surfing, watching television and movies—technological and cultural

forms—shape and structure our students' lives, we should find ways to use them as

content in the writing classroom" (107). Certainly a multitude of ways are possible; the

way I argue for in the dissertation is rhetorical because it allows students to analyze not

only how familiar texts make meaning but how they are persuasive acts of

communication for larger audiences.

Poovey makes one other point about relevance that needs to be considered within

the context of popular culture. She contends, "to ignore this and teach only close

readings of texts that we present as static and centered is to risk making institutionalized

education seem even more irrelevant to our students' past experiences and extra-

curricular lives than I suspect it already feels" (616). Her concern about the relevance of

what students do in courses like first-year composition is witnessed in recent scholarship.

Evan Carton and Alan Friedman's 1996 *Situating College English* describes a growing

concern about where English studies fit in a fast-evolving academic culture. In 2002

Robert Yagelski and Scott Leonard's collection of essays, *The Relevance of English,* asks

how English matters to its tuition-paying audience. Either way, these books are

discourses in response to an exigence, a problem of figuring out the role of English in

college curricula. My dissertation responds to this exigence by asking what role first-

year composition can play in such curricula.

Literature, as an academic field, is another place this dissertation is situated.

Literature is something familiar to most incoming students in part because many high

school English curricula often teach classic literary texts like *The Odyssey*, *Romeo and*

Juliet, or *The Sun Also Rises*. As college writing teachers, we can capitalize on that

familiarity by teaching outré literary texts from new perspectives (thus, Williams's old-

to-new mantra). While there are many reasons to study literature in college, I will focus

here on developing one proffered by Kenneth Burke in his short essay "Literature as

Equipment for Living." Burke proposes a sociological criticism that identifies why

readers connect so strongly to certain literary texts. He begins with a microscopic

example of proverbs then extends outward to the larger category of literature. He says,

"Proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*. In so far as situations are typical and

recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for

handling them. Another name for strategies might be *attitudes*" (595, emphasis in text).

Because Burke equates proverbs with literature, we can see how literary texts are

strategies for dealing with situations. People read literature in order to figure out how to

cope with something they are experiencing in their life. Each of the case studies I

analyze in this dissertation provides life strategies for readers; for example, understanding

how Harry negotiates a personal life with a scholastic one or seeing how Buffy accepts

her calling or realizing how soldiers deal with the repercussion of war. People turn to

literature to understand something about their own lives, and as such literature becomes

the sociological criticism Burke imagines.

The dissertation is also situated in literacy. Literacy is often thought of as reading

and writing, but it is also more than that. It is about knowing and communicating that

knowledge to others. It is about membership in communities, both public and private.

My three-prong approach to first-year composition (reading, thinking, and writing) offers

ways for students to improve literacy not just to survive their college years but also to know more about the communities they are a part of in their private lives. I want students to be able to think better about the books they read for pleasure, the television shows they watch every week, or the comic books they dream over. Literacy skills learned in first-year composition can have appeal beyond the academic classroom when we present these skills within a rhetorical framework.

Because the audience for the dissertation is first-year writing teachers, one of the issues it addresses is pedagogy. Pedagogy as I see it is more than teaching. It is communication, not just between teacher and student, but between students, between student and assignment, between student and text. Pedagogy is about the total approach or attitude toward the course, established long before the first day. Pedagogy begins when the instructor first conceives of the course. It exists in the reading material chosen for the course, the assignments students are asked to do, the theory underpinning the course, and so on. In order to be rhetorical, pedagogy must be flexible to accommodate the actual audience met on the first day. Pedagogy does not exist in its own space and time; it exists within a specific rhetorical situation and because of that, it must be regarded as a fundamental component of first-year composition. The curricula I outline in the middle chapters engage a rhetorical pedagogy because the instructor, students, content, and context work in harmony. While I avoid making specific day-to-day suggestions about classroom activities, the reading material, rhetorical thinking, and writing assignments suggest ways for instructors to create a rhetorical pedagogy that responds to their own rhetorical situations.

Finally, the dissertation is situated in experience—my experience as a writing teacher. This is not to say that the dissertation is an expressivist treatise. Rather, the purpose, the audience, and the various sites of the dissertation grow out of my involvement in teaching first-year composition for nine years. My philosophy on life is always to seek ways of making things better, not because the current paradigm is flawed or broken, but because I believe that any model can be improved. One of the habits I have seen in English departments has been a reluctance to change, to grow, to evolve. English teachers can be fussy this way, refusing to change the status quo. This habit may be borne out of a practical need to keep the paper load manageable. I agree that we must find ways to make our lives easier, but we should not do so at the expense of our curriculum, our pedagogy, or our students. As an instructor, I keep in mind the best interests of my incoming students. I want to make their time and experience in first-year composition worthwhile. I also want to avoid falling into a routine, something that can be easy when prepackaged textbooks come delivered to our office doorsteps every semester. For some of us, teaching a rhetorical approach to popular culture or using outré literature will seem like the end of days, but for others like me, it will feel like a refreshing breeze of ocean air wafting over the musty bookshelves of our office. This dissertation is infused with my experiences with rhetoric, first-year composition, literature, popular culture, literacy, and pedagogy.

Overview of the Dissertation

The preceding discussion of the dissertation's rhetorical situation helps ground it

in larger issues. In this next section, I attend to the specific content by offering a chapter-by-chapter summary of the major arguments as well as a brief defense of the rhetorical strategies in chapters two, three, and four.

Chapter one introduces and interrogates four critical terms that bind the dissertation together: reading, thinking, writing, and literacy. I argue why it is necessary to consider first-year composition as a site where more than just writing happens. Writing comes about profitably only when students read and think about something. It does not matter so much if students read texts or their past experiences. What students learn are ways to interpret and talk about what they read. I also suggest that an impetus for the focus on outré literature is the National Endowment for the Arts' report that indicates a decline in literary reading among eighteen- to twenty-four-year olds. The dissertation does not hinge on this one report, of course, because first-year composition has a history of using literature to teach composition. However, I argue that using literature in first-year composition can be more efficient if we adopt a rhetorical approach. The chapter concludes by asking what is at stake when using outré literature in first-year composition.

Chapters two, three, and four follow a consistent pattern of organization. Each begins with a short introduction followed by a defense of the medium, a rationale for why the case study is appropriate, and an analysis of the rhetorical theory. The same organization for these middle chapters helps readers locate what they need quickly and efficiently.

More specifically, the second chapter is what my colleagues and friends call the

Harry Potter chapter because I adopt J. K. Rowling's five novels as my case study. But

the hallmark of the chapter remains the three rhetorical strategies I use to read, think, and

write about the Harry Potter novels, other adolescent literature, and other academic texts.

Rowling's novels are a phenomenon upon us, with the end of the projected seventh book

not yet in sight. Most incoming students are familiar with the books to some degree.

Because of this familiarity and Harry's rising status as a pop culture icon, I argue that it is

important to develop ways to think critically about these books beyond, "well, I really

liked the books a lot." Developing rhetorical categories will help readers understand the

language of the books, why readers may identify strongly with characters and events, and

how pathos generates an intense desire to keep reading.

I employ three rhetorical strategies in chapter two: defamiliarization,

identification, and pathetic rhetoric. The first is from the Russian formalists' conception

of defamiliarization from the early twentieth century, and as such, comes directly from

literary theory. It is important for any rhetorical approach to literature to be conscious of

literary theory. Defamiliarization is useful for adolescent fantasy literature because of its

premise that reality is twisted or skewed (made strange) by the use of literary language.

With this rhetoric, students explore connections among author, audience, and text. Based

on Kenneth Burke's work, identification examines how elements in fiction persuade

readers to keep reading by connecting to the audience through titles, property, fashion,

media, myth, gender, and race. Finally, pathetic rhetoric is *pathetic* in the sense that it is

a rhetoric of pathos, of emotion, and comes from Wayne Booth's work on ordering

intensities in fiction. Its premise is that readers are persuaded to keep reading because of

the emotional investment they have made during the reading experience. I specifically examine how the pathos of death is elevated from book one to five.

Chapter three is an exception compared to chapters two and four because its units are not devoted entirely to specific rhetorical strategies but to different writing scenarios. Chapter three assumes that television is familiar to first-year students and as such strives to teach them new ways to think critically about it in a way that will not only help them become better viewers but also better textual interpreters. The case study is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (*BTVS*), a now defunct television series that ran for seven years on two different networks and enjoyed a loyal cult following. The three units are centered around different writing assignments in response to the WPA's "Outcomes Statement" and to the need for writing teachers to offer some variety to their students. Unit one asks students to compose a teleliteracy narrative so that they may examine their viewing habits from an early age through the present. Unit two asks students to write a rhetorical analysis of *BTVS*. Unit three asks students to write a critical review of *BTVS*'s first season.

In terms of the rhetorical analysis in chapter three, I offer three strategies: rhetorical situation, dramatism, and introductions. Analyzing a rhetorical situation involves determining purpose, audience, content, and context. With a televisual medium, it is important to consider how a concept like authorship can be radically different from an essay. Students examine how multiple authors help create a coherent televisual text. With Kenneth Burke's dramatism, students expand the notion of rhetorical situations to five key terms (also called the pentad) that give a text its overall meaning. The point of

dramatism is not to analyze the five elements in isolation but rather to determine which one dominates the situation—and thus which one influences how the other elements can behave—in order to establish the philosophical world view of the author. Finally, the strategy of introductions is derived from composition theory and the work of Wayne Booth. This strategy posits that introductions are rhetorical acts that have a purpose, audience, content, and context. Applied to televisual literature, introductions can be analyzed in regard to characters; for instance, examining how a character is first introduced to the audience helps the audience determine characteristics about the character (good or evil, strong or weak, etc.).

Chapter four returns to the model of one rhetorical strategy per unit. The outré case study I use in this chapter is *Star Wars* graphic literature (an improved form of comic books). The three rhetorical strategies are generic rhetoric, visual rhetoric, and social rhetoric. Using generic rhetoric, students examine the convention of graphic literature in general and how individual graphic novels accept or reject those conventions. Visual rhetoric examines how texts make arguments using images instead of words. In the case of graphic novels, the argument is made using a combination of images and words. Finally, social rhetoric asks students to examine the social implications of issues like cloning and war. Students examine how these very real issues are reflected in a graphic format that serves as social commentary.

I started with adolescent fiction first because of its potential familiarity to first-year composition teachers. Adolescent fiction is basically novels for an adolescent audience. But because they are novels, they will be familiar to instructors because most

of us have read and taught novels. From a purely instructional perspective, then, adolescent novels will not be overly challenging. However, using Harry Potter will seem like an easier task than, say, using televisual literature to teach first-year composition. It is true that most teachers will know what television is because they watch their favorite programming, but how many teachers have taught television in their courses? Televisual literature is less familiar to writing instructors than novels and may prove to be more challenging to develop a workable pedagogy. This is also why I have three different assignments in chapter three, hoping that an array of writing assignments will offset any anxiety over using televisual literature. Finally, I place graphic literature third because I assume most teachers will have even less experience with teaching comic books than with novels or television. I assume this is also true in their personal lives as well; that is, I think it is likely that many teachers have read novels and watched television, but I think it is less likely that many teachers have read graphic novels. That is why I chose mainstream rhetorics like genre, visual, and social. Focusing on the visual features of a graphic novel will not only help boost their confidence in using a "new" medium, but also help generate in-class discussions, especially if teachers can adapt previous activities based on a visual approach.

Even though I use specific rhetorical strategies for each of the case studies, I am not suggesting that those rhetorical strategies can be used only for that medium or for literary texts. In order to illustrate how to use these strategies, I use concrete examples; however, I try to point out at the end of each chapter ways in which the rhetorical strategies can be useful for other textual situations students may encounter in their

curriculum. The goal of the dissertation is not to be contained only within first-year composition, but to show ways in which what students learn in a course like first-year composition can transfer to other areas of their non-college experiences.

Because chapter five serves as the dissertation's conclusion, it returns to the larger sites involved in the project. In short, I examine first-year composition as a rhetorical site, arguing that for the course to be a successful experience for those involved, its purpose, audience, content, and context must cohere. When any one of these rhetorical elements clashes with another, then the rhetorical balance is thrown off, and students and teachers may struggle to understand what is happening. If we advocate a rhetorical approach to the first-year course, then we must also adopt a rhetorical pedagogy. Students will sense when the pedagogy is out of sync with the overall harmony of the course. Finally, one of the ubiquitous features of a first-year composition program and its pedagogy is the composition textbook. I examine how several current literature-for-composition textbooks frame the use of literature in composition courses. Textbooks reflect a particular pedagogy that may or may not be consistent with the purpose and audience of the designated course. Each of these rhetorical elements must be synchronized in order to present the best possible experience for ourselves and our students. We can achieve this if we keep basic rhetorical principles in mind and keep that mind open enough to see how things can be better.

I have one final note about organizing courses based on the outré literature I present in chapters two, three, and four. I present these chapters as full courses that can be taught using just the case study specific to the chapter. For example, in chapter two I

assign all of the Harry Potter novels over the course of the term. The focus of class

discussion and writing assignments is on the novels and the three rhetorical strategies.

However, my audience will see that combining texts from each of the three chapters into

one course is also an exciting possibility. For example, teachers may assign two of the

Potter novels for unit one, a season from *BTVS* for unit two, and some *Star Wars* graphic

novels for unit three. Of course, there are many other combinations if we divvy up the

rhetorical strategies as well. When working with texts drawn from popular culture, the

possibilities are limited only by our own imagination.

CHAPTER ONE

MAKING A CASE FOR THE RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

OF OUTRÉ LITERATURE IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Mark Richardson's 2004 *College English* article raises two questions that directly impact how first-year composition is taught. First, he asks what sort of literature is best suited to first-year composition, and second, he asks if we teach literature in first-year composition, how should we teach it (279)? He assumes that using imaginative literature to teach first-year writing is productive, and I agree with him. Imaginative literature fosters critical reading, thinking, and writing abilities—abilities that will benefit students as they move through college curricula and life experiences. In itself, using imaginative literature is not a novel idea; however, Richardson draws the literary texts from what students are likely to bring from their own background: "TV and movies, their own lives, church and popular culture" (291). By privileging students' literacies, Richardson invokes a form of rhetoricality that centers on the relationship between the receiver (the student) and the universe (his or her reality) in the communication triangle (Lunsford and Glenn 474).

Shortly after Richardson's account of a successful use of imaginative literature in a required, introductory college composition course, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) issued the grim *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*. In the report's preface, NEA chairman Dana Gioia writes, "For the first time in modern history, less than half the adult population now reads literature […]" (vii). He notes that "the rate of decline has accelerated, especially among the young" (vii). One cause of this

sharp decline is society's shift to other forms of entertainment: movies, television, Internet activities, video games, etc. Reading a book in print takes considerable time and energy, something fewer people are willing to expend. Of particular relevance here is the noted decline within specific age groups. In the 18-24 age group, for example, 59.8% engaged in literary reading in 1982 as opposed to 42.8% in 2002, a drop of seventeen percent (xi). While the NEA report may seem inconsequential to us or simply a rehashing of the literacy crisis to some of us in education, Scott McLemee's reporting of it in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* brings the issue closer to us because one of the populations most affected by the conclusions of the NEA report are our students.

My response is located within first-year composition, a site that uses imaginative literature to teach principles of writing. Getting students to write well, however, is not the only goal. Reading and thinking are both crucial components to writing well. When students read an assignment, we teach them how to think critically about it and to express their ideas in writing. These skills allow students to move through college and their lives with an increased awareness of the connections among reading, thinking, and writing. Furthermore, if we can manage to convince students that literary texts from popular culture can be used as a model for critical thinking and writing, then maybe we have a chance to reverse the NEA's grim numbers about reading habits.

In the context of first-year composition, I see reading, thinking, and writing at work. Although these abilities are not new to writing instructors, I propose a more useful way to connect them. I teach students how to use rhetorical strategies (critical thinking) to examine literature (critical reading) and how to express these ideas in writing (critical

writing). Learning, understanding, and executing this triptych of skills defines critical literacy in first-year writing. And as such, critical literacy is the best response writing teachers can offer to help turn around the reading trends of America's youth.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and define four key terms: literature (reading), rhetoric (thinking), composition (writing), and literacy (the act of all three). Establishing and interrogating definitions is important not only so that teachers and administrators can hear one another, but also so that a larger, more public audience can listen to us and understand what we mean. By way of a conclusion I ask what is at stake if we do not foster a rhetorical analysis of popular literary texts in first-year writing.

Critical Reading: Outré Literature as Familiar

I accept a broad range of texts as literature, but what do I mean by outré literature? *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *outré* as "Beyond the bounds of what is usual or considered correct and proper; unusual, eccentric, out-of-the-way, exaggerated." The literature I use as reading material is outré in two main ways. First, the physical format of the texts are unusual for a first-year composition course. For instance, I use adolescent novels, TV-on-DVD, and graphic literature. These are forms, or genres, that are not ordinarily considered appropriate to study in a generalist writing course. Second, the texts themselves are outré. The texts I use—J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels, Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* television series, and George Lucas's *Star Wars* graphic literature—are classified as fantasy or science-fiction.

Some critics may dismiss outré literature as trivial and inconsequential. Those

who dismiss outré literature do not recognize the ability of those texts to offer commentary on the present state of society; that is, outré literature often reflects social, economic, or political conditions of our own time. This ability becomes even clearer in the next three chapters when I introduce nine rhetorical ways of reading outré literature. However, there are scholars and teachers who see outré literature as valuable because of its ability to stimulate imagination and interest in reading, a goal that should be admirable in our current era of short attention spans and multiple forms of entertainment.

Outré literature carries a long tradition into the twentieth-first century. *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* (1469-70), Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Sterne's *Tristam Shandy* (1760-67), Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), Walople's *The Castle of Otranto* (1763), Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) are a few examples of outré literature throughout history. Rowling, Whedon, and Lucas are contemporary authors of outré literature who echo the work of their precursors. Jorge Luis Borges writes, "The word 'precursor' is indispensable to the vocabulary of criticism, but one must try to purify it from any connotation of polemic or rivalry. The fact is that each writer *creates* his precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future" (365). When Borges writes that authors create their own precursors, he means that once a writer publishes X, then people can look back throughout history to find textual examples of X. Inevitably, we will find instances of X that have been unnoticed. These instances may have gone unnoticed if it were not for the writer of X. Together these instances form a loose tradition. For example, Borges identifies four writers (Zeno, Han Yu,

Kierkegaard, and Robert Browning) as precursors of Franz Kafka, saying that pieces by these four writers "resemble Kafka" but "not all of them resemble each other" (363). Kafka is the link that binds all five of these people together into a loose tradition. The project I develop in this dissertation uses rhetoric as the link to bind together such media as adolescent novels, televisual literature, and graphic literature.

Contemporary outré writers should not be thought of as polemic or rivals to the past, but rather welcomed as new additions. As such, my project does not aim to exclude classic examples of outré literature (or for that matter, classic examples of traditional literature), but rather, it aims to bring into classrooms outré texts that are new and fresh— texts our students will be familiar with.

Even equipped with good arguments for using outré literature to teach writing, I am faced with the issue of using imaginative literature to teach writing. While it is not in the purview of this dissertation to survey comprehensively the debate over using literature in first-year composition, the issue still needs to be addressed. Teachers of literature may frown at the idea of literature being the object of a course in general writing ability, while teachers of writing may decry the perceived exalting of literature as the default text for students to write about. An example of the debate over whether to include literature as part of the first-year writing course occurred in separate articles published in *College English*. Erika Lindemann (con) and Gary Tate (pro) represent their cause—as much as two people can be said to epitomize the two popular sides in the debate over using literature in composition.

Lindemann argues that first-year composition is no place for literature when

literature displaces writing as the focus of the course.[1] She does not object to using

literature when literature fosters critical reading, thinking, and most importantly, writing.

Because she believes that first-year composition should "provide opportunities to master

the genres, styles, audiences, and purposes of college writing," she thinks that literature

alone cannot do this, especially when writing is slighted (312). Her point is valid because

the focus of first-year composition cannot only be reading. Whatever reading is done in

the first-year course must help students achieve strength in thinking and writing. Despite

the advancement of composition studies and the work of product, process, and social

system critics, literature in first-year composition still has the tendency to become the

focus. My argument is that if literature is used in first-year writing courses, it must be in

conjunction with other critical skills such as thinking and writing. If it stands alone, then

the course is no longer about writing.

Gary Tate, on the other hand, believes that literature should be used in first-year

composition. He argues that reading imaginative literature helps him see his students as

"individual human beings who will have private and maybe public lives" (321). But

according to Tate, rhetoric is not the tool that will help students negotiate their private

and public selves. In Tate's eyes, literature is the victim and rhetoric is the perpetrator:

"What was waiting to replace literature was rhetoric, supported since the 1960s by the

Rhetoric Police, that hardy band of zealots who not many years hence were to become the

dreaded enforcement arm of the Conference on College Composition and

Communication" (318). Tate's position seems to be that either we have a place for

literature in first-year composition or we have a place for rhetoric, but not for both

together. This either-or thinking is what boxes him into a position that denies rhetoric's role in thinking and writing about literature. Despite the popularity of this exchange, neither writer acknowledges the positive role rhetoric can play.[2]

Rhetoricians believe it is reductive to think of literature in traditional categories of novel, short story, poetry, etc. Viewed as texts, literature encompasses movies, television shows, music, video games, report cards, shopping lists, dialogue at Starbucks, advertisements, calendars, and many others. Scott Carpenter calls these examples "para-literary," that is next to, or outside of classic literary definitions (xi). Most of these forms fall into popular culture—a place our students are immersed in every day of their lives and a place that is rife with possibilities for literacy and pedagogy in first-year composition.

In laying out a framework for integrating composition and literature into one course, David Paxman says, "we should select books that students can understand without much assistance from the instructor: 'Each book should be looked upon as a segment of real life which the student is privileged to see with special clarity'" (125). I would substitute "text" for Paxman's "book." Given the fact that students have only a semester or quarter to read, discuss, process, understand, reread, draft, write, revise, edit, proofread, and submit their thoughts about a topic, it becomes necessary to give explicit thought to what we have our students read. Reading is time intensive. Most instructors would argue that reading is an investment in their students' future ability to communicate and understand the world around them. For this investment to be realized for students, students must feel as if their time is being well spent.

Further, Paxman's ideas resonate on a fundamental level: not every student is a fluent reader. If we assign reading that matters, it becomes our responsibility to ensure they have the tools to navigate the reading process as carefully as they do the writing process. Writing teachers who assign reading are responsible, in part, for making the reading feasible. This means selecting works that generalist students can approach with little outside resources. In some ways this is common sense, but common sense goes out the window when the first-year course is conceived primarily as a literature course with heavies like Shakespeare, Joyce, and Faulkner. If, by definition, first-year writing courses are to appeal to a broad range of students and abilities, then so must the required reading.

Kathleen Blake Yancey distinguishes between a delivered curriculum and a lived curriculum.[3] She argues that "students do not enter our classes as blank slates. Before entering college, most students have completed twelve years of official, formal study of literature" (20). She calls this a delivered curriculum because the reading material is determined by people other than the reader; thus it is delivered to a student. Among this delivered curriculum, students encountered "picture books and narratives," "adventure stories, adolescent literature, and canonical literature" (20). In conjunction with this delivered curriculum is what Yancey calls a lived curriculum. A lived curriculum occurs outside English classes and involves reading experiences with parents, family, friends, or ones self. Our students can be voracious readers as they read "magazines and books; short stories and Web pages; user manuals; game protocols and player identifications" (22). Her point is that when students arrive at our doorstep, "they know quite a bit about

both reading and literature;" therefore, writing instructors need to tap in to this knowledge as the backdrop to teach critical thinking and writing skills (22). Louise Rosenblatt also speaks to the lived curriculum when she says, "It is not enough merely to think of what the students *ought* to read. Choices must reflect a sense of the possible links between these materials and the student's past experience and present level of emotional maturity" (41-42). Rosenblatt and Paxman agree that choosing literature that is accessible to our students is wise if we are to teach them how to think and write about it in ways that will be useful beyond meeting the goals of the course. Using literature that students may already be familiar with stimulates and encourages young adults to read, think, and write without having the pressure of learning how to read texts they have never encountered before. We should honor—not exclude—students' experiences with literature; if they have an investment in the reading material to begin with, we can strengthen their relationship with it by teaching them how to think and write about it critically.

One of the issues teachers struggle with when assigning literature is to what extent to use literary theory as reading frameworks. Because first-year composition is mandatory at many colleges, its population is a general sampling of college students— most of whom will not be Literature majors. If teachers make literary theory a presence in the course, many students may struggle with the content. Most people will agree today that no course can be without theory, so the difficulty is finding a balance between theory and practice. Nevertheless, we cannot abandon literary theory all together because literary theory is rhetorical in ways that are not often pointed out in literary scholarship.[4]

If writing instructors can tap into literary theory from a rhetorical perspective and apply it to outré literature, then we begin to realize a more useful purpose for using literature in the course and do not risk alienating non-Literature majors. My intention is that rhetorical ways of reading will appeal to a greater number of generalist students than explicitly literary ways. Some may say that my distinction here is merely semantic, but I think it is important because of how it presents the course to a heterogeneous group of students.

Literary theory is rhetorical in many ways. For example, cultural studies is one of many approaches to literature. In fact, cultural studies is itself composed of a variety of intellectual strains. I will not attempt a comprehensive survey of cultural studies here; I only wish to show how such an approach can work within the context of first-year composition. Cultural studies aficionados believe that society has bestowed certain privileges on specific kinds of texts—the Victorian novel, for instance—or to certain authors—Shakespeare. An aim of cultural critics is not to dismiss these texts or authors, but to deny them the status of privilege by recognizing that there is "writing of historically disadvantaged groups such as African-American or gay and lesbian authors" (Gardner 44). While I do not focus on minority writers or minority-themed texts, I do seek out other texts and genres that have been historically disenfranchised by the academy. Gardner argues that any "attempt at broadening the canon [both of literature and in first-year composition] is designed to provide students and scholars alike with a more inclusive definition of what art and literature are all about" (45). Thus, I draw from popular culture such contemporary phenomenon as Harry Potter, Buffy Summers, and the

Jedi Knights.

Cultural studies is rhetorical for a number of reasons. One, it has an open door policy when it comes to texts. That is, cultural studies finds value in most texts, not just those restricted to "high" culture. Two, cultural studies examines the ways in which a text is elevated or dismissed in society. Three, cultural studies looks at how a text affects its audience and its surrounding culture. Other critical theories can also be considered rhetorical. A feminist (or a gender studies) approach, for example, seeks to discover how works are received by women and men. The rhetorical situation is played out when critics seek to discover how authors conceive of male and female roles in their work and how those conceptions are received by an audience, either historical or contemporary.

In the context of first-year composition, outré literature can be useful in helping students gain critical reading, thinking, and writing skills—skills they can employ not only in a college setting but also in their own lived experiences.

Critical Thinking: Rhetoric as a Way of Thinking

Rhetoric is the analytical tool that students use to investigate outré literature in first-year composition. As such, rhetoric represents the critical thinking component of the critical literacies involved in the first-year course. Using rhetoric as a theoretical framework offsets concerns that the course is invested solely in reading and writing about literature. Literature is the reading material, but the way students are asked to think about what they read is rhetorical. In this section, I first discuss critical thinking as a concept and then meld it with transactional theories of rhetoric as expressed by James Berlin and

Louise Rosenblatt.

The scholarship on critical thinking is vast and forms a large community—a community that does not often agree as to what the term involves. Some psychologists, for example, believe that critical thinking is connected to emotion and is used as a way to better understand one's self and one's relationship to others. A psychological view of critical thinking might be said to align with pathos in the rhetorical triangle. On the other hand, some philosophers believe that critical thinking is connected to logic and is used to develop arguments. A philosophical view of critical thinking might be said to align with logos in the rhetorical triangle. Seen from this perspective, both theories on critical thinking are different parts of rhetoric. In terms of my project, I side with the philosopher's view of critical thinking as logical and representative of the process of making arguments in part because it will be familiar to writing and rhetoric teachers who often teach how to make arguments.

Robert Ennis is recognized by others as a major philosophical voice in critical thinking. He defines critical thinking as "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" ("Definition"). Critical thinking is central in two areas of our lives: "the formation and checking of beliefs" and "deciding upon and evaluating actions" ("Definition"). Supposedly, we apply critical thinking to our own behavior, but we can also use it to evaluate the behavior of others in order to uncover why people act the way they do. Barnet and Bedau say that critical thinking involves "searching for hidden assumptions, noticing various facets, unraveling different strands, and evaluating what is most significant" (3). They touch upon a chief characteristic of critical thinking:

identifying the assumptions behind arguments. Uncovering assumptions is what Ennis
means by reflective thinking, and we uncover assumptions through reflection by asking
questions. Browne and Keeley address this component directly when they say that
critical thinking "consists of an awareness of a set of interrelated critical questions, plus
the ability and willingness to ask and answer them at appropriate times" (2). Such
questions begin with identifying the issue and continue with understanding the reasons,
what words are ambiguous, what the values and assumptions are, what fallacies may be
present, evaluating the evidence, seeing the causes, noting what is left out, and
discovering what other conclusions are possible. This understanding of critical thinking
will be familiar to teachers who have taught argumentative writing in their courses. The
task now is to connect critical thinking to reading literature.

Critical thinking about literature—outré or otherwise—arises when teachers and
students see the literary text as a form of an argument, complete with its own set of
assumptions and questions about purpose, audience, content, and context. Just asking
what the story, episode, or comic book is about begins the process of asking how authors
communicate to an audience and who that audience might be. The nine rhetorical
strategies I offer in the next three chapters allow readers to ask critical questions about
the text.

Many teachers today recognize that students' voices are valuable components in
thinking about literature. This recognition, however, has not always been so. An old but
familiar pedagogical paradigm for teaching literature has teachers expounding on a
work's themes, characters, symbols, and so forth, while students hurry to take as many

notes as they can process.   This model "frequently made literature a threat to students, implying that they could not trust their own judgment about what they read" (Swope and Thompson 75). Rosenblatt underscores this point when she recounts the story of a Native American reservation that redesigned its curriculum to include Restoration plays. According to Rosenblatt, "It seemed ridiculous that these children whose past experiences had been only the conditions of the reservation village and the vestiges of their native culture, should be plunged into reading the sophisticated products of a highly complex foreign country remote in space and time" (55).[5] Her point is if the reading material is not accessible to the students, then students must rely on the instructor to understand the poem, and by *understand* she means "a parroting of empty words and phrases to satisfy a teacher's demand" (55). Developing critical thinking skills will be simplified for students if the text itself is easier to get through because it is familiar.[6]

Familiarity is one of the thirteen suggestions Ennis offers to teachers who are interested in integrating critical thinking into their curriculum. He argues, "Students do not need to become subject matter experts before they can start to learn to think critically in a subject. These things can proceed together, each helping the other. Students will learn best the subject matter they use. But ultimately, of course, familiarity with the subject and situation calling for critical thinking is essential for critical thinking" ("Teaching"). Earlier, I argued that using outré literature is a useful way to motivate students to read because the texts are familiar to them. Here, outré literature is instrumental in fostering critical thinking for precisely the same reason. The hope is that students will think critically about a text they know something about.

The dimensions of critical thinking sketched above suggest a close kinship with rhetoric. To understand this kinship better, I begin with Aristotle's definition of rhetoric. He taught, "Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (36-37). "To see" means to examine or to analyze the ways persuasion works, for persuasion does not work unilaterally. Persuasion is contextual and depends on the speaker, the audience, and the location. Rhetoric, then, is an act of creation. In ancient Greece, this skill was primarily oral, civic, and male. Classical rhetoricians generated and invented rhetoric for the purposes of convincing others to adopt a particular point of view. They arranged their points in a fashion that would appeal to specific audiences, adopted a suitable style with memorable words and phrases, decided on attire, posture, and voice to make their delivery as attractive as possible, and finally, they committed the speech to memory so their hands could be engaged in strategic gesticulations. Each of these activities centered around finding the best way to persuade an audience to agree with their position.

Although persuasion has survived as a hallmark of what rhetoric examines, rhetoric has also been applied to informative and expository discourse—especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Corbett and Connors 16). The range of rhetoric expanded greatly in the twentieth century when rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke placed rhetoric at the heart of human symbolic communication. Theresa Enos argues that "Rhetoric, though the oldest and broadest of the humanities, is becoming ever more difficult to locate in a conceptual framework because it draws increasingly on disciplines like anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, and psychology" (vii). Today we cannot

speak effectively of rhetoric in the singular. Thomas Miller contends that "The rhetorical tradition is a fiction that has just about outlasted its usefulness" (26). He suggests that "Instead of just the rhetorical tradition, we need to study the rhetoric of traditions—the ways that political parties, ethnic groups, social movements, and other discourse communities constitute and maintain the shared values and assumptions that authorize discourse" (26). His argument calls for *rhetorics*—a term that encompasses a broader spectrum of thinking about language, persuasion, motivation, etc. that more accurately reflects the types of discourse and variety of individuals and groups found in society today.

James Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric and Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading offer useful frameworks for critical thinking about literature and can be useful in first-year writing courses. Both of these scholars share similarities even though they work in different spheres of the English department—Berlin in rhetoric and composition studies and Rosenblatt in literary studies. Their work is testament to the interdisciplinarity of rhetoric that Enos observes and to its usefulness in a generalist course like first-year composition.

In his survey of rhetorical theories in the twentieth century, Berlin identifies objective, subjective, and transactional rhetoric. Objective theories of rhetoric, according to Berlin, locate truth in the material world, while subjective theories locate truth in individuals. While both sets of theories were prominent in education at one time or another throughout the last century, Berlin favors transactional theories largely because they form a more accurate representation of what happens when people engage in

knowledge making. He argues, "Transactional rhetoric is based on an epistemology that sees truth as arising out of the interaction of the elements of the rhetorical situation: an interaction of subject and object or of subject and audience or even of all the elements—subject, object, audience, and language—operating simultaneously" (*Rhetoric and Reality* 15). With this model, "rhetoric exists so that truth may be discovered" rather than communicated (165). Transactional approaches discover principles based on what the elements are in any given situation. For instance, knowledge about a television show depends on what the show is, who is watching it, where it is being watched, and the circumstances of how it is being watched. All of these elements of the rhetorical situation influence meaning. Also, if one of the variables of the rhetorical situation changes, the knowledge discovered in the situation is likely to be different as well. The point for writing courses is to know that rhetoric is grounded in space and time.

Rosenblatt shares a similar model of rhetoric, although she does not name it as rhetoric. Rosenblatt, however, grounds her theory specifically in reading imaginative literature. As early as 1938 she argues, "The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his [or her] thoughts and feelings" (*Literature* 24). She notes that in the past, reading was thought of as *inter*action more than *trans*action. She says, "reading is a constructive, selective process over time in a particular context" (26). Reading is an active process because readers build knowledge based on what the text offers and what they know about what is said. In other words, students' own experiences contribute to how they read a text. Rosenblatt also privileges

the role of context, something affirmed in Berlin's transactional theories. Location plays a critical factor in what readers understand from the text. Writing teachers will ask students to interrogate issues involved in context by asking them to consider what differences might surface if they read adolescent literature as a college student as opposed to as an adolescent.

Thinking critically about the outré literature I use as case studies, for example, involves asking an array of rhetorical questions. Such questions may include who is the audience for the Harry Potter novels? What is the purpose of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*? What difference is there between a four-panel page versus a one-panel page in a graphic novel? What do these media say about the society we live in? When students ask these questions, hopefully they recognize that they are not only thinking of the text's role within a classroom, but are thinking of the text's role in a larger community of readers. Having students read texts drawn from popular culture prepares them to enter conversations about those discourses in public and private spaces beyond the academy. Not only will critical thinking teach students to frame an argument or articulate reflection, but it will also teach them that the literacies they grew up with are part of a larger dialogue which can only become clearer when their voices are joined to the many others already speaking.

Critical thinking is not just a skill students have to master in order to pass a course; it is a skill that will help them understand a variety of textual situations they encounter throughout their lives. Chaffee, McMahon, and Stout tell students that critical thinking "affects the entire way that you view the world and live your life. Your

development as a critical thinker and thoughtful writer is revealed in many aspects of

your life: for example, how you make decisions, how you relate to others, and how you

deal with controversial issues" (19-20). The nine rhetorical strategies I offer in the next

three chapters help students think critically about literature as well as their own lives.

Critical Writing: Composing in Contact Zones

After students have read the assignments and thought about them rhetorically,

then they express their ideas in writing within the context of a composition course.

Writing theory in the last twenty-five years has concentrated on understanding the

processes writers go through when they first receive an assignment to when they submit

the assignment. Commenting only on student-produced discourse, Linda Flower and

John Hayes initially identified three main areas that impact writing: the task environment

(the rhetorical problem and the text produced so far), the writer's long-term memory, and

writing processes (planning, translating, reviewing, and the monitor) (370). Their point

was to show that writing entailed more than putting words on paper; both reading and

thinking played important roles. Although the model Flower and Hayes developed was

eventually set aside, it was popular for a decade and influenced first-year composition

curricula across the nation.[7] Later, in a solo effort, Hayes attempted to breathe life into

the model by proposing a revision that accounted for motivation and affect in the

flowchart, but the addition of more boxes and arrows fell mostly upon closed ears (175).

But Flower and Hayes understood that writing must be expanded to include a host of

other activities like reading and thinking as well as other influences like situation and

environment.

Today, the term *composition studies* reflects the idea that *writing* is no longer adequate to express what we teach. Louise Wetherbee Phelps says that composition studies has grown "to study and teach written language, emphasizing the centrality of writing and literate practices to intellectual development, learning, and critical thought; to the rhetorical construction and negotiation of knowledge, culture, and personal identity; and to democratic participation, power, and work in an 'information society'" (123). Ferrell once wrote that first-year composition is for "improving students' writing" (244). Today, we understand that first-year composition now provides students with the opportunity to read texts from their own life experiences, think critically about them, and write out their ideas.

First-year composition courses, however, are many and varied. Erwin Steinberg notes, "There is no such thing as *the* composition classroom" (266, emphasis in text). Because there are varieties of composition courses, isolating one as a shining exemplar is fruitless. At many universities, first-year writing is composed of several courses based on perceived writing, reading, and thinking ability. Dividing incoming students in this manner is normally created through prior or placement testing. However students are classified, they are often distributed into one of three varieties: basic, regular, or honors. A typical research one university can have up to five varieties of first-year composition: basic, regular, honors, ESL, and a special, one-semester course for gifted students. Regular first-year composition courses tend to be a two-semester requirement with one of the courses focusing on academic discourse and the other on imaginative literature

(Steinberg 267).

I locate my research in the regular versions of first-year composition in part because the percentage of first-year students enrolled in it is so high. Steinberg estimates the number to be seventy-five percent (267). The writing ability of students placed into the regular sections is judged to be average, or well enough to satisfy the requirement and move forward. Basic writers often require time-intensive devotion to the fundamental process of their writing in order to boost their confidence for reading, thinking, and writing at a collegiate level, while honors students because of their high school background may already possess the critical reading and thinking strategies I offer in this project. Using outré literature that students have some familiarity with is critical in helping students become better readers, thinkers, and writers and in connecting what we ask them to do in the classroom with what they do on an everyday basis.

The Council of Writing Program Administrators adopted the "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition" in 2000 in order to bring some degree of coherence to what is taught in the first-year writing requirement. The statement has four sections: "Rhetorical Knowledge," "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing," "Processes," and "Knowledge of Conventions" (Steering Committee 323-25). The courses I propose in this dissertation address all of these sections, but my focus for the moment is on the second one about the connections between critical reading, thinking, and writing. Some of the objectives students should learn include using "writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating" and understanding "the relationships among language, knowledge, and power" (324). Faculty have a

responsibility to aid students in the "uses of writing as a critical thinking method" and to explain the "interactions among critical thinking, critical reading, and writing" (324). These goals, as well as the others, are realized in the courses I design in this dissertation.

Clearly, the Steering Committee did not envision writing as an isolated activity. Writing is paired with reading in order to develop critical thinking skills. In the courses I model in the next three chapters, rhetoric is critical thinking because it involves a reflection of the reading and planning for the writing. Because the outcomes are conceived of as a "context for specific programs; to create a new program, to revise an extant one" (323), they function as a guide rather than as law. If those of us who teach first-year composition can agree on a set of outcomes, then we can find ways to implement those outcomes in our classrooms. For my project, outré literature is the means for achieving the goals of the outcomes statement.

Even with a set of outcomes, teachers do not always agree on a theoretical background for their courses. Erika Lindemann identifies three basic varieties of the first-year course. First, courses are taught where writing is seen as a product. A product-centered course, she claims, is the oldest type, often taught by instructors with little or no formal training in literature or composition. Product-centered courses privilege texts, so much so that the texts (imaginative literature, according to Lindemann's examples) become the focus of reading and discussion. Writing is largely a matter of finding something to say about the literature. But even the writing, usually cast as an essay, is a product that has clearly defined requirements and over time becomes formulaic for students to compose and teachers to grade ("Three Views" 290-93). A second view of

composition courses considers writing as a process, a concept driven by the early work of

Janet Emig, Ken Macrorie, Peter Elbow, and Donald Murray and later by the designs of

Linda Flower and John Hayes in the late 1970s. Lindemann believes process approaches

are expressivist in nature because they ask students to write often in order to discover

something about themselves as writers and their relationship to the various subjects they

encounter in writing classes and in life. Student writing becomes the most important text

in the class. It does not matter whether this writing is in the form of journals, freewriting,

or drafting—all of it is privileged by the instructor (293-95). Finally, a third view of the

first-year course considers writing to be a system of social actions. This approach

examines the location of writing; that is, the various contexts in which it is done, such as

in discourse communities where student writers are full time members. As such, students

read texts from across the disciplines, understanding how language creates meaning

depending on the subject being studied. Students learn to write like a physicist, a

historian, or a philosopher, for example. The goal of writing as a system in first-year

composition, then, is to help students become more adept at written communication in

other areas of the academy (295-99). These three models represent the rhetorical

triangle, with product as the author/text, process as the reader/student, and system as the

environment/context.

Part of the problem in working with literature is the temptation to slip into

traditional methods of teaching that literature. A traditional model of literature pedagogy

has students sitting "passively while the teacher, acting as prime knower, guides them

toward the meaning of an anthologized major or minor work, to attempt close readings in

an effort to understand great works, to hear the odd biographical fact about the major author, and to write highly tentative interpretative essays aimed at closure" (Dunlop 252). In this arhetorical model, only the instructor is privileged; the text, the student, and the classroom are largely immaterial. Instead, Dunlop favors a text-based, rhetorical approach that produces a "classroom of activated readers and critics rather than passive receptors of certified meaning" (251). As part of this plan he removes "the anthology and its certified contents in favor of cheap and preferably flashy paperbacks so accessible to relatively inexperienced readers as to at once reduce any need for an authoritative teacher to guide the reading" (252). Dunlop is overenthusiastic in providing a rationale for his theory because as Yancey and others describe, students arriving in first-year composition are far from inexperienced readers. Yancey argues that students come to first-year composition having experience with a variety of texts (21-22). Also, Dunlop's model does not take into consideration how students will read these "cheap and preferably flashy" texts. With the rhetorical approach I propose, teacher guidance is necessary to strengthen reading and thinking skills.

We might forgive Dunlop his eagerness if we accept that his theory is a fully realized rhetorical effort to teach literature. Dunlop argues that "Textual theory transports into the classroom a set of categories available for open discussion, brings the student into active relation to the text, and sets up texts in the context of their cultural life" (260). Personal background informs the literacies students possess. E. D. Hirsch, for example, believes that it is "not possible to separate reading skills from the particular cultural information our readers happened to possess" (143). He goes on to say that "To

teach reading and writing well, we can't reside comfortably in rhetorical expertise but must make difficult decisions about which *particular* cultural vocabularies we wish to impart to our students" (145). A rhetorical perspective would argue that it is not so much in having to impart anything to our students, but, rather, in letting the students impart to the class what they know so they can learn from one another. Of course, there are still goals that need to be accomplished during the semester, but an instructor's goals ought to work in concert with what a student already possesses. Cooperation and negotiation are key words in the literacy I envision.

Mary Louise Pratt's theory of the contact zone applies to first-year composition so fittingly because the teacher and individual students are thrust into a space not knowing anything about anyone else for a set period of time and must work together to create meaning. Pratt defines contact zones as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (496). Players in the contact zones are not often involved in the same game, as "one party is exercising authority and another is submitting to it or questioning it" (503). In terms of college courses, instructors often assume the authority role and students assume the submission or questioner role. Pratt's vision of contact zones as gritty, contentious, and possibly violent spaces contrasts with my own vision of first-year composition as a place where differences do exist, but can be openly shared, discussed, and examined from rhetorical perspectives.

If, then, we conceive of composition courses as places where students and teachers negotiate over the meaning of literacy, for example, then we can see more

clearly Hirsch's error. He advocates a set "cultural literacy"—"a central canon of cultural information that is analogous to the central canon of literature" (145). As Pratt makes clear, no such canon or experience exists for all students. Several students may indeed share some cultural background, but a unilateral cultural literacy is a contradiction since culture itself in not transferable from person to person. A Navajo student from an Arizona reservation, an African American student from inner-city Los Angeles, an Anglo American from Beverly Hills, and a recently immigrated non-native speaker from Sonora, Mexico, will have different cultural resources—all thoroughly valid in their own right, but all unfamiliar to teachers and other students. Hirsch would argue that in order to participate in a common culture, they need to know a shared canon. A rhetorical perspective privileges the variety of cultural backgrounds each student already possesses and seeks to create knowledge about cultural literacies—firmly in the plural.

Myriad cultural literacies are never more present than in the generalist first-year composition course. Unlike specialized courses where students use the same algorithms to solve problems, or study the same Supreme Court cases, or analyze the Civil War, first-year composition is a mixture of students from across the socioeconomic spectrum. Alan France recognizes that "The introductory composition course is crucially implicated in the process of cultural reproduction" (593). However, we do not reproduce culture in first-year composition so much as we *create* culture. Ultimately, contact zones must be learning communities, positive places where cultural creation can take place not just places where people clash in order to subvert ideas about culture.

Most students enmeshed in a composition contact zone are not yet fully thought

of as adults by society's standards. If we must apply a label at all, *young adult* may

suffice.[8] These young adults typically just graduated from high school and range in age

from seventeen to nineteen. Because the parameter of composition has been assigned to

the learning community, it also becomes a discourse community where the agents in the

contact zone communicate in symbols by speech, writing, or gestures. The creation of

discourse depends on the participants' full experience even if teachers have more

experience. In the end, we do not need a set of prescribed vocabularies as Hirsch

suggests or merely affirm that difference exists in contact zones; we need, instead, to

foster productive dialogue in this contact zone. That is, the participants of the learning

community determine their own discourse about the reading material.

Rather than conceive of first-year composition in terms of Pratt's contact zone, I

advocate using *interpretative community*, a term suggested by Stanley Fish. Fish argues

that "interpretative communities are made up of those who share interpretative strategies

not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their

properties and assigning their intentions" (989). A community such as this responds to a

text by determining what the texts "call into being." That is, interpretative strategies are

created by the community for the community. Fish's theory recognizes that individual

members of a community will read a text according to their own cultural formations, but

he places greater importance on how these individuals talk about the text. Thus,

members who use their cultural heritages to inform their reading must contextualize their

background in ways that other members of the learning/discourse/interpretative

community demands. And herein resides a problem with interpretative communities.

Interpretative communities are, however, seen as coercive entities that demand members conform to the standards established by the group. In discussing the nature of holistic grading sessions, White notes that "Readers in the world often do not agree, they will argue; so the consistent standards of an essay reading [interpretative community] falsify the nature of reader response" (101). From this perspective, interpretative communities are arhetorical because they do not privilege the freedom for members to contribute their readings of the text. But they can be rhetorical under certain conditions, and this rhetoricality is what I want to explore in fuller detail.

Even though interpretative communities have a coercive nature, they can still be useful in a course like first-year composition. However, teachers and students must first understand that the rules for how to interpret a text are devised by the entire community. If students differ on interpretations, those interpretations can only be allowed in the community if each member agrees to it. In this case, students must make arguments about why their interpretation is valid. After sufficient negotiation, the members of the community can decide to accept the interpretation or reject it. If accepted, the student is free to put the argument into writing. If rejected, the student must rethink the text and develop a new interpretation that will appease the community of readers, thinkers, and writers.

When thought of as acts of negotiation, Fish's concept of an interpretative community sounds much like what Pratt finally arrives at. Pratt suggests that contact zones can become safe houses, "social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high

degrees of trust, shared understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression" (506). Whether students interpret a text or their own experiences, they should do so safely within first-year composition.[9]

Critical Literacies: In College and at Home

Writing within the Jeffersonian tradition, Robert Yagelski argues that writing instructors "teach the literacy that students must have in order to become active, participating citizens" (3). Thomas Jefferson's idea of an informed populace giving informed consent is not unlike the idea of learning about discourse in first-year composition and using that knowledge to make sense of texts outside of school. From this point of view, first-year composition helps students learn critical reading, thinking, and writing in order to become participating citizens of their home country. This goal is no less political than if we ask our students to become critical readers, thinkers, and writers in order to become more self-aware, or better communicators through the rest of college, or better employees at whatever job they land after graduating. Yagelski situates college English and the first-year composition course in an era of virtual literacies that readily compete with traditional reading material like Shakespeare and Harper Lee. He asks whether what we do in our courses actually helps our students "negotiate this often treacherous world" (6). The argument I have been building throughout this chapter, and one that will be laid out in detail in the remaining chapters, is that first-year composition can indeed help students negotiate the complexities of their everyday literacies (including college literacies).

Literacy is a term that does not lend itself to a quick and easy definition. The scholarship on literacy is vast, and I make no apologies for referencing only a bit of the scholarship I deem useful for this project. Literacy has long been identified as the ability to read and write (see Winterowd; Kist). This is a basic characterization akin to saying that rhetoric is persuasion. Literacy does involve reading and writing, but it also involves a great many other things. Winterowd acknowledges the concept of functional literacy by asking what it takes to be functional in a society (5). The answer, of course, is rhetorical: who you are, what you are engaging with, and where you engage it. He points out that "Literacy is always grounded in a social context—as [Kenneth] Burke likes to say, in a scene" (11). Kist, however, argues that "If literacy is to be inextricably linked to social context, then linked to that focus may be criticism of the power structure in that social context, as well as its prevailing discourses" (7). Privileging outré literature from popular cultures permits a degree of criticism along these lines. For instance, students will be studying literacies from their own experiences within an academic space that does not ordinarily sanction such texts as legitimate forms of study. Remember, many views of first-year composition are to prepare students for the academic writing they will encounter in the next three years, and my vision of first-year composition is not only to prepare them for college but also for the work they do outside of college.

When I speak about *student literacies*, I mean the literacies that students possess (to whatever degree) when they arrive in our first-year class. Students (like people in general, obviously) are literate in many areas. These literacies are many and varied, developed and undeveloped. Our students may be fully aware of them or completely

ignorant of what they possess. Take music, for instance. Some students will possess a

full range of hip-hop literacy; that is, they will know the hip-hop genre—artists, history,

and cultural contexts, while other students will know next to nothing about hip-hop but a

lot about country-western, pop, metal, or classical. Still other students will play

instruments from the guitar to the harp, will be dancers who choreograph music, will be

fluent in the discourse of MTV and VH-1, and will be singers—both on a surprisingly

good level and on a karaoke level. Although the range of literacies in music will vary,

students will have one thing in common: they will know what music is. Whatever

experiences they have and whatever they know about music, they will have listened to a

radio, a CD, or watched a music video before coming to our classes. Rare will be the

case of the student who timidly raises a hand to ask what music is. As instructors, then, if

we assign music as a critical text to be examined in first-year composition, we will have

privileged a literacy our students know in order to make them better readers, thinkers, and

writers about that literacy. So the next time they listen to a song, for example, students

can identify the singer's persona, the intended audience, the situation that generated it,

and the ways in which the song reflects and impacts the larger audience/society.

     Walter Ong made a point over twenty-five years ago that still resonates today. He

claimed, "Many people like to believe that today reading is on the wane" (1). His

observation foreshadows the NEA's 2004 report. Ong says, "We have all heard the

complaint that television is ruining the reading habits of children" (1). He does not

believe that comparing the children of his time (1970s) to the children of his past is fair

because the generations are different. The same is true even of the reported decline in

literary reading between 1984 and 2004. Ong's rationale is apparent: "It is in fact very difficult to compare the present state of reading and writing skills or activity with those of the past because past student populations do not match those of the present" (1). His advice is true even today. The student population of 2004 has been exposed to multiple literacies, or what Kist calls the new literacies.

These new literacies are pervasive in popular culture today. Kist argues that "Notions of print reading and writing have been undergoing a reconceptualization as the social nature of language and learning have been emphasized" (6). Because "Literacy is deeply enmeshed in the cultural, history, and everyday discourses of people's lives," first-year composition needs to reflect this in what it asks its students to work with (6).

If we are to support the presence of outré literature in first-year composition, it must occur with a direct appeal to today's student population. First-year writing courses cannot be seen as a fossilized remnant of previous generations. Popular cultures can be a starting point for locating materials to inject into course content—materials which will grab students' attention and make them want to read a text.

Deborah Brandt argues that in the context of Rhetoric and Composition, literacy "illuminates the ways that individual acts of writing are connected to larger cultural, historical, social, and political systems" (392). Rhetoric is useful because it asks students to examine the various positions people occupy in relation to these systems and understand how society works. Brandt also notes that literacy "may be useful for identifying pedagogical interests that may be common to teachers of both composition and literature" (392). Rhetorically speaking, pedagogy is determined in large part not

only by the instructor's preferences but also by the students and the reading material.[10]

That is, a course that assigns reading from popular cultures will be taught differently than a course that has readings from the sciences.

Academic literacy, then, is a rhetorical concept because it is created at a specific moment in time based on who and what is involved: the instructor, the students, the reading material, the writing assignments, the classroom space, the meeting time, and the length of the term. Patricia Bizzell grounds literacy in the complex operations of academic life. She argues, "Teaching academic literacy becomes a process of constructing academic literacy, creating it anew in each class through the interaction of the professor's and the students' cultural resources" (250-51). As I described earlier, this is what first-year composition is all about. Students and teachers do not possess one cultural literacy or one academic literacy. We possess cultural literacies *and* academic literacies, in addition to multiple other literacies. My point is that literacy is negotiated anew in each and every course students take and a teacher teaches. Outside the academy, literacy is negotiated in every situation we encounter. When dealing with a contact zone as heterogeneous as first-year composition, cultural literacy is present whether teachers like it or not. What matters is how we deal with it. We do justice to students' cultural heritages when we consider them rhetorically; that is, as experiences grounded in a specific context and suited for particular audiences.

Conclusion: What Is at Stake?

One of the issues at stake in my project is student retention. If first-year

composition is considered by some people to be a contact zone, it is also a *first*-contact zone, and as such has certain responsibilities. By *first*-contact zone, I mean that for many students first-year composition will be one of the first—if not the first—courses they take. Because the first-year sequence is mandatory in many programs, teachers and administrators have a duty to make sure the content of such courses reflects not only the goals and mission of the institution but also the practical needs of the students in their first year. The course will create an impression on students. Using literature as the content invokes a number of curricular issues that foster the impressions made on students (Lide and Lide 110). If students see that their literacies are privileged and used as content for a course, then they may have a more favorable reaction to the university as a place that sees them as active members of many communities, rather than as a place that sees them only as an identification number. Also, teaching outré literature rhetorically breaks from more traditional approaches students may have been exposed to in high school and thus offers them new perspectives on a familiar subject. Familiarity with literature is also another concern because if students feel more comfortable using literature as their reading material in the first year, they may feel less traumatized as they transition their lives into the full college experience. Finally, forming learning communities that investigate adolescent novels, television shows, and graphic novels is a serious way to keep students interested enough to continue their education at the university.

Another issue at stake is the increasing division between professors in composition and professors in literature. Corbett notes, "To ask whether literature and

composition are allies or rivals in the classroom is to suggest that there is potential for opposition between the two disciplines" (168). If nothing else, a divided English faculty sets a poor example for students who encounter it, either as an undergraduate or a graduate. Peter Elbow goes so far as to describe each side as cultures characterized by tension over "power, money, and prestige" (488). With the sides labeled as cultures, reaching a settlement between the two becomes much more challenging. Each "culture" now has a working sense of attitudes, beliefs, values, goals, pedagogies, theories, etc. Workload, appointments, promotion, and tenure all factor in to the acrimonious division that makes up each culture. A division between cultures seems far more permanent than thinking of the two as parts of the same whole. Such defined divisions based on values shows an inability for professional adults to compromise for the benefit of their constituents—the students. Both sets of professionals have a depth of experience that when combined can yield benefits in the classroom. If student retention is part of what is at stake in this debate, then a more unified faculty should be fully desirable on all accounts.

A third issue at stake is the loss of literature all together from a student's degree plan. Students who are determined not to take a course that requires reading literature will find every possible way to avoid doing so, despite a plethora of general education requirements or electives designed to include literary reading. Loopholes exist, and students find them. I recognize that my project advocates an expanded definition of literature, so much so that some scholars would still object that students are not reading literature. Additionally, some students may resist any idea of studying literature in a

generalist course. I can only respond by stressing the point that in the course, literature is in conjunction with critical thinking and writing. Students read literary texts rhetorically in order to develop skills that will allow them to think and write throughout the academy. The focus is not on literature alone, but on a host of skills and activities.

James Murphy observes, "in virtually every [English] department there is a deeply rooted division between those who teach 'reading,' commonly called 'literature,' and those who teach 'writing,' commonly called 'composition'" (3). When we teach courses that focus exclusively on writing—the student's process and drafting, for example—we risk not developing critical reading and thinking skills that are an integral part of critical literacy. When we teach first-year composition courses that focus on reading imaginative literature, we risk alienating writing and thinking (rhetoric). The solution is to meld the two extremes with rhetoric acting as the critical thinking link in the chain of literacy.

The September 10, 2004, edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published replies to the NEA's *Reading at Risk* report from six people. The Letters page bears the subtitle of "Why Johnny Isn't Reading—or Is He?" evoking the 1970s literacy debate. The writers point out what they perceive as flaws in the report, not the least of which includes the restrictive definition of literature and the loss of leisure time for reading. Both Barbara Fister and Wayne Steffen decry the narrow-mindedness of the NEA in defining literature. What Fister and Steffen fail to see is that the NEA has defined literature specifically. As I pointed out earlier, defining what someone means when using literature is necessary to avoid the very criticism Fister and Steffen level against the NEA. The NEA report clearly defines literary reading as "novels, short stories, plays, or

poetry" (ix). Whether I agree with the NEA's definition or not, it responded to and

pointed out a trend in a very specific context. Their message must not go unheeded: our

students are not reading literary texts as often as they were twenty years before.

Without using the word *rhetoric*, Carla Arnell asks the *Chronicle*'s readers a

fundamental question: "Could it be that today's decline in reading is partly a response to

a literary culture that no longer explores problems of meaning and value once essential to

everyday literature, and still important to American readers?" (A55). Although she

generalizes readers as American and does not acknowledge that Americans read widely,

her point is sound. Rhetorically, imaginative literature presents readers with

opportunities to reflect on the everyday world in which they work and play. We learn to

see our world better through the world of fiction. Without imaginative literature as part

of our lives, we have one less resource from which to evolve.

By understanding these four concepts in greater depth and seeing how each is

connected to the others, we begin to imagine a tapestry much larger than four academic

walls. We see that literature is not just a word; it is *what* we read. Rhetoric is not just a

word; it is *how* we think. Composition is not just a word; it is *where* we write. Literacy

is not just a word; it is *who* we are.

CHAPTER TWO

TEACHING ADOLESCENT FANTASY LITERATURE RHETORICALLY

IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Writing courses like first-year composition are not only about writing, or composing academic arguments. Students as writers must also read and think. What one reads and thinks about in first-year composition is precisely the heart of the debate about what first-year composition should or should not do. My goal is to see imaginative literature in terms broad enough to be suitable in first-year composition courses—courses which have administrative and university-wide demands upon them. I choose to use outré literature, or literature not ordinarily taught in first-year composition, because it may be more familiar to its generalist student population than traditional literature. The focus of this chapter, then, is on adolescent fantasy literature. To that end, this chapter provides a rationale for using adolescent literature in first-year composition by rhetorically interrogating what adolescent literature means, justifies Harry Potter as the case study, and suggests three rhetorical strategies and corresponding pedagogies for reading, thinking, and writing about adolescent fantasy literature.

Why Teach Adolescent Fantasy Literature in First-Year Composition?

Rhetorical issues of definition, audience, purpose, and context emerge when working with adolescent literature. As with any discourse, adolescent literature is embedded within a network of rhetorical elements that are not always easy to determine. One of the chief issues is definition. To define something "is to set bounds or limits […],

to state its essential nature" (D'Angelo 159). How something is defined depends on other rhetorical elements like purpose and audience. Peter Hunt says, "Just as most questions imply their answers, so definitions are controlled by their purpose. There can be, therefore, no single definition of 'Children's Literature'" ("Defining" 2). As much as readers are now thought of as individuals rather than as generalized subject groups, so too are categories of literature. This is true on two accounts: first, there is a great range of reading ability and emotional development between when a child first starts reading to when a child is considered an adult. Even the "cut-off" age is under dispute. Does having a driver's license at sixteen make one an adult, or the right to vote at eighteen, or the right to buy and consume alcohol at twenty-one? The point is that the age at which one someone is ready for adult literature cannot be permanently fixed. Second, the range of published texts that fall under the category of children's literature may seem ridiculous at times. Consider the opening lines of these two examples of children's literature: "Whee! A new family moved in next door. They have a girl, and the girl has a dog" and "The island of Gont, a single mountain that lifts its peak a mile above the storm-racked Northeast Sea, is a land famous for wizards."[11] I refuse to be held liable for choosing extremes as my illustration here because both books are called children's literature. The children's section in a typical bookstore is crammed with so-called children's literature that varies greatly in content.

Isabelle Holland uses *adolescent* literature, a term that more accurately reflects the population of first-year composition and fits better with my purpose. She says, "An adolescent is a human being on a journey in that great, amorphous sea called adolescence.

That is, he or she is somewhere between age twelve and ages eighteen or nineteen" (33-34). Deciding to use either *children's* or *adolescent* may seem like tiresome quibble to many people, but it is ultimately a rhetorical choice because of its effect on others. The idea of teaching *adolescent* literature in first-year composition may seem less explosive that teaching *children's* literature because a proposal to teach children's literature may elicit questions of whether picture books will be assigned. I prefer the term *adolescent literature* because the very audience of the texts we analyze are enrolled in the course we are teaching.[12]

Along with definition, adolescent literature creates discussions about audience. For example, Karin Lesnik-Oberstein questions what is meant by "children" or in my case, adolescent. She points out that "the 'children' of 'children's literature' are constituted as specialised ideas of 'children,' not necessarily related in any way to other 'children' (for instance those within education, psychology, sociology, history, art, or literature)" (16). She goes on to note that "'children' are divided by class, race, ethnic origins, gender, and so on" (17). Louise Rosenblatt argues this point when she states, "There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are only the potential millions of individual readers of the potential millions of individual literary works" (24). Idealizing the concept of a generic child reading a book is arhetroical, but sometimes necessary. We might be able to speak about groups or types of children who find certain parts of a book appealing, but we cannot hold useful discussions if everything about a book must be grounded in specific instances of a specific child. This allows us to teach our students ideas like informed generalizations; there will always be exceptions in

rhetorical situations, especially when it comes to assessing a target audience.

Hunt identifies other audiences beside adolescents. He says, "Paradoxically, although many books 'sink' towards childhood, so many rise toward adulthood" ("Defining" 15). Chief among the adult readers are the parents of young readers as well as adults who grew up reading children's literature and have an affinity for it. Hunt also includes in this adult population the critics who evaluate the books and the historians who write about books "which no longer concern their primary audience" (14). In first-year composition there is a dual audience: the adult instructor and the adolescent students, and both audiences learn to be readers as well as critics. Instructors know that students are not reading these books for pleasure, but as an academic assignment to strengthen their communicative skills.[13] The goal is to foster critical thinking, reading, and writing. Armed with rhetorical strategies, students will investigate how adolescent literature functions rhetorically in our society

Purpose is another rhetorical issue inherent in adolescent literature. Lesnik-Oberstein notes, "The definition of 'children's literature' lies at the heart of its endeavour: it is a category of books the existence of which absolutely depends on supposed relationships with a particular reading audience: children. The definition of 'children's literature' therefore is underpinned by purpose: it wants to be something in particular, because this is supposed to connect it with that reading audience— 'children'—with which it declares itself to be overtly and purposefully concerned" (15). When we ask questions about the purpose of children's literature, for example, we are in essence asking its *telos*—its end goal. Familiar answers abound: to entertain, to keep

occupied, to improve reading skills, to encourage creativity. The last goal recalls the words of Emily Dickinson's inspirational poem: "There is no frigate like a Book / To take us Lands away / Nor any Coursers like a Page / Of prancing Poetry—" (267). While these goals are familiar, there are other goals of adolescent literature in particular. For example, Lesnik-Oberstein summarizes a popular way critics define children's literature: "books which are good for children, and most particularly good in terms of emotional and moral values" (15-16). If the purpose of literature for young readers is believed to be the acquisition of "emotional and moral values," then we have the root of the controversy surrounding purpose.

Most adults who read have a fair sense of their own values. With children, however, values may not be fully developed. What they read when they are young will undoubtedly help form their senses of right and wrong. As much as children bring their experiences to a text, the text brings experiences to them in ways that are not always so with mature, adult readers. This represents what Louise Rosenblatt means by transactional reading. Values portrayed in children's literature can be conveyed by everything from how a female character acts to whether racial groups are present to whether religion is embraced to what the characters' home life is like. Reading is one way children learn about values.

Problems of purpose and audience do not seem as incendiary when we consider context. When readers are the focus of context in rhetorical reading situations, attention is given to the readers' environment. Whatever stimulus (indoor or outdoor, at home or in school, etc.) is around them often influences how the text is read, so much so that no

two readings of the same text will ever be the same. Iser argues this point when he claims, "With all literary texts, then, we may say that the reading process is selective, and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations. This is borne out by the fact that a second reading of a piece of literature often produces a different impression from the first" (1223). Both Iser and Rosenblatt contend that such differences in reading occur because of both internal and external changes. When we read a text a second time we are altered by the fact of having read it already and where we read a text may sway our attitude toward what we are reading.

On the other hand, when the text is the focus of context, attention is given to the circumstances around which the book was written and published. A critique of this nature addresses larger social circumstances and may even consider what circumstances brought the book and the reader together. In this chapter the context is first-year composition, a required college course on writing. The readers are not children and have mostly developed a sense of their own values; therefore, they will not be as influenced by what they read. Instead, their interest will be to read adolescent literature as rhetoricians interested in how the discourse says what it says and in how it communicates that to its audience.

Using adolescent literature to teach students about rhetoric and writing is ideal because so many components of the rhetorical situation are in play. As students read adolescent texts, they think critically (rhetorically) about issues of definition, audience, purpose, and context. Other rhetorical features can also be injected into discussions: for example, visual rhetoric like book jackets, word choice and style, chapter divisions, and

illustrations.

Aside from explicitly rhetorical reasons, there are other reasons to use adolescent literature in first-year composition. Adolescent fantasy literature helps students meet one of the WPA's outcomes. The WPA suggests that first-year composition faculty can help students "learn the interactions among critical thinking, critical reading, and writing" (Steering Committee 324). Adolescent literature can achieve this goal in part because students will learn how to read, think, and write critically about a discourse convention they have encountered before. In other words, it makes sense to teach new concepts and ideas about texts when we work with something familiar. Once the concepts are introduced and studied, then the students can move on to rhetorically analyzing texts that are unfamiliar, but by then, the rhetorical concepts will be familiar.

Fantasy literature, in particular, involves the outré, generates possibilities, and fosters hope. In terms of being outré, fantasy "takes place in a nonexistent and unreal world, such as fairyland, or concerns incredible and unreal characters […] or relies on scientific principles not yet discovered or contrary to present experience" (Holman and Harmon 192). In fantasy, even though characters and their experiences are unreal and worlds appear radically different from our own, there is a feeling that those experiences could happen to us in our world and those worlds could be our own. Like *The X-Files*'s Fox Mulder, we want to believe. E. M. Forester says that "fantasy asks us to pay something extra" (109), and we do so willingly. The suspension of our beliefs in order to partake in a different world and circumstances is part of the payment for the enjoyment we get when submersed in fantasy. The critical component of fantasy is an investigation

into how this world is created and what purpose it serves its readers.

In addition to being outré, fantasy also encourages readers to dream, something typical school readings do not always accomplish. Tamora Pierce observes, "Once children enter school, however, emphasis shifts from imaginative to reality-based writing, and many youngsters grow away from speculative fiction" (179). But fantasy fiction is more than reminiscences or reconnecting with past ideals. Pierce argues, that "Fantasy, along with science fiction, is a literature of *possibilities*. It opens the door to the realm of 'What If,' challenging readers to see beyond the concrete universe and to envision other ways of living and alternative mindsets" (180). In courses like first-year composition where many instructors encourage students to think outside the proverbial box, fantasy provides that out-of-box experience right there in front of them. Students are free to imagine the possibilities of playing Quidditch on a Firebolt, of waving a wand to write an essay, or studying at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Finally, fantasy encourages hope where there is little or none. In a world such as ours filled with increasing violence, sanctioned discrimination, and never-ending warfare, young readers turn to fantasy as a way to hope for better. Pierce says that fantasy "creates hope and optimism in readers" and may connect with students whose lives have been particularly troubled by the course of their lives (183). When recounting her own struggle in a dysfunctional family, Pierce remembers how Tolkien's Mordor helped her see that even through terrific and oppressive darkness, there is light—and with light, there is hope; Frodo prevails.

Despite these positive qualities adolescent fantasy fiction brings to a composition

class, there will be literalists who dismiss fantasy as stupid make-believe. Yes, fantasy is make-believe, but fantasy is rooted to some degree in realism. If it were not, then readers would not be able to comprehend the work. When we read fantasy, we feel the familiar workings of our world. Fantasy becomes a mirror to examine our own world. It is sometimes through the magic of make-believe that we come to recognize the very reality that we live in. When taught from the rhetorical perspectives I offer in this chapter, fantasy becomes a powerful tool for reflecting on our own values, morals, and beliefs.

Partly because I enjoy them so much and partly because they are receiving critical attention from scholars, I chose J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series as my case study. Rowling's books fit a traditional framework that is marked by wizards and witches, magic, faraway but recognizable places, potions, dragons and house-elves. It helps, I think, that these books have become the best-selling series in history.

Reading Harry Potter as a Rhetorician: A Case Study

Because the Harry Potter phenomenon is huge, I have narrowed my focus to the five published novels: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1997), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003).[14] I selected these as my case study for a number of reasons: they get people interested in reading; they transcend their target audience of children to include readers of all ages and socioeconomic groups; they are bestsellers that have left a mark on popular culture; they deal with outré themes of fantasy and everyday themes of education and

coming of age; they are modern-day morality plays; they are accessible for teachers to assign as reading material; they provide opportunities for enriching writing assignments.

As with any case study that is grounded in context, one of the chief reasons for assigning Harry Potter is its contemporariness. We are *in media res* of the phenomenon; that is, it is happening right now. Whether the books will still be read with as much enthusiasm as they are right now is not for me to speculate because, in a sense, it does not matter. In five years, the rhetorical strategies outlined in this chapter can be applied to another set of adolescent fantasy novels that has enthralled the country's imagination. The Harry Potter books work well in first-year composition because they are familiar texts to teach new concepts. Our students of all ages and backgrounds are likely to have at least heard of them and most students will have something in common with Harry Potter and his Hogwarts friends (and enemies). Mary Pharr observes, "Harry Potter is a hero whose story is in progress, and it can be no surprise that the center of his story is his development through metaphorical and literal education, as well as through the application of that education to his own expanding experience" (54). Like Harry, our students are progressing in their own education, however magical or not they seem to think theirs is.

Not everyone, however, has praised the Harry Potter series. Harold Bloom argues, "The cultural critics will, soon enough, introduce Harry Potter into their college curriculum, and *The New York Times* will go on celebrating another confirmation of the dumbing-down it leads and exemplifies" (A26). Bloom's argument is that interest in Rowling's books is fleeting and will not become a classic of children's literature. By

characterizing the first volume as a cross between the realism of *Tom Brown's School Days* by Thomas Hughes and the fantasy of *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, Bloom suggests that Rowling's work is barely if at all original.

What Bloom does not elaborate on in a positive way is the long tradition that the Harry Potter books belong to: the education novel. The bildungsroman is a novel of education in which the protagonist journeys from adolescence to adulthood facing and usually overcoming numerous obstacles that serve to make him or her stronger physically, emotionally, and morally. David Steege points out that "Over the course of the past 140 years, the public school novel has been a genre in its own right, with roots going back even further" (141). He also argues that Rowling's books "use many of the traditions, conventions, and concerns of public school novels and series" (143). But rather than simply repeat these traditions, "Rowling's books modify and modernize the tradition so that it is more pleasing to contemporary readers in general" (153). As novels of education, the Harry Potter novels seem to be ideal texts for college students to analyze.

Bloom also points out Rowling's lackluster style. He says, "Her prose style, heavy on cliché, makes no demands upon her readers" (A26). He notices seven clichés on page four, implying that other pages are stained with worn-out expressions. However, in one of the first serious pieces of Harry Potter scholarship, Edward Duffy refutes Bloom's charge of seven clichés. Duffy argues, "But the perhaps too-easy pleasure I confess to finding in the run of clichés Bloom has thus singled out is the way they sound the spiritual and linguistic shallows of the Muggle whose temper of mind and tone of

voice Rowling is elaborating and mocking" (171). The use of clichés at this moment in the text comments on the characters involved in the scene, something Rowling handles with "free-wheeling aplomb" (171). Duffy argues that people can dismiss these books as mere cliché if they read them too quickly, as Bloom admits that he does (A26). Ultimately, Duffy is optimistic that "the Harry Potter craze is cause both for general celebration and for a very particular hopefulness about the college reading and writing classrooms of a decade hence" (170). Equipped with rhetorical reading strategies, I see no reason to doubt Duffy's hopefulness.

Bloom ends his argument by saying 35 million book buyers are wrong to invest their time and resources in the Harry Potter book franchise. But five years later and with five total books, that number must be adjusted to 250 million book buyers (Isidore). Bloom's project of convincing people that Harry Potter readers are wrong seems to be a losing battle. As I show in this chapter, these books can be read for more than pleasure because they can be used to introduce college students to a concept like rhetorical analysis.

No one who makes a study of the Potter novels can easily dismiss Bloom's argument, and if we juxtapose it with the recent NEA *Reading at Risk* report, we have something of a dilemma. On the one hand, Bloom lectures the masses (both young and old) for not reading "superior fare." When asked why people read the Harry Potter novels, he says, "Presumably, if you cannot be persuaded to read anything better, Rowling will have to do" (A26). On the other hand, the NEA identifies a twenty percent decline in 18-24 year olds' literary reading. Granted, Harry Potter is targeted for slightly

younger readers, but the books have more widespread appeal and the 18-24 year age range reflects the typical population of first-year composition. As print books compete with multiple entertainment media these days, Bloom and others interested in promoting reading and popular literacy should thank Rowling for the imagination she sparks in people, especially younger readers.

Writing about working-class issues, William DeGenaro says, "The challenge involves what to do with the language and the ideas that students already possess, particularly language and ideas that clash with what's expected of them in college" (38). DeGenaro speaks to the larger issue of enculturation or indoctrination that happens when students leave their comfort zone of home for the contact zone of the academy. Generally, the academy expects each student to read college texts, to think critically about what they read and hear, and to write academic essays in Standard English. These expectations are not met easily when students arrive with poor reading skills, with simple and basic ideas, and with weak command of the English language. Rather than treat these students as needing help or dismissing them all together, DeGenaro seeks ways to work with what they already do know about reading, thinking, and writing, for example. Working with the familiar is one of the major goals of this dissertation.

Taking my cue from DeGenaro, I argue that adolescent literature is not what the academy expects writing instructors to teach in first-year composition, but is a discourse that incoming students are familiar with. If students have not read any of the Potter books, they will most likely know about them or have seen the movies. As cultural artifacts, the Harry Potter books are a part of students' literacies and are fruitful material

for a course like first-year composition.

We are in the midst of a publishing boom in Harry Potter scholarship. One basic category of publications is guide or reference books such as Elizabeth Schafer's *Exploring Harry Potter*, David Colbert's encyclopedic *The Magical Worlds of Harry Potter*, and Allan Zora and Elizabeth Kronzik's *The Sorcerer's Companion*. These books are not designed to offer interpretations of the novels, but only to act as resources to understand vocabulary or historical origins of characters or themes. A second category of publications called interpretative scholarship is more useful to the course I outline below. Among the leading books are Lana Whited's anthology *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*, Giselle Liza Anatol's collection *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*, and Professors Baggett and Klein's compilation *Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*. Interpretative scholarship has produced numerous way of reading and analyzing the Harry Potter novels. The above anthologies, for instance, contain feminist, cultural, racial and ethnic, religious, historical, linguistic, and technological interpretations (to name a few).

In the rest of this chapter, I work both inside the established interpretative scholarship and outside it in order to construct three categories of rhetorical analysis for adolescent fantasy literature in general and the Harry Potter novels in particular. I start with defamiliarization because its emphasis is on reading the text to unveil something about the society individual readers live in. Second, identification reveals how readers find some shared values with a character, a location, or an act, for instance. The analysis is both internal and external—meaning the reader searches for what it is inside that

triggers the reaction to something outside themselves that resides in the text. Identification takes its cues from the work of Kenneth Burke and Joseph Campbell. With identification, the focus shifts from a world or societal view to an individual view. Third, pathetic rhetoric, or a rhetoric of pathos, shows how readers emotionally connect to novels. I adapt this strategy from Wayne Booth's notion of ordering intensities. At stake in pathetic rhetoric is the deeply emotional connection readers feel for characters they identify with in a world that seems eerily familiar.

Unit One: Defamiliarization

In keeping with the popular fashion adage that retro is in again, I turn to an important concept of the early-twentieth century Russian formalists: defamiliarization. Holman and Harmon define it this way: "Because our senses are forever falling into rigid habits and empty routines, we need art periodically to wake us up by making the familiar suddenly seem strange—and the process of estrangement is *defamiliarization*" (130). Defamiliarization works as an imprecise mirror that distorts the world readers have come to know as their own. Although defamiliarization may have gone out of vogue decades ago, its basic premise is applicable to a genre like adolescent fantasy literature, a genre which distorts reality in an effort to get readers to see something new about the places in which they live. I argue that defamiliarization is rhetorical because of its examination of the effect literary language has on people to create change in their own lives as a result of having read literature.

Defamiliarization is the hallmark of Russian formalism, a movement that emerged

in Moscow in 1915 when a group of linguists formed OPOYAZ (the Society for the Study of Poetic Language) and lasted about fifteen years. Championed by a revolutionary group of literary thinkers, Russian formalism found meaning in the *form* of literature as opposed to the *content*. Critic Terry Eagleton notes, "Formalism was essentially the application of linguistics to the study of literature; and because the linguistics in question were of a formal kind, concerned with the structures of language rather than with what one might actually say, the Formalists passed over the analysis of literary 'content' […] for the study of literary form" (3). Considered in this light, Russian formalism can be seen as a precursor to American new criticism, though the two share some important differences.

Russian formalists believed that language could be divided into a normal language—used for everyday communication—and a poetic language—used to write poetry or prose fiction about the everyday world. In some ways, Russian formalists were ahead of their time when making connections between the form of the text and the readers' experience with the text, for the only way to recognize that a text defamiliarizes people is to understand that readers bring something to the text and take something away from that text. Readers bring their own experiences to the text and have them transformed by what the text is and says. Readers of literary texts, then, understand there is a difference between the world they read about (or in) and the world they live in on a daily basis. This difference is the crux of defamiliarization at its highest level.

According to David Richter, defamiliarization operates on several levels. He argues that on a preliminary level, "the formalists analyzed sentences taken from literary

texts to see how they estranged reality as a purely aesthetic end in itself" (701). In this case, attention may be devoted to the choice of individual words or to the placement of those words in a sentence. Critics' goals are to see how word choice or arrangement is somehow different from the reality of writing, perhaps for a newspaper or other nonfiction prose publication. The point, remember, is that literary language is different from nonliterary language, and the Russian formalists' project was to discover how this occurred.

However, if taken to a higher level, Richter says "the [Russian] formalists saw texts' representations of reality as a technique for defamiliarizing the social ideas of the dominant culture [...]" (701). On this level defamiliarization operates at its most rhetorical and, some might suggest, most radical. Even if we understand rhetoric in its simplest manifestation of persuasion among author, text, and reader, we have in defamiliarization a highly rhetorical act. The intense power of literary language to expose to people the starkness of their living and working conditions is enlightening, but in postrevolutionary Russian, also dangerous. Eagleton observes, "Under the pressure of literary devices, ordinary language was intensified, condensed, twisted, telescoped, drawn out, turned on its head. It was language 'made strange'; and because of this estrangement, the everyday world was also suddenly made unfamiliar" (4). He argues "literary discourse estranges or alienates ordinary speech, but in doing so, paradoxically, brings us into a fuller, more intimate possession of experience" (4). Ideally, when readers return to their ordinary world—a world they have seen portrayed as such in the fiction they read—they do so with the intent of seeking ways to change their everyday

conditions for the better.

Victor Shklovsky argues that "art is thinking in images" (717). This maxim builds the foundation for the concept of defamiliarization, in part, because the idea of thinking in images is somehow perceived as strange or not ordinary. He argues, "The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' […] because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged" (720). Shklovsky implies that in order for art to have a sensation—or an effect—it must have an audience. Because art has an audience, it therefore seeks somehow to affect this audience. By striving to understand how art makes itself unfamiliar to an audience, Shklovsky and others are seeking answers to questions inherent to rhetorical criticism.

Russian formalists contend that authors of literature use devices in language to change the way readers see the world around them. Rhetoric operates when language, as the means of communication, is used by one to affect the response of another or others. Fredric Jameson notes that defamiliarization

> permits the establishment of a hierarchy within the literary work itself.
> Inasmuch as the ultimate purpose of the work of art is now given in
> advance—namely the renewal of perception, the seeing of the world
> suddenly in a new light, in a new and unforeseen way—the elements and
> techniques or devices […] of the work are now all ordered to this end.
> (52)

As much as the Russian formalists were a progressive group, however, they still

conformed to the typical standard of the formalists—the need to find order (unity, coherence, etc) in a literary text. But there is something rhetorical in their effort. If defamiliarization is present in the text and the outcome of being "made strange" is to change living and working conditions in the ordinary world, then someone must have orchestrated this entire effort. And that person, obviously, is the author of the work. Authors must convince readers to believe in the strange words and form of the text. To convince them, the text must be persuasive. To be persuasive, the text has to have an order. Figuring out which devices should come in what order depends a great deal on the writer's assessment of audience and context. Defamiliarization just does not happen; it is created.

Defamiliarization seems like an ideal concept to work with regarding fantasy literature. W. R. Irwin notes that "Our appetites for strangeness are powerful, but they do not necessarily end in Faust-like efforts to penetrate ultimate mysteries" (3-4). His overall argument is that fantasy literature fulfills a basic human need of escape from the world which it created. He says, "Thus it is no cause for wonder that literature is pervaded by the systematic representation of what we generally think antinatural or impossible and of what contravenes intellectual conventions in such a manner as to become temporarily with credence" (4). When we read fantasy, we believe that what happens in that world could happen in our world. Irwin defines fantasy this way: "a fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility; it is the narrative result of transforming the condition contrary to fact into 'fact' itself" (4). And this transformation of what-is-not-fact into fact is what

defamiliarizes readers.

But Irwin does not accept the rhetorical power of defamiliarization's goal of changing reality. He argues, "Just as fantasy does not exclude emotion, so it does not fundamentally attack the norms it denies. It may leave the reader enriched with an intellectual modification that prevents his [or her] ever again holding to his [or her] original naïve understanding of the norm, but it will cause no revolution" (183). Such a statement denies the defamiliarizing effect of fantasy literature. But perhaps the Russian formalists placed too great a burden on the power of literary texts. E. M. Forester might agree when he claims, "The power of fantasy penetrates into every corner of the universe, but not into the forces that govern it"—if by forces Forester is speaking not of a literal universe but of the laws and government policies that run a country or province (the microscopic version of the universe) (110). Perhaps a flaw in Irwin's thinking is his association of wit to play to narrative. Let me explain. He argues this way: "I have repeatedly stressed that wit turned to making fanciful narrative operates according to the principles of play. Whatever else they may be, revolutionists are not playful" (183). My initial response to Irwin's assertion is why not? If playfulness of narrative or other literary devices is what convinces one person to return from reading to make some change in the world, then how is this not a success? Remember, we are talking about the literary text itself—and the strategies and devices in it—that is what inspires readers to associate something strangely familiar in the text to the stark familiarity of the world they inhabit. Irwin would agree with this, I think, when he says, "Yet to say that fantasy strikes against convention with no zeal to alter or subvert is not to suggest that fantasy is

quite frivolous. A fantasist [writer] may really hope that his [of her] story will have some lasting effect of modifying the way in which his [or her] readers accept the norm that he [or she] has playfully violated" (183). Only here does Irwin glimpse the rhetorical power—playful or not—fantasy has on its readers.

John Killinger, a Christian minister who defends the books, argues that the sense of magical strangeness (defamiliarization) is precisely what generates so much interest in the novels. He says:

> there is no question that the reader who enters the fiction of J. K. Rowling
>
> is stepping into a world of magic and enchantment, one in which portraits
>
> move and talk, trees take out their aggressions on people, ordinary objects
>
> fly through the air, strange, belligerent plants, animals, and insects share
>
> the planet, and wizards practice exceptional powers that Muggles or
>
> ordinary people don't understand and usually don't even see. (106)

Killinger's point is that even though these objects have magical properties, they are familiar to us. We recognize them for what they are and can more readily accept the magical moments in the texts as plausible. Although we cannot fly on broomsticks, we can fly on hang gliders.

Defamiliarization can be used to analyze a number of issues in the Harry Potter novels. While the term itself does not appear in the critical scholarship on Harry Potter, critics use it when they discuss issues that deal with the strangeness of Harry's magical world. Objects, for instance, often are endowed with magical abilities. Shawn Klein writes about the seductive powers of the Mirror of Erised, an object important to book

one's storyline. When Harry notices that he can see his parents in the mirror, he becomes addicted to it, not realizing precisely what the mirror does. Klein remarks, "The problem is an example of the traditional distinction between appearance and reality" (93). The mirror is a familiar object, but it holds an unfamiliar reflection, yet it shows people what they desire (Erised spelled backwards). When we look into mirrors in our own world, we see ourselves as we are, but we also might wish for something better. Thus, the Mirror of Erised, like all mirrors, allows us to critique ourselves and ultimately change ourselves. From a defamiliarization standpoint, the Mirror of Erised snaps us out of our rut in life by showing us more than we can hope for, even if that hope is only fleeting.

An examination of technology in the magical world is another way defamiliarization reveals something about both worlds. Margaret Oakes describes the world of wizards as a "sort of Looking-Glass Land; similar, but not-so-similar, partner to our own electronically advanced society: it is a contradictory combination of advancement worthy of the most far-reaching science fiction, and an everyday life so antiquated as to be almost medieval" (118). Oakes points out that societies can function and survive just as well without electronic gizmos. Anyone who dreams of being a wizard or witch and living in a world where Hogwarts is just a train ride away would have to abandon comfortable things like DVDs, CDs, high-speed Internet connections, and cell phones. Viewed this way, the Harry Potter novels almost read as an indictment of the technological advancements our society has made and our growing dependence on those developments.

Another way defamiliarization works in the Harry Potter novels is through its

contemporary British locale. Unlike most fantasy works of literature, Rowling's story is

set in modern-day England. At the outset, there seems to be very little difference

between the two worlds. Cockrell notes: "This is contemporary England, and instead we

find bankers and government bureaucracy. People, even magical ones, have to get jobs.

But across everything is the veil of magic […]" (15). When we read the novels, we do

not have to suspend our beliefs fully to understand or enjoy the story. We read about

people living in suburbia, a boy going away to school, professors teaching school, and so

forth. In truth, we need not go very far at all to be in Harry's magical world. Bloom

agrees when he says that readers "want to join her world, imaginary or not. She feeds a

vast hunger for unreality" (A26). The feeling of emancipation is particularly significant

when considered from a defamiliar standpoint. Literature during postrevolutionary

Russia was especially attentive to themes of liberation and freedom. Reading the

strangeness in fiction was one way ordinary people could partake in the fantasy of

freedom, especially if they could not feel that freedom in the course of their real lives.

Defamiliarization also allows us to examine the role of language in Harry's world.

The language to cast spells, for instance, is one way the novels seem both familiar and

different at the same time. Spells like *lumos*, *nox*, and *expelliarmus* seem familiar

because they are based on Latin (an old language of our world) and translate roughly to

light, night, and disarm. Even if readers do not know Latin, the words sound similar to

what they mean. This language is privileged because in order to cast magic, most

wizards and witches have to speak the words.

Finally, defamiliarization locates intersections between the Muggle world (our

world) and the magical world (Harry's world) in order to see ways in which to make our world a better place. An original goal of using poetic language for the masses was to provoke change on a societal level. Thus, it is a concept that depends on both the text and the reader. Identification is another rhetorical concept that depends on the relationship between text and reader, only with a less revolutionary purpose.

Unit Two: Identification

Defamiliarization is a global approach to a text because it explains how a fantastical world can seem both strange and unfamiliar in order for us to see things in our world that need changing. On the other hand, identification operates at a local, individual level. Rhetorical theories of identification help explain why texts may seem familiar to readers in part because readers find something of themselves or something they know well reflected in a character or situation, for example. Identification helps explain why some readers have such intense reactions (positive or negative) to something in the text, like a character we love or love to hate.

The theories of Kenneth Burke are helpful in coming to a better understanding of what identification is in literature and how it can be used to understand the Harry Potter novels. Because identification posits a relationship among author, text, and reader, it is a highly rhetorical concept, especially when considering adolescent literature as an object of its study. Kenneth Burke argues, "You persuade a man [or woman] only insofar as you can talk his [or her] language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his [or hers]" (*Rhetoric* 55). Though he speaks about

discourse broadly, identification regularly operates in literature. "Literature has always

been concerned with questions about identity, and literary works sketch answers,

implicitly or explicitly, to these questions," notes literary theorist Jonathan Culler (110).

He goes on to say that the novel in particular has been a place where readers see

characters being influenced by their past and the social forces that surround them. Culler

argues that literature plays an important part in how readers create their own identities:

"The value of literature has long been linked to the vicarious experiences it gives readers,

enabling them to know how it feels to be in particular situations and thus to acquire

dispositions to act and feel in certain ways" (112). The value of the rhetorical strategy of

identification is to understand just how a work of literature is persuasive enough to have

readers relate to the attributes of its characters. In examining literature, then, readers also

examine their own lives.

 For Burke, persuasion occurs through establishing common ground—a place

where both author and reader stand. Burke calls the sharing of common ground

consubstantiality. Foss, Foss, and Trapp note,

> Individuals form selves or identities through various properties or
>
> substances, which include such things as physical objects, occupations,
>
> friends, activities, beliefs, and values. As they ally themselves with
>
> various properties or substances, they share substance with whatever or
>
> whomever they associate and simultaneously define themselves against or
>
> separate themselves from others with whom they choose not to identify.
>
> (192)

My focus now turns to the common ground established by the author of fiction. What is common ground and how do we recognize it? In *adolescent literature* common ground must be obvious and fairly uncomplicated for young readers to recognize while in *fantasy fiction* common ground must resemble the reality of the reader, otherwise everything would be so utterly foreign that persuasion cannot take place simply because readers will not comprehend what is happening. Marlowe argues that fantasy is "a fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (ix). Fantasy has characters that connect to readers so much so that readers feel as if they know those characters. This is identification in its most basic guise.

But identification has its own set of issues to confront before accepting. First, identification often operates on a generalized, detached level, meaning it ignores individuals. Adolescent literature assumes a young audience. If identification is to be present at all during the reading experience, as Lesnik-Oberstein points out, the text must have a "child in the book" (26). The logic here is that young readers will identify with youngsters in the book as they do with Harry, Hermione, or Ron. Anatol points out, "Rowling's novels allow children to identify with a character who triumphs even though he, like them, appears powerless" (xiii). I would agree that even adult readers who feel powerless in their job or life experiences identify in this fashion, as well. Obviously children can identify with adult characters in novels, especially if they regard those characters as potential role models or as possessing characteristics that they wish to

emulate on some level. Extending this line of discussion, then, we can ask whether the child in the book is indeed someone a child reader can identify with. That is, can a female child reader identify with Harry Potter? Can an Asian American child identify with Harry Potter? If so, then how? And if not, then why?

A second issue involving identification resides in the transmission and acceptance of values. Charles Sarland notes that "The assumption is that readers 'identify with' the protagonists, and thus take on their particular value positions" (49). Sarland's emphasis is on the role of readers, and in this case of child readers. Identification becomes a politically-charged issue when we consider Sarland's point that the values inherent in certain characters (or symbols, themes, settings, etc.) are identified with by young readers. Tamora Pierce recognizes the powerful connection fantasy literature has with identification when she says, "Intelligent readers will come to relate the questions raised in these books to their own lives" (180). In terms of a generalized view of first-year composition, the idea of self-reflection or self-questioning is a long-standing goal typically expressed in journaling or personal-based writing assignments. A close look at how identification establishes common ground helps expose how the books transcend age, race, gender, and values.

Authors establish common ground by drawing on experiences that may seem familiar to readers. In this rest of this section, I examine how identification works in the Harry Potter books by examining names/title, property, clothes/fashion, media, the hero's journey, gender, and race.

First, names and titles are a concrete way in which society establishes identity.

Burke points out, "For the rhetorician uses 'titles' (either imaginal or ideological) to identify a person or a cause with whatever kinds of things will, in his [or her] judgment, call forth the desired response" (*Rhetoric* 86). British society, for example, still holds titles in high esteem, especially with royalty. England has a queen, princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, sirs and dames, and should Prince Charles one day ascend to the kingship, the country would have its first ever *princess consort*, a newly created title for his second wife, Camilla.

In adolescent literature, titles help young readers understand how they are supposed to respond to characters, for example. In Harry Potter, readers encounter familiar titles such as *Lord* and *professor*—titles that help bridge the magical world and the Muggle world, but also help to establish a sense of hierarchy in both worlds. In this way, titles teach young readers that there are people who command greater authority (whether real or perceived) in both worlds. But the Potter series also has descriptive titles for several of its characters. For example, Harry is known throughout the magical community as "the boy who lived" and Voldemort as "You-Know-Who." Epithets or titles such as these work rhetorically to indicate how readers are to respond to these characters without the author directly telling readers. The goal of analyzing titles is not merely to point them out, but to show how they function as indicators of character and as reflections of the society that creates and maintains them as a way of allocating power. For example, as a student at Hogwarts, Harry must call his teachers by their professional title: "Professor." Harry and Severus Snape, the potions master, do not like each other, and when Harry is among his friends, he attempts to disrupt Professor Snape's authority

by calling him only by his last name. When Harry refers to him this way in conversations with Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster corrects him: "*Professor* Snape, Harry" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 299). Italics are used to emphasize the importance of using the title to define the potions master. So, even when Harry attempts to subvert the authoritarian hierarchy, he is forced back into his position of student by the headmaster, who is usually beyond dispute.

Property is as another way of identification in literature and also speaks to issues of hierarchy. Burke notes, "In the realm of Rhetoric, such identification is frequently by property in the most materialistic sense of the term […]" (*Rhetoric* 23-24). Property can mean anything from location or setting to the family homestead. One of the best examples in the Harry Potter novels of how people are identified through their property is with the Weasleys and their Burrow. Arthur and Molly Weasley and their children are a pure-blood wizarding family. Arthur earns a basic salary working at the Ministry of Magic, while Molly stays at home. Raising and sending their seven children to Hogwarts puts a considerable strain on their financial resources. Unlike most middle class families in the Muggle world (think of the Durselys in suburbia, for example) the Weasleys live in a rural environment reminiscent of farm workers. The Weasley homestead is observed through Harry's eyes:

> It looked as though it had once been a large stone pigpen, but extra rooms had been added here and there until it was several stories high and so crooked it looked as though it were held up by magic (which, Harry reminded himself, it probably was). Four or five chimneys were perched

on top of the red roof. A lopsided sign stuck in the ground near the

entrance read, THE BURROW. Around the front door lay a jumble of rubber

boots and a very rusty cauldron. Several fat brown chickens were pecking

their way around the yard. (*Chamber of Secrets* 32)

Key words such as "pigpen," "crooked," "perched," "lopsided," "jumble," and "rusty"

attest to the chaotic, disorganized home. Such words are fully appropriate for a family

with a working father, a tired mother, and a bunch of kids. But the overall description

creates a farm-like atmosphere where hard-working farmers/people are not afraid to get

their hands dirty in order to do the work that needs to be done to sustain themselves in the

competitiveness of the world. The fact that Mrs. Weasley is described as a "short, plump,

kind-faced woman" (32) who wears a "flowered apron with a wand sticking out of the

pocket" (33) reinforces the image of a farmer's wife. The Weasleys are grounded to their

home, and as much as they define their home, their home also defines them (with the

exception of Percy who strives to break free from his "farmer's" roots).

At stake in this line of analysis is the basic question, do we make our home, or

does our home make us? In addition to the Weasleys' home, one might examine number

four Privet Drive, the house where Harry lived for the first eleven years and must return

to every summer. Readers can think about property as a means of identification by

asking these questions: In what ways is this a typical suburban abode? What values are

consecrated in this home? In what ways is this a home for Harry? How is it not a home

for Harry?

A third indicator of how people are identified is through clothes or fashion. Many

young adults are especially susceptible to the latest trends in shoes, jeans, shirts and other

adornments because of their desire to blend in with the crowd. Burke argues that clothes

are indicative of social class and a crucial part of what he identifies as mystery. He notes,

"the conditions for 'mystery' are set by any pronounced social distinction, as between

nobility and commoners, courtiers and king, leader and people, rich and poor, judge and

prisoner at the bar, 'superior race' and underprivileged 'races' or minorities" (*Rhetoric*

115). Burkes says, "in mystery there must be strangeness; but the estranged must also be

thought of as in some way capable of communion" (115). Burke references Carlyle: "Is

it not to Clothes that most men do reverence?" (118). He then connects Carlyle and Karl

Marx: "Both [men] are talking about the kind of hierarchy that arose in the world with the

division of labor. Marx says that the modern division of labor began in earnest with the

manufacture of Cloth" (118-19). Burke suggests that clothes are symbolic of social class

and that social class and clothing are ways of identification which persuade (in fiction, as

in reality) people as to the nature of a person, but also reveal something about the society

in which these clothes are manufactured, sold, and worn.

Specifically, in Harry's magical world, robes distinguish between classes. A

classic example is the difference between the middle class (the Weasleys) and the upper

class (the Malfoys). In *Goblet of Fire*, Draco and Ron Weasley have a bit of a row on the

Hogwarts Express:

"Weasley…what is that?" said Malfoy, pointing at Pigwidgeon's cage.

A sleeve of Ron's dress robes was dangling from it, swaying with the

motion of the train, the moldy lace cuff very obvious.

Ron made to stuff the robes out of sight, but Malfoy was too quick for

him; he seized the sleeve and pulled.

"Look at this!" said Malfoy in ecstasy, holding up Ron's robes and

showing Crabbe and Goyle, "Weasley, you weren't thinking of wearing

these, were you? I mean—they were very fashionable in about eighteen

ninety…."

"Eat dung, Malfoy!" said Ron, the same color as the dress robes as he

snatched them back out of Malfoy's grip. Malfoy howled with derisive

laughter; Crabbe and Goyle guffawed stupidly. (168)

By this point in the series, the tension between the haves and the have-nots (the Malfoys

and the Weasleys) is well established. By highlighting the clothes the characters wear,

Rowling is using magical society as a mirror to reflect the same class distinctions faced in

Muggle society and in high school and college.

Fittingly, Harry meets his nemesis, Draco Malfoy, for the first time in Madam

Malkin's Robes for All Occasions, a location that accentuates the significance of clothes.

Their meeting introduces a powerful theme running through the five novels: racism (see

below). Without knowing who each other is, Draco explains the philosophy that so-

called "dark" wizards have: "I really don't think they should let the other sort in, do

you?" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 78). By "other sort," Draco means wizards and witches born to

Muggle parents, parents without a history or connection to the magical world. Draco

continues, "They're just not the same, they've never been brought up to know our ways.

Some of them have never even heard of Hogwarts until they get the letter, imagine. I

think they should keep it in the old wizarding families. What's your surname, anyway?"

(78). The irony here is that Harry's mother was not pure blood and because of his

parents' death, he was raised in a Muggle household completely devoid of magic. Draco

is more interested in learning Harry's surname so he might be able to identify him as a

pure blood.

A fourth way identification works in the Potter novels is when people form

opinions of others through the media. While this concept does not come directly from

Burke, it does speak to how people identify others. A news report, for example,

assembles a particular profile of the subject of that report and then presents it to the

masses. The case of Sirius Black in *Prisoner of Azkaban* illustrates how readers and

other characters come to regard the supposedly deranged killer. Readers are first

introduced to Black through a Muggle television newscast. It is not difficult to say that

many Muggles believe what they see and hear on television news programs. The reporter

says, "The public is warned that Black is armed and extremely dangerous. A special hot

line has been set up, and any sightings of Black should be reported immediately" (16-17).

The government needed to portray Black as the essence of villainy in order for readers to

accept that he is dangerous and, therefore, a threat. After seeing how Black's character is

set up for readers, students can then ask how the press portrays people in their own

society.

Identification establishes common ground in fantasy literature through what

Joseph Campbell calls the hero's journey. Of myth, Campbell says, "it will be always the

one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with

challengingly persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told" (3). Campbell's hero with a thousand faces turns up in stories across time and continents. There may be numerous reasons why readers of fantasy literature recognize the hero character so readily. Perhaps readers see those hero qualities in themselves or in others around them, or perhaps the hero motif is so ingrained in their own lived experiences (in books, television, comics, video games, etc.). Whatever the reason, adolescent literature is rife with heroes on the mythic journey.

Campbell's theories about mythology and the hero's quest are examples of rhetoric on a universal level. Mary Pharr notes, "Humanity has always had a boundless interest in heroes, in those few among us who rise to perform great but arduous deeds. That interest is both innate and universal, representing as it does something individualized within a society and yet wide-ranging among all societies" (53). When readers encounter the hero character on a journey—the pattern appears familiar and comfortable. In a way, this mythological pattern is a type of formula. M. H. Dunlop says, "Formula is best defined as consisting of 'recognizable conventions which give rise to certain expectations' […]. Identification of those conventions constitutes one of the decoding tasks to be performed by students and can further lead to pleasurable recognition of the sturdiness and durability" of the pattern in fiction (253). We literally identify the pattern and relish how the hero navigates the journey, wondering whether we would make the same choices and waiting to see how the journey is resolved.

Merely identifying the hero's journey in the Harry Potter series, for example, is only the beginning of a fruitful analysis. Pharr offers this advice: "The hero's story has

the 'thousand faces' made famous by Campbell's work, but it is still a *story*, that is, a narrative process by which things happen to create, to shape, and to demonstrate the hero in action" (54). The narrative process of the Potter books is where critical application of Campbell's theories must happen. How does the text create the narrative? How is Harry impacted or shaped by the narrative events? And what does Harry do to achieve his greatness? These questions and others begin to unravel the rhetoric of Harry's journey through the five published books.

Analyzing gender identities in the novels is a sixth way identification works. Sonja Foss writes, "The critic's concern is with discovering what the artifact presents as standard, normal, desirable, and appropriate behavior for women and men" (170). Because men and women are constructed in the texts, Foss argues, readers must seek to discover how that construction occurs. Because Hermione Granger is the most visible female in the novels, she has received the most attention from critics. Eliza Dresang's essay examines the literary history of Hermione's first name as well as whether she is a caricature or a stereotype. Naming is a rhetorical act because our names gives us authority to exist. Without a name, Dresang's argument goes, we have no power in society. In fiction, names are important because their names often connote their strengths and weaknesses. In this case, Hermione is "the female form of Hermes, messenger of the gods, god of science, trade, and eloquence […] the daughter of Helen of Troy and Menelaus, King of Sparta" (Dresang 213). Hermione is smart and perhaps even wise for her years as she often mediates between impulse and caution when Harry and her friends have moral decisions to make, much like a daughter of two kingdoms.

Brycchan Carey, however, sees Hermione Granger as an advocate for social justice when she fights for the rights of house-elves. Unlike Harry and Ron, Hermione "sees the problem as a public one, requiring political engagement to reach public solutions" (105). Reading Hermione this way takes her out of the domestic or private realm (a typical feminine sphere) and into the civic realm (a typical masculine sphere). In *Goblet of Fire*, Hermione is the only character willing to openly combat racism against house-elves. And Mimi Gladstein considers gender in the novels from a moral point of view: "J. K. Rowling depicts a world where equal opportunity among the sexes is a given" (49). In this outré world, readers can see for themselves what life is like when both sexes are treated as equals. Thus, "The character of Hermione plays the important role of understanding and showing Rowling's vision of a world where what is important—regardless of sex—are people, their choices, and their actions" (55). Hermione obviously receives the most critical attention when it comes to gender because she is the only female main character. But there are a host of other female characters waiting to undergo a critical analysis in terms of identification and gender.

With that said, however, a rich area for research into the Harry Potter novels is not how femininity is constructed, but, rather, how masculinity is constructed—an idea Foss notes but the Harry Potter scholarship thus far overlooks. In the first novel, readers can examine the first male authority figure we see: Vernon Dursley, Harry's uncle. Vernon is the epitome of male, father, uncle. He is aggressive, loud, and very strict. Because he knows Harry has the potential for magic, he also scrutinizes Harry's every move, complaining loudly about Harry's wild hair growing too fast. Harry and his

friends as well as the Hogwarts professors are also in need of critical analysis. At school, Harry is not much of a bookworm as he and Ron continually blow off their studies in favor of wizard chess or a stroll along the lake. Rather, Harry finds himself an instant jock when Professor McGonagall recommends Harry become the Gryffindor seeker. To be the hero of the story, the novels suggest, one must also be qualified to play sports and play them well. Even in the magical world, a great emphasis is placed upon boys playing sports. When events in the plot sideline Harry from playing, he becomes belligerent and rebels, as if he is defined by what he does on the Quidditch field, not by what he does in the classroom.

Finally, identification can be used to examine how racial identities are constructed in the novels. One of the criticisms of the Harry Potter books related to identification might be the lack of racial diversity. The three main characters are white, as is most of the supporting cast. But, racial themes dominate the book, not in an obvious, color-oriented way (as in the Muggle world), but on a genetic, inbreeding way. Whited argues that Rowling develops a powerful theme throughout the five published books: "the goal of racial purity and the horrors perpetrated by those who pursue it" (368). While there may be merit in discussing the absence of race in the novels, research will do a great disservice to overlook the racial themes that are present.

In examining the racial themes lining Rowling's story, Burke's theory of associational clusters may be valuable. Associational clusters allow readers to identify how certain words in a text can be seen as a lens through which worldviews are espoused. Often, such words can be used as a way to see something in the novel's depiction of

society that may not be explicit. In explaining associational clusters, Burke says, "the

work of every writer contains a set of implicit equations. [The writer] uses 'associational

clusters.' And you may, by examining his [or her] work, find 'what goes with what' in

these clusters—what kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations go with his

[or her] notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc." (*Philosophy* 20).

The word *Mudblood* in the Harry Potter series is a term associated with negative

attitude and is one that espouses a particularly racist and elitist view of the world.

Mudblood is one of the more offensive words in the magical community because it

identifies (or targets) someone of magical ability who is Muggle-born and, thus, has

muddy, or impure, blood. Furthermore, the word itself is capitalized, reinforcing its

significance because words that are capitalized stand out and command readers to look

and not turn away so easily.

Mudblood is first spoken in *Chamber of Secrets* during an impromptu Quidditch

practice between, fittingly, Gryffindor and Slytherin—the two houses most symbolizing

good and evil, respectively. Also not surprisingly, the term is spoken by Draco Malfoy.

Addressing Hermione, Draco spits,

> "No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood," he spat.
>
> Harry knew at once that Malfoy had said something really bad because
>
> there was an instant uproar at his words. Flint [Slytherin captain] had to
>
> dive in front of Malfoy to stop Fred and George [Gryffindor players]
>
> jumping on him, Alicia [Gryffindor player] shrieked, "*How dare you!*",
>
> and Ron plunged his hand into his robes, pulled out his wand, yelling,

"You'll pay for that one, Malfoy!" and pointed it furiously under Flint's

arm at Malfoy's face.

A loud bang echoed around the stadium and a jet of green light shot

out of the wrong end of Ron's wand, hitting him in the stomach and

sending him reeling backward onto the grass.

[….]

Ron opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out. Instead he

gave an almighty belch and several slugs dribbled out of his mouth onto

his lap. (112-13)

Based on this initial use of *Mudblood*, we identify several associated meanings. The first

is hostility. When Malfoy is openly challenged by a girl in front of others, he responds

with anger characteristic of his house. He does not simply say the word; he spits it,

suggesting anger and force. He means it with every ounce of malice he can muster.

A second association with the word concerns the setting. The characters are at the

Quidditch stadium, a place normally representative of powerful emotions—emotions so

powerful that Dementors storm the field in year three to suck the emotion out of everyone

in the crowd. But during practice, it is a place to anticipate the upcoming match,

something Harry associates with great joy. One might associate Mudblood with athletes

in the heat of battle; foul language being normal, if not required, to prove the worth of a

team member to others on his team. But the offense is aimed at a non-athlete, Hermione,

and thus leaves the world of sport. Furthermore, when the weather is rainy, for example,

the grass field literally turns into a field of mud, no doubt itself mixed with blood from

the various skinned elbows and cuts from the often violent game.

The intensity of the word makes Ron feel the need to exact immediate revenge, only the revenge backfires, resulting in the third association of Mudblood: nausea. Ron's spell forces him to vomit slugs. Thus, Mudblood is associated with involuntary vomiting, suggesting a word that is capable of creating physical, as well as mental, violence. Not everyone becomes physically ill whenever the word is mentioned, of course. But the fact that Ron does become ill when the word is *first* used in the novels suggests just how nasty a word it is. Rowling, as a rhetor, could easily have had the narrator say that *Mudblood* is a bad word, but she chooses to demonstrate its nastiness through her characters, a decision that convinces with much greater force. Ron's explicit explanation of the word comes only after it is introduced by the pure blood youngster. Further, the explanation takes place within a defined "safe haven" of sorts—Hagrid's hut. Since *Sorcerer's Stone*, Hagrid has been a firm believer in Harry's innate goodness and the place where he lives is a kind of refuge for Harry and his friends when the bad overshadows the good. Not surprisingly, Mudblood's explanation comes in a place that helps to soften its nasty effect.

In this case, Draco is identified as a racist—someone speaking from a position of pampered, pure blood privilege, while Hermione is identified as a victim—someone persecuted because of her "muddied" bloodline. Readers see that magical society is merely a reflection of their own society. Despite the allure of waving wands, buying fantastic sweets, and studying potions, magical society is not any better than Muggle society because even the power of magic cannot erase the stain of racism.

Unit Three: Pathetic Rhetoric

With defamiliarization students learn to analyze a fantasy novel in light of what it teaches them about their own society. With identification students learn to analyze the novels as a way of understanding something about their own lives. And with pathetic rhetoric students learn to analyze how a text creates persuasion through the graduation of emotion.

Pathetic rhetoric is *pathetic* in the sense that it is a rhetoric of pathos, or of emotion. Aristotle says "[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [*pathos*] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile" (38). In classical rhetoric along with ethos and logos, pathos is one of chief appeals speakers use to persuade an audience.

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* Wayne Booth recognizes the power of emotion in novels. Booth calls the pathetic appeal an ordering of intensities, a concept derived from Henry James. According to Booth, ordering intensities is the way in which a writer builds momentum in a story, choosing what and when to reveal important details, usually emotional in kind. He argues that ordering intensities means that "no quality, however desirable, is likely to be suitable in the same degree in all parts of a work" (60). Booth wonders, "If a novelist could achieve such a uniform intensity of whatever quality he [or she] cares about most, would he [or she] expect the reader to climb by himself [or herself] to the height necessary for appreciation of that first elevated line?" (60). The author[15] decides when to restrain or emphasize an emotion. If the same emotion has

equal stress throughout a novel, then that emotion would likely lose its impact. Take, for

instance, the falling-in-love storylines of so many novels in history. If readers knew

Chris and Michaela were in love from the beginning and the author sustained the

intensity of their love throughout the story, then what would be the point of reading?

People are persuaded to continue reading largely to find out whether Chris and Michaela

actually fall in love.

The intensity of the emotion must come when events need it the most. Booth

contends, "But to give [realism] with intensity, to make the imagined picture of reality

glow with more than a dim light, requires the artist's finest compositional powers. And,

since any sense of composition or selection falsifies life, all fiction requires an elaborate

rhetoric of dissimulation" (44). We have here exposed the inner rhetorical workings of

the reading situation. Ordering intensities is a calculated move on the author's part so

that readers are not overwhelmed or overstressed by the constant barrage of intense

emotion. A gradual steepening of intensity secures readers to the novel in precisely the

way the author intends.

In order to feel any intensity of emotion, readers need a character with which to

experience the intensity. Booth suggests that "The process most like the process of life is

that of observing events through a convincing, human mind, not a godlike mind

unattached to the human condition. At the same time mere bewildered limitation is not

enough; if the experience is to be more intense than our own observations, the mind used

as observer must be 'the most polished of possible mirrors'" (45). This *polished mirror*

needs to be a character with which readers have come to trust so that there can be no

doubt about what readers are observing. The author's job is to replace any authoritative rhetoric in favor of a subtle rhetoric that works to persuade readers into feeling an intensity of illusion through characters who reflect the intensity of the human condition. For the Potter books, ordering intensities works best when we identify Harry as the polished mirror. We see how emotions intensify because we see events unfold through Harry's eyes.

In thinking rhetorically about the polished mirror, readers can ask how Harry Potter is like or unlike a polished mirror. That is, to what extent does Harry live up to readers' expectations as a polished mirror? Harry is far from flawless in his academic life (he barely passes his courses) or his ethics (he breaks school rules when he feels justified to do so). Readers ask what events through the narrative help convince (or do not convince) them of Harry's trustworthiness.

Pathetic rhetoric is subtle because it needs to draw readers into the text through both defamiliarization and identification. Once immersed in the story, readers begin to *feel* the intensities of certain scenes. These feelings can be as intense as if the reader was that character in the book. In adolescent literature in particular, pathetic rhetoric is significant because younger readers may not yet be emotionally developed to handle possibly upsetting situations. And because of this, adolescent literature serves as a teaching tool.

One of the prominent intensities in the Harry Potter series is death. Some people believe that children should be gradually prepared for a concept like death, and Rowling's books do just that. Death is a natural part of life, but a horribly painful one—

one that cannot be explained rationally to a child (or indeed to many adults, either). By

ordering the intensity of death, Rowling helps children cope with their own feelings and

emotions about a serious event. From this perspective, the Potter books serve a practical

function in society as a guide for dealing with difficult emotions.

Death is an absent present in the first chapter of *Sorcerer's Stone*. Witness the

dialogue between Headmaster Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall on the night

Voldemort vanished:

> "What they're *saying*," she pressed on, "is that last night Voldemort
>
> turned up in Godric's Hollow. He went to find the Potters. The rumor is
>
> that Lily and James Potter are—are—that they're—*dead*."
>
> Dumbledore bowed his head. Professor McGonagall gasped.
>
> "Lily and James…I can't believe it…I didn't want to believe it…Oh,
>
> Albus…"
>
> Dumbledore reached out and patted her on the shoulder. "I know…I
>
> know…" he said heavily. (12)

Readers are not given any explicit details of the death of Harry's parents in part because

we have just begun the story and are not yet equipped to handle the full details. The

information that we do get is filtered through dialogue—second-hand—in order to protect

us from the grisly details of the Potters' demise.

By virtue of her intense reaction to the news, McGonagall serves as the first

polished mirror by which readers gauge the intensity of death. The punctuation of dashes

helps readers see how difficult it is to speak about death. We often speak of death in

stops and starts, trying to comprehend an event that defies explanation. Readers learn

right away that death is no easy matter in this series. The fact that infant Harry survived

death at the hands of Voldemort is the evidence readers need to understand his

significance in the coming saga, and starting with the next chapter, Harry will become the

polished mirror by which readers encounter death throughout the series.

     Sorcerer's Stone begins and ends with death. During the climactic battle between

Harry and Lord Voldemort—who possessed the body of Professor Quirrell, Harry kills

the evil wizard, but does not do so consciously. The love from Harry's mother is what

kills Quirrell, thus Lily Potter achieves revenge from beyond the grave. This point is

important because Harry is still very young and not mature enough to decide to kill

someone, no matter how evil that person appears to be. Readers do not see the death that

occurs because Harry faints during his encounter with Quirrell/Voldemort. Harry, too, is

protected from bearing witness to the tragedy of death. Harry and readers learn about

what happened from Dumbledore: "[Voldemort] is still out there somewhere, perhaps

looking for another body to share…not being truly alive, he cannot be killed. He left

Quirrell to die; he shows just as little mercy to his followers as his enemies" (298).

Although death is present in book one, it is not shown explicitly because readers are not

yet ready to handle the painful deaths that come with the remainder of the series.

     I do not have the space here to offer a complete analysis of death's intensity in all

five of the books. Just a brief glance at *Order of the Phoenix* shows us the emotional

level to which death is elevated when Sirius Black is surprisingly killed. Although the

scene is not gruesome, it is psychologically intense because of Sirius's relationship with

Harry. Readers have identified and accepted Sirius as a person who can only help Harry on the hero's journey. When Sirius falls into the mysterious black veil, readers feel the loss as acutely as Harry does, and we share in Harry's intense rage against Dumbledore in the aftermath. By the end of the book, readers accept that death is a painful part of the overall story and are as prepared as they can be for the projected deaths in books six and seven, deaths that Rowling herself has promised were difficult to write.

A number of writing topics present themselves with ordering intensities. For instance, readers can analyze other intensities such as love, hatred/anger, grief, and joy. Additionally, emotions need not be the only areas considered. Fundamental storytelling skills like description, conflict, and suspense all gradually increase as more of the story is revealed.

Pathetic rhetoric can also be used as a way of investigating parallels between our world and the Muggle world; in other words, to what extent is the magical world a polished mirror of our own world? A question of this sort takes pathetic rhetoric out of the individual experience and connects it to global views seen with defamiliarization. Readers can ask questions such as, How does pathetic rhetoric in the Potter novels reflect the stages of growth individuals in our world go through? Are youths at Hogwarts very different from our youths in our educational institutions?

Unit Four: Synthesizing for a Final Exam

If a final exam is a required component of first-year composition (as it is in many universities), then it should seek as much as possible to provide students with the chance

to synthesize what they have learned. Although in-class, timed writing assignments have their problems, students should know in advance the general topic of the exam. I see no reason why final exams should be a surprise; rather, students should come to the writing situation fully prepared and ready to write about what they have learned.   I suggest either of these two questions for a final exam:

- Write an essay in which you argue for or against using adolescent (fantasy) literature in first-year composition.
- Using the Harry Potter series as a case study, write an essay in which you analyze the purpose and audience of adolescent fantasy literature in today's society.

The first question asks students to reflect critically on the rationale of the course they have just taken. The second question asks students to discuss the societal and cultural significance of the Harry Potter phenomenon in particular and of such literature in general.

Any final exam for a course such as the one I have outlined here should have questions that are relevant to the course. I know that in some departments, the final exam is standardized for all sections of first-year composition. While I understand there can be many reasons for why this process is in place, I think that every step should be taken to ensure that the final exam—the last assignment students have in the course—should be a fitting and appropriate coda to a semester's worth of learning.

Conclusion: Beyond Hogwarts

The three rhetorical strategies in this chapter may at first seem only useful for

adolescent fantasy literature. But upon closer inspection, they can be useful beyond literary texts and can work well with a variety of academic discourse. For example, defamiliarization is less to do with fantasy literature than with how texts construct reality. It can be used to analyze a chemistry lab report by focusing on the language or vocabulary as well as the overall organization and methods. Students may ask how these conventions are different or similar to the conventions of an essay or short story. The basic goal would be to understand how language operates in genres that are different from the ones they may be familiar with. Identification is also a useful strategy to apply to any text, not just literary ones. With identification, readers seek to understand how a text attempts to connect with them. Undoubtedly, there are features of a text readers can identify as ways an author tries to establish common ground. Finally, pathetic rhetoric is essentially an organizational method designed to present the most powerful emotions in the best place, usually as part of a novel's climax (and in the Potter books, at the climax of the series). In argument, for example, the most powerful and potentially persuasive reasons are presented last as a forceful way to argue the claim.

Privileging in the classroom what students work with and encounter in their lives gives students the tools necessary to successfully critique other discourses. Ultimately, one goal of a course that teaches texts from popular culture is to create a more enlightened student body—a population that will return to the private sector with an awareness of how rhetoric works with discourse. Students gain an understanding of how reality is depicted in adolescent fantasy literature and ask how they can make their own lives better. They gain understanding of how a text establishes common ground and ask

to what extent an author has succeeded in persuading them. They gain an understanding of how texts control emotional responses and ask to what degree the cathartic experience of texts works. Students who take a course on Harry Potter learn more than just what happens at Hogwarts; they learn about their community and themselves, their role in their community and the tools they need to navigate their ever-expanding communities. This ability comes not directly from the novels, but from a rhetorical perspective, a way of thinking that will serve them well through college and beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHING TELEVISUAL LITERATURE RHETORICALLY

IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

The WPA's "Outcomes Statement" provides a framework for using televisual literature to teach reading, thinking, and writing in first-year composition. While I recognize the "Outcomes Statement" is not codified, I do think it provides a useful guide for the basic goals of a sequence like first-year composition. For example, a goal under "Rhetorical Knowledge" is for students to write in several genres (Steering Committee 324). Another outcome under "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing" is for faculty to teach students the "uses of writing as a critical thinking tool" (324). The course I design in this chapter speaks directly to both of these outcomes. Students will write in three different genres: a teleliteracy narrative, a rhetorical analysis, and a review—each of which seeks a different audience and has a different purpose. Because of these different genres, students will think about how purpose and audience, for example, vary according to the specific genre they write in.

James Berlin argues that a "new rhetoric requires a new language if we are to develop devices for producing and interpreting discourse that are adequate to our historical moment" ("Poststructuralism" 17). A new rhetoric, however, does not have to abandon the old rhetoric. It merely needs to find ways of updating the old for contemporary discourses like televisual literature. For example, as I show later in the chapter, Aristotle's theory of the introduction can be applied to television's introduction of characters. Is this, then, an instance of an old rhetoric or a new rhetoric? It is, I

contend, a fashioning of a new language to talk about a discourse that is present in our own historical moment.

In the context of this chapter, I take *televisual literature* to be fictitious episodic programming. Distinguishing between fiction and nonfiction in television can be challenging; for instance, documentaries employ reenactments to illustrate historic moments. I exclude from my thinking newscasts, documentaries, reality programming, sports events, award shows, and music videos. My hope is not to come across as a traditionalist here, but I do think it is helpful to restrict the choice of texts to clear fiction. Television shows that are obviously fictional might provide an easier transition from teaching traditional forms of print literature such as short stories, novels, and poetry— texts our students are familiar with from high school.

This chapter offers a rationale for using televisual literature in first-year composition and lays out a foundation for creating such a course. I provide the grounds for using *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* (*BTVS*) as the case study for this chapter because as much as working with televisual literature may seem outré to writing instructors, the show itself deals with the outré, or the fantasy, the strange. I then interrogate the rhetorical theory and pedagogy that comprise the four units of the course. First, I present basic concepts inherent to rhetorical situations, focusing specifically on author and audience. Then I work with Kenneth Burke's dramatism as a maturing of the rhetorical situation. Finally, I consider introductions as pathmakers by combing elements of Aristotle's rhetoric and Wayne Booth's rhetoric of fiction. I also provide a way of using the final exam as a means of synthesizing the important concepts from the course.

Why Use Television to Teach Reading, Thinking, and Writing?

Since nearly every student who walks through composition's door knows what television is, why teach it? Well, we might ask the same question about books. Nearly every student who walks through composition's door has read a book, so why teach books? Our response to that question might be something like this: "Oh, but we are teaching them *how* to read a book in a way that will demonstrate their ability to think and communicate critically at a college level." The same answer can work for television and is even more powerful considering that students will have watched far more television than have read books. So it makes sense to teach them how to think and communicate critically about a medium in which they are likely to have some degree of experience.

Television is a constant presence in the lives of our students. Susan Taylor notes that "the average person watches 3 to 6 hours of TV per day" (105). Those involved with first-year writing should not ignore this statistic. Instead, we should find ways to use it to our students' advantages. If students are already investing a quarter of a day watching television, then we have an opportunity to arm them with some critical tools to enhance their watching. To this end, they will become more active readers of television, rather than passive watchers.

Using television establishes a connection between college and their own lives. For many students, going to college means leaving their old ways of life behind in favor of the academic topics and challenges they encounter. A first-year writing curriculum that assigns television programming is one way to help students become better informed

about discourses that envelope their lives. Berlin argues, "Our business must be to instruct students in signifying practices broadly conceived—to see not only the rhetoric of the college essay but the rhetoric of the institution of schooling, of the work place, and of the media" ("Poststructuralism" 24). This charge rests on the assumption that teachers adopt a social-epistemic rhetoric in their postmodern classrooms. According to Berlin, social-epistemic rhetoric means that there is "never a distinction between experience and language, whether the experience involves the subject, the subject and other subjects, or the subject and the material world" (*Rhetoric and Reality* 16). For first-year composition teachers, then, there are possibilities of using rhetoric to discover the connections our students have to their own experiences and the language of the discourse medium they are studying. The rhetorical content of the course is not mandated solely by the academy, but rises out of students' own histories—in this case, their histories with television.

As a visual medium, using television appeals to varied learning styles. Because first-year composition is a generalist course composed of students from a wide spectrum, some students will learn better through visual texts. A visual approach helps administrators make the argument that the courses they offer generates a variety of opportunities for student learning. Television is as good a means of teaching these skills as standard academic articles.

Teaching television rhetorically in the first writing course of a two-course sequence prepares students for what is to come in the second course. At many institutions like the University of Arizona, students study literary discourse in the first course and academic discourse in the second course. Both courses adopt a rhetorical

perspective, but teaching rhetorical principles is challenging because most students arrive

without having studied rhetoric at all. Using a familiar medium like television in the first

course may ease anxiety over working with new analytical concepts. Once students have

an introduction to rhetoric, then they can take what they have learned and move into the

next course with more demanding texts.

Using television as a teaching tool is also a way to recognize students as

individuals in a postmodern age. Postmodernism tells us that individuals are not unified,

coherent agents acting of our own free will; thus, individuals possess histories in relation

to experiences in culture and society, of race and gender. People are "formed by the

various discourses, sign systems, that surround [us]. These include both everyday uses of

language in the home, school, the media, and other institutions, as well as the material

conditions that are arranged in the manner of languages—that is, semiotically (like a sign

system), such as the clothes we wear, the way we carry our bodies, the way our school

and home environments are arranged" (Berlin, "Poststructuralism" 18). Using Berlin as a

guide, we can imagine first-year composition as a site where students can retain

possession of their selves and their discourses as well as learn academic ways of reading,

thinking and writing about their selves and discourses.

Another reason to use television in first-year composition is expressed by Gary

Edgerton who argues that people learn from television. He contends that "television is

the principal means by which most people learn about history today" (1). I would add

that people not only learn about history from television, but they also learn about current

events, future possibilities, themselves, others, and practically the whole spectrum of life.

For most of us, television is an opportunity to experience difference/the other in a way we normally cannot. And outré televisual literature can help us escape from our own world, or imagine how our world can be a different place.

Despite these reasons for using television in first-year composition, there will be people who oppose it. Although the academic field of Television Studies exists in many universities (Newcomb, *Critical* 2), television has not always been well received in places like first-year composition. Classes with an inherently English focus tend toward books, essays, advertisements, magazines, and perhaps film, but rarely toward television programming. One of the reasons for this may be accessibility. Unless someone videotaped the show, an entire television series was rarely if ever available for purchase and later viewing an analysis. Now, however, with the advent of DVD technology, a wide selection of classic and contemporary television shows are appearing on store shelves for consumers to purchase. Most TV-on-DVD sets are reasonably priced for mass consumption. Having the episode at the ready now competes openly with having a book at hand; no longer is a television episode gone in sixty minutes. DVD technology brings television programming to the forefront of critical study, and thus makes it a feasible product for analysis in first-year composition. Critics can analyze individual episodes from a twenty-two season show, freeze scenes, print those scenes for inclusion in a article, and listen to director and actor commentary about selected episodes

Also, according to Newcomb, prevailing attitudes toward television have changed over time (2). Television has gone from being considered a "social problem" to being a discourse space worth investigating for its contributions (positive or negative) to the

society in which it operates (2). There is also "society's massive shift toward electronic media for entertainment and information" (National Endowment for the Arts vii). These electronic media include the Internet, iPods, video gaming, and television. Historian John Patrick Diggins observes that television appealed to people's sense of belonging. He says, "But producers soon recognized what social scientists had known for fifty years: every culture has a basic need to reassure its identity by experiencing the collective forms of popular symbolism" (188). As television replaced the radio as the basic form of in-house entertainment, "more person-hours per year were being spent watching TV than even working for pay" (188). In responding to this massive shift, educators need to prepare students for ways of reading these electronic media.

Reading *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* as a Rhetorician: A Case Study

While traditionalists may yet frown at using television as a means for critical reading, thinking, and writing, using outré literature like *BTVS* may also create difficulties. Although he is writing thirty years ago, Alvin Kernan's words might still echo in today's academic halls: "it is apparent that the numerous fictions of popular and mass culture are excluded [from definitions of literature] so absolutely as to make it doubtful whether they are even of the same species of literature" (38). He later suggests the differences between literature and popular literature may be one of degree rather than kind. Still, his assertion that texts from popular culture are not worthy of academic merit is present. This dilemma can be resolved if we adopt a rhetorical perspective.

Rhetoricians do not typically separate texts based on some idealized standard of

high art. They examine texts, often calling them artifacts. Rhetoricians are concerned with the artifact as discourse and with understanding how it communicates to people. Sonja Foss defines a rhetorical artifact as "the data for the study—the rhetorical act, event, or product that the critic analyzes. It may be any instance of symbol use that is of interest to the critic and seems capable of generating insights about rhetorical processes. It may be discursive—written or spoken language, such as a speech or an essay—or non-discursive—involving nonverbal symbols, such as a painting, a building, or a film" (12). Although Foss places film in the nondiscursive category, I think film (both cinematic and televisual) is much more discursive than nondiscursive. Technically, the film itself will not be the focus of the study but rather the images on the film. Televisual literature involves both spoken and written language, thus making it a clear example of imagistic, discursive language.

Although any number of outré television shows may be used in the course, I selected *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* for a number of reasons. One, the first season is short—only twelve episodes, so students can read a full season within the semester. Two, the show ran on network television for seven years[16] and generated a five-season spin-off named *Angel*, thus establishing itself as a television presence. Three, it enjoyed—and yet enjoys—a loyal cult following that includes members beyond its target audience, thus demonstrating wide-spread appeal. Four, the show itself, as well as the genre, is likely to be familiar to incoming students, thus making it attractive material for study. Additionally, *BTVS* portrays high school and college characters who not only deal with the outré but also with life. And five, it generates serious scholarship and critical

discussion, thus making it receptive to the type of academic scrutiny expected in first-year composition.

One concern about choosing a show like *BTVS* as my case study is whether the show itself will last long enough in people's memories to be worth teaching. In a sense, the same concern should be noted for the Harry Potter titles in chapter two. I would argue that any case study must be rhetorically grounded in a specific context. The examples I use in these three middle chapters are tied to the specific context in which I am writing about how to teach English 101 more effectively. *BTVS* is a good example to use as a case study right now; in five years, perhaps another television show may be a better example to use, and so on through time.

Viewers meet the cast in the first episode, "Welcome to the Hellmouth." As the show's protagonist, Buffy Summers is a transfer student at Sunnydale High School that is, unbeknownst to her, the hidden location of the Hellmouth, a "center of mystical energy. Things gravitate towards it that you might not find elsewhere" ("Welcome"). As the school's librarian and Buffy's Watcher, Rupert Giles, reminds her on the first day of school, "Into each generation, a Slayer is born. One girl, in all the world, a Chosen One. One born with the—" ("Welcome"). Buffy having heard this all before finishes the mantra, "—the strength and skill to hunt the vampires to stop the spread of their evil" ("Welcome"). In short, Buffy is a sixteen-year-old girl in high school who has a secret identity and possesses superpowers. Because she is on the side of good, she appears as a role model for many adolescent viewers. She is joined in season one by two others who learn of her slayer powers, Xander Harris and Willow Rosenberg. Along with the older,

more experienced Giles, the four form a tight-knit vampire/demon fighting group. The

chief villain in season one is the Master, an ancient vampire stuck in the Hellmouth for

sixty years after he failed to open it. His moment to reopen it and become unstuck is at

hand, and he vows that no slayer will stop him.

As with much television, the Internet provides a vast network of sites that discuss

aspects of *BTVS*, and serves as a good starting point for research. For example, the

Internet hosts a scholarly and respected journal called *Slayage: The Online International

Journal of Buffy Studies* edited by David Lavery and Rhonda Wilcox. *Slayage* started in

2001 and publishes quarterly. By the end of 2004, the site recorded over 230,000 visitors

in two years. The journal was established in response to over one hundred and forty

submissions to a proposed anthology called *Fighting the Forces* (see below). The editors

write, "It seemed obvious that there was a not-soon-to-be-exhausted international critical

and scholarly interest in *BTVS*" ("Site History"). *Slayage* publishes quality analyses of

aspects of the show and its relationship to the society that generated it. Past articles

include "*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the Pedagogy of Fear" by Robert Davis; "Love,

Death, Curses, and Reverses (in F Minor): Music, Gender, Identity in *Buffy the Vampire

Slayer* and *Angel*" by Janet K. Halfyard; and "Perceived Values and Social Support in

Buffy the Vampire Slayer" by Lawrence B. Rosenfeld and Scarlet L. Wynns. Derik A.

Badman published the "Academic Buffy Bibliography" on *Slayage* to help researchers

focus on scholarly publications.

In addition to the online journal, there are three books that may be used as

required or supplementary reading. *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the*

Vampire Slayer is the anthology that spawned *Slayage*. *Slayage* creators Rhonda Wilcox and David Lavery edit the print collection that contains twenty articles divided into the following three sections: forces of society and culture, forces of art and imagination (past), and forces of art and imagination (present). Article content ranges from the Internet, the rhetoric of music, sexuality, fairy tales, dreams, religion, race, family, and politics.

The second edition of *Reading the Vampire Slayer: The New, Updated Unofficial Guide to Buffy and Angel*, edited by Roz Kaveney, was published in 2004. Eight writers penned the articles for this volume. The background of the writers is as varied and interesting as the content of their pieces. The writers are a freelance literary journalist, a research fellow in English at the University of Sydney, the head of Education at the University of London, the head of History at University of Leeds, a theatre critic, a doctoral candidate at UCLA—Santa Barbara, and the Literary Editor of *The Independent*. This variety of background underscores the wide appeal *BTVS* generates among its viewers and makes for fascinating interpretations of the series.

James South edited *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*, a collection of twenty-two original essays that strive to bring philosophy to watchers of *BTVS* and bring *BTVS* to philosophers. South recognizes an opportunity to reach a wider audience for philosophy and at the same time expand the horizons of what philosophy can be applied to. The anthology is divided into these sections: feminism (five articles); knowledge, rationality, and science (five articles); ethics (four articles); religion and politics (five articles); and watching *BTVS* (three

articles).

There are several points to consider briefly before moving on. First, not all classrooms will have a television and a DVD player. Arguments about different learning styles and evolving literacies can be used to persuade the administration to purchase the equipment. Similarly, students will need access to DVD players. Most students come to campus without their own TV or DVD player, and many dorms do not have this technology. Second, some students, however, may balk at having to purchase TV-on-DVD sets especially because they will be most likely unable to sell them to the bookstore as a buy-back.[17] If students object, we can use the same arguments about requiring a book; books are an investment in the course because students will be asked to read, think, and write about the episodes of season one, just as they would about pieces or chapters in an anthology or novel.

Most units in a writing course prepare students to compose a specific response to an assignment that involves using the concepts from the unit. The units and corresponding writing assignments I offer next are for a course that reads season one of *BTVS*. I first assign a teleliteracy narrative, followed by a rhetorical analysis of *BTVS*, and conclude with a review of *BTVS* based on season one. These three assignments have different rhetorical situations and ask students to assume different positions.

Unit One: Reading Televisual Literature

A teleliteracy narrative is a form of the literacy narrative but focuses specifically on examining television literacy—the experiences students have with television from the earliest memory. Mary Soliday says "At the most basic level, the plot of a literacy story

tells what happens when we acquire language, either spoken or written" (511). Mark Richardson argues that television programming is a source of student insight. He names television among "the literacies—the kinds of 'text' that students are already familiar with and know how to read (though not in academic ways)—when they come to college" (285-86). First-year composition instructors have the opportunity to teach students how to read, think, and write critically about television—a medium they are already familiar with, although, as Richardson points out, not in academic ways. Depending on whom one asks, "academic ways" can mean any number of things. For me, the term means critical reading, thinking, and writing.

David Bianculli defines teleliteracy as "the demonstration of fluency in the language and content of TV" (7). Teleliterate people quote from movies, radio, or television with fluency and accuracy. They understand allusions, spoofs, and intertexuality among television programming. Demonstrating teleliteracy in the world outside of the university may be as simple as talking among friends or coworkers about who got voted off on last night's *Survivor* or debating the merit of killing off Tim Speedle on *CSI: Miami*. But Bianculli's definition does not go far enough. Teleliteracy also means being able to read, think, and communicate about television. And this overall project of the course begins with teleliteracy narratives.

I begin the course with a teleliteracy narrative for several reasons. First, the assignment has a lesser degree of difficulty than the other major writing assignments. George and Trimbur argue that "Most Americans know a good deal about television, and, as with any topic that you investigate, you will want to begin with what you do know"

(229). Television is the topic of the entire semester, and students will write about it from different perspectives and in different genres. It makes a certain amount of sense, then, to begin with what students already know.[18] Whereas this first unit asks them to think in new ways about known material—their experiences with television, the last two units ask students to think in new ways about new material. Also, a reflective piece such as this one allows students not to feel too pressured into writing for college.[19]

There are several purposes of a teleliteracy narrative. First, a teleliteracy narrative privileges a discourse that usually goes unrecognized in first-year composition. Using television as the primary teaching text allows for a certain acknowledgment of television as an academic text, that is, a text that produces significant meaning and can be discussed for its contribution to society. And second, a teleliteracy narrative identifies relationships with television and analyzes what impact—if any—those relationships have had on an individual. Traditionally, "reading is an activity, whereas watching TV is, for most people, a highly passive mode of behavior" (Newcomb, *Most Popular* 21). This is a major obstacle facing teachers who use television: how to convince their students to take television seriously by paying close attention to it. Rhetoric helps in the solution especially if teachers conceive of television as a text—something that can be studied and analyzed. Students come to college having watched thousands of hours of television, but they come with very little to actually say about what they watch (Richardson 285-86). In first-year composition, students do not study television for pleasure; instead, they study it in order to say something significant about it—to create knowledge. This promotes an active stance regarding television, thus making it something to reflect on and analyze.

The audience for a teleliteracy narrative starts out as the students themselves because reading memories is something done individually. But as the thinking begins, students will want to share their thoughts with others in the learning community, thus expanding the audience. The other people in the class will offer overall encouragement as well as suggestions for further thought . Eventually, students may want to find outside avenues to share their teleliteracy narratives. The purpose of sharing is to acknowledge similarities and negotiate differences: two activities common in the contact zone.

The teleliteracy narrative is flexible in order to accommodate a range of student experiences. To that end, I offer three possible topics for a teleliteracy narrative: one focused on their earliest memories of television, one focused on the role television played in their family space, and one focused on how their TV tastes have changed as they grew older. Surely, many other possible topics are available but these will serve as a good idea of the kind of thinking and writing I want students to do during the first unit.

Students who choose to focus on their earliest memories of television will be challenged to provide enough details to bring the narrative alive. A typical teleliteracy narrative might begin with the first memory students have with television. They might begin with a description of the television itself, where the television was located, what time it was turned on. Students might explain the content of a significant program as best as they can recall it. They will also want to explain who else watched when they did and whether the room was quiet or loud. As always, students should know they can express whatever they watched from Saturday-morning cartoons to Sunday-afternoon football to late-night variety shows. Knowing they feel comfortable is a key to good narrative

writing; but being embarrassed about what they watched might actually provide a charming anecdote in the narrative.

I want to provide a brief interlude here that may resonate with other writing teachers. In 2004-05, most of our typical first-year composition students were born in the mid-to-late-1980s and began watching and remembering television around 1990. This is a very different period from when I (and most teachers) started watching television. For me, the television was in the living room and was turned on after dinner for prime-time shows. As I grew older, these privileges evolved to being allowed to watch after-school programming. For today's students, however, access to television seems much easier. TVs are not just in the living room. Students can literally be in a different environment when watching television. Is there a difference, for example, when watching *Cheers* on a Thursday night with the whole family in the living room and watching *21 Jump Street* on a Sunday night in your own bedroom? I think when instructors sit down to read these teleliteracy narratives, they will find very different experiences across the generations. These assignments will help us to better understand our students and at the same time encourage them to privilege their own experiences in a college writing class.

Another topic to focus the narrative might be to write about the role television played in their family unit. Students will want to discuss who made the decisions about what to watch and when to watch it. Something as seemingly simple as who held the remote control is worth exploring in terms of power dynamics in the family. The ability to switch channels signifies the ability to control what others in the room watch. Students will want to describe the television itself. Was it the centerpiece of the room? Were

there more than one sets in the house? Was there cable, satellite, or antenna? How often was a new television purchased? How did other members of the family respond to television? Perhaps they will spend a paragraph contrasting the role television played in their own upbringing and the role TV played (or did not play) in their parents' childhood; this makes for an especially rich exploration if students were raised in a home with multiple generations. All of these questions help students understand and critique the role television played in the family.

A third topic students may want to write about is how their own tastes in television programming changed as they grew older, for teleliteracy narratives need not be restricted to the earliest memories because like most literacies, teleliteracy evolves as we do. Some students start out with educational programming like *Sesame Street* and Saturday morning cartoons which they eventually outgrow. Once their tastes become more advanced, what changed? Students may want to give close attention to what was happening in their life at these points of transition and draw parallels between what they watched and what was happening in school, in their social lives, and their family lives. Were they watching *Murder, She Wrote*, *Matlock*, and *Father Dowling Mysteries*? Or *Married…with Children*, *Who's the Boss?*, and *Full House*? Or perhaps they tuned in to *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Quantum Leap*, and *E.A.R.T.H. Force* (McNeil 1031)? Being aware of these changes in themselves enriches their own understanding of self— something that will serve them well as they enter adult communities such as college.

This assignment may intimidate students who have a limited teleliteracy based on the region of the country they lived. In the Southwest, for instance, students may arrive

from a reservation where television (or electricity, for that matter) is not a regular priority. Others may come from rural communities where farm chores take precedent over television. Students who fit this profile should not discard the assignment, however. For a teleliteracy narrative without television is still a teleliteracy narrative because the absence of television can be a rich and meaningful experience to recount. Students can describe what they did for entertainment (if anything) or what took precedent. Their narratives will certainly contrast with other students' narratives. If handled well, this can turn into a wonderful opportunity to learn about other peoples' relationship with television in the learning community created in the class.

When students think about their experiences with television, others in the learning community realize that everyone has different experiences. Deborah Brandt writes, "Contemporary literacy learners—across positions of age, gender, race, class, and language heritage—find themselves having to piece together reading and writing experiences from more and more spheres, creating new and hybrid forms of literacy where once there might have been fewer and more circumscribed forms" ("Accumulating" 651). Literacies have specific contexts. Watching television at home alone on a Friday night is a different literate experience than watching football Sunday afternoon at a friend's house. The rhetorical situations are different. With our students in possession of so many literacies (sometimes an individual's literacies may conflict), one task of a college education is to sort through and understand as many of these literacies and rhetorical situations as possible. And this task begins in first-year composition with televisual literature.

Teleliteracy is just one example of the many literacies included under the umbrella term *academic literacy*. Teleliteracy is a form of academic literacy because television is the subject of discourse by people in university departments like history, philosophy, sociology, English, and media arts, to name a few obvious departments. Instructors who have taught writing by using academic discourse garnered from biology, history, sociology, philosophy, economics, etc., know the frustrations they encounter with students who resist or give up. A great deal of time is usually spent talking about what academic discourse is—even defining the word *discourse* takes an entire period or two. Resistance to reading, thinking about, and writing about academic discourse is normal for students and is just one of the many challenges faced in first-year composition curricula. But the choice is not between televisual literacy and academic literacy, because teleliteracy is a form of academic literacy. Choosing a televisual medium reduces the amount of stress students may feel in having to spend weeks and months of their time immersed in this course. Imagine how quickly a course might progress when students are already familiar with the literacy we want to teach them to examine better. Almost every student will know what television is and what it does, though they may not always be able to express their ideas about it. Discourse from academic disciplines will be foreign to them and take time to work through. Instructors often have to build the course from scratch, assuming students know nothing about the texts. Thus, a televisual literacy narrative unit is valuable not only in itself, but also as a comfortable transition into more academic ways of thinking about television.

Unit Two: Thinking about Televisual Literature

The transition from a teleliteracy narrative to rhetorical analysis can be difficult for many students because it requires a shift from writing about self (television experiences) to writing about text (*BTVS*). To ease the transition, instructors can approach the second unit from this perspective: once students become aware of their own teleliteracy, then they can move forward to a critical analysis of specific televisual texts (*BTVS*, for example) and sharing their insights with others who have a vested interest in what they have to say. The teleliteracy narrative comes first in the course precisely because it grounds students in their own relationships to television. This second unit grounds television in critical conversations that students will observe, read, and begin to understand.

When we ask first-year students to compose a rhetorical analysis of a television program they have read, we are asking most of them to do something brand new.[20] We can introduce rhetoric by drawing on the theories of James Berlin and Louise Rosenblatt.[21] Both theorists place texts in specific contexts, enveloped by purposes, audiences, and language, some of which are in harmony with one another, others which conflict. A rhetorical analysis examines the interrelationships among these elements in order to discover how meaning is constructed for the television show.

The purpose of a rhetorical analysis assignment is to think critically about a specific television show. This critical thinking can take a number of forms, depending on how the student has transacted with the text. For example, critical thinking means asking questions about how the elements of the rhetorical situation fit together in order to offer a

fresh interpretation of an aspect of the show.[22] As they study Burke's dramatism, for instance, they might ask questions like, how does Buffy Summers achieve agent status? Is she in control of her actions? How does scene affect action and the agent? What overall purpose does Buffy have? What gives Buffy her ability to perform her actions? Aside from focusing on Buffy, any of the other characters can also be analyzed. Students may also want to focus on whether the introduction of a character indeed serves as a pathmaker through the entire season. That is, what evidence at the time of the character's first appearance dictated how he or she would turn out?

Another approach to rhetorical analysis is to situate *BTVS* in a larger context. To this end, such an essay might critique the larger concepts of multiple authorship and audiences. Questions to guide this assignment might be: How do multiple authors reach multiple audiences? What points in an episode reflect the different authors or appeal to different audiences?

Unlike the teleliteracy narrative where the audience was fairly small, the rhetorical analysis assignment has a larger audience, one which will appreciate students' original insights into the specific television programming. Teachers may ask students to select an appropriate outlet from among scholarly periodicals or to create one of their own. For instance, the instructor can act as an editor of a new anthology of critical essays about rhetoric and *BTVS*. Students will be expected to draft and revise their essays with potential publication in mind—even if the publication is only a booklet of the essays in the class.[23] The major goals of this assignment are to learn the basic conventions of academic essays, to engage a text from a rhetorical point of view, and to contribute a

unique perspective to *BTVS*.

The primary reading text for the course comes to the forefront in the second unit and will be used for the third unit. Whereas unit one's teleliteracy narrative considers what television a student can recall, the rhetorical analysis zeroes in on just one television program—the one assigned as the featured course text-on-DVD, in this case, *BTVS*. Instructors will decide how best to assign the reading of each episode, keeping in mind that season one is twelve episodes. If one episode is assigned per day on a three-day-a-week course, then each class day can be devoted to a discussion of the episode in light of the rhetorical framework.

For this unit I propose looking at three different varieties of rhetorical criticism. By presenting three different perspectives on how rhetoric can be applied to *BTVS* (and televisual literature in general), instructors give students options in case one particular rhetorical method does not resonate. The rhetorical theories I use include rhetorical situation, dramatism, and introductions.[24] Starting with rhetorical situations provides a nice overview of the scope of rhetoric. Once students learn what comprises rhetorical situations, then they can begin to see how the situation changes when elements are altered. My own approach focuses on the elements of author and audience. Rhetorical situations also represent a fairly basic approach to rhetorical analysis, something that must be valued by instructors working with a generalist, first-year student population. Dramatism is from Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theory explained in *A Grammar of Motives* and is useful for a variety of texts, including television programming. Students will see that dramatism is an embodiment of the basic rhetorical situation but based on

motivation. Third, the rhetoric of character introductions is inspired by Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* and book three of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. This method focuses on one relationship of the rhetorical situation—character/agent and its influence on audience. Examining character introductions also tightens connections between writing and reading because students write introductions for essays all the time. The focus is on learning how introductions function rhetorically within their context.

Beginning with rhetorical situations provides an introduction to the vocabulary rhetoricians use when conducting their analyses. Most renderings of rhetorical situations involve the author/speaker, the reader/audience, the text/message, and the context/situation. A basic understanding of rhetorical situations involves understanding how one of these elements affects the others. When teaching rhetorical situations, I may focus on one or two of the elements during class discussion, allowing students the opportunity to explore the others in their own writing processes. In the scope of this chapter, I focus on authors and audiences, two elements that require close attention when examining televisual literature.

Traditional accounts of rhetorical situations come from what is usually called the rhetorical triangle, a concept from classical rhetoric involving ethos, pathos, and logos. These three concepts may be a good way to begin examining rhetorical situations and televisual literature, but they should not be an end result. In starting with these concepts, instructors ask their students to consider ethos in terms of characters and the show in general. That is, how do specific characters embody the idea of ethos? And how does the show embody ethos—or credibility/believability? How does a fantasy series

involving vampires and demons and notions of good and evil become credible to attract

viewers and remain on the air for seven years? Similar questions can be asked for pathos

and logos. While these elements of a rhetorical situation may seem productive, they are

beginning questions.

A deeper investigation into the nature of rhetoric and television uncovers a

multiplicity of authors and audience—two more terms important to rhetorical situations.

In a televisual medium, authorship is not as simple as it appears to be. When Wayne

Booth introduced the term *implied author* he gave voice to multiple authors within a

novel. For Booth the implied author is itself an invention of the real author. But, still,

the idea that not one author is responsible for the story, but several, paved the way for the

multiplicity of authors we find in published material today. Largely uncredited editors

and ghost writers play an important role in the production of text. In televisual literature

it is naïve to think of a singular author.

A television show has a number of authors, chief among them a creator, a writer,

a director, and an actor. Other authors include camera operators, wardrobe people, set

designers, and acting coaches. These people work together to bring a series to life. Let

us take a look at how this works with just one element of *BTVS*, the character of Buffy

Summers. Joss Whedon, the series creator, has the overall vision and understanding of

Buffy Summers. He knows what her goals are and how she will achieve them. When

Whedon does not write the script or direct the episode, he consults with the episode's

writer(s) on how Buffy will develop as the heroine. The writer's job is to give Buffy her

identity through language and action, for the writer is not only in charge of scripting the

words she will say but also in determining what she will do. The director controls how the character acts on set. The director determines everything from how and when the character moves to how much lighting appears in a scene. Finally, Sarah Michelle Gellar is the actress who plays the part of Buffy Summers. Gellar literally authors the character in that she is the physical, visual representation of Buffy Summers. Her appearance will persuade many viewers to accept or reject Buffy. The camera operators zoom in for a close up of an emotional reaction or pull away to see the fight scene; either way, they focus on a particular aspect of the scene as ordered by the director. A wardrobe staff designs the clothes Buffy wears, giving the character substance and ways to connect to the audience. This network of authorship cannot be undone. Each needs the other to bring Buffy Summers to the small screen in every episode.

Using televisual literature to teach authorship allows instructors to demonstrate the complex nature of authorship in modern discourse. Students will see that political speeches, for instance, are composed by a team of writers and spoken by the politician. Newspaper articles are written by the journalist, the copy editor, the chief editor, and anonymous sources from the newswire. And in a first-year writing course, even students' own essays are written by other students and the teacher. In peer review sessions, other students make suggestions and offer alternate wording; writing teachers do the same with drafts. Televisual literature may make the concept of multiple authors more concrete, but it is a concept students will be familiar with in their experiences as first-year college writers.

When writing instructors teach audience, they do so on several levels. On the one

hand, they teach students how to examine who their own audiences are for the essay they are writing. This transforms students into rhetoricians aware of their own rhetorical situations in which the choices they make readily impact their readers. On the other hand, instructors teach students to become critical readers of discourse so that they can identify the audience of a text based on the rhetorical strategies the author(s) use. This skill helps students determine who the target audience is for a specific text. Both of these approaches to understanding audience in a composition class are relevant when teaching televisual literature.

With a televisual medium, we still have questions of target audience. In the case of *BTVS*, we can begin to determine the target audience by assessing features of the show. It originally aired for five seasons on the WB and for the last two years on UPN— two fledgling networks that attract a younger demographic. From the title we learn the series is about a character named Buffy. The name alone suggests a female, a young girl most likely. The rest of the title tells us what the girl does—she is a vampire slayer. Vampires will be a prominent feature, as will the hunting and slaying of them. The heroine will attract a young female audience, but the vampire angle will attract males as well. Perhaps even a Goth audience will tune in. The show will also attract an audience of all ages who have an interest in vampires and other classic horror characters and themes. All of this can be assessed just from a close examination of the network and title. Once the show started, word of mouth began to spread and other features such as character, story, dialogue, themes began attracting a loyal following. The point here is to show that a series can begin with a target audience in mind, but once it airs, it will gather

support from much wider demographics.

Classical concepts of audience do not apply so easily to televisual literature. Faigley et al. say "the classical dictum was that a speaker should know his [or her] audience's character thoroughly and plan his [or her] rhetorical strategies according to that knowledge" (81). This advice was fairly easy to follow back in ancient Greece and Rome when one speaker assessed the audience. But with modern communication the way it is, the authors of a television series must gather their information about a target audience from statistics and generalizations. As I have pointed out, the target audience is not the sole audience of a television series like *BTVS*, and even within a target audience there can be variation. If a target audience is fourteen to twenty-one, for example, will a fourteen-year-old girl have the same connection to the show as a twenty-one-year-old woman? The issue then becomes how series creators plan their rhetorical or persuasive strategies to attract *and* retain a viewing audience. For it is not enough simply to attract an audience for a couple of episodes; the show must retain that audience for as long as possible.

Walter Ong suggests abandoning the term *audience* in favor of *readers* when discussing written works of fiction. Whereas *audience* speaks to an immediate collectivity of people, *readers* does not signify "a collectivity, acting here and now on one another and on the speaker as members of an audience do" ("Writer's Audience" 11). Understood this way, televisual literature does not have an audience, but rather readers. But *readers* is a poor terms for a dynamic, visual medium like television, which does not often have words to read and process, but images to see and process. *Viewers* might be a

better word than readers, so long as *viewers* means more than passively viewing the images. The internal processing of the images is what watching television critically means.

According to Ong, audience is a fiction in two ways. First, writers create the ideal audience for their work in their minds, not being able to conceive of every individual reader out there. With televisual authors, the creation rests on forming a generalized group of people who will be able to relate to the themes, values, and characters of the show. Second, echoing Booth, Ong suggests that readers fictionalize themselves. He says, "A reader has to play the role in which the author has cast him, which seldom coincides with his role in the rest of actual life" (12). This second idea is worth exploring here in more detail due chiefly to its rhetorical impact. As with any genre of fictional literature, readers must become the type of readers called for by the work. In the case of *BTVS*, how does the show transform its viewers? How do thirty-something, male viewers become the audience the show seeks? Douglas Park in "The Meanings of 'Audience'" provides an answer. He argues that "the meanings of 'audience,' then, tend to diverge in two general directions: one toward actual people external to a text, the audience whom the writer must accommodate; the other toward the text itself and the audience implied there, a set of suggested or evoked attitudes, interests, reactions, conditions of knowledge which may or may not fit with the qualities of actual readers or listeners" (249). Viewers can turn to the episodes and ask what in those helps transforms viewers into the audience the show asks for. The driving question here is: how is *BTVS* a rhetorical argument suited to its target audience?

We need not look much further than the setting of the series in season one for an answer. Much of the first episode of the season takes place in Sunnydale High School. Because Buffy Summers is a full-time high school student and moonlighting slayer, the setting is logical. However, if the rhetorical effect is to pull in viewers and transform them into ideal viewers, then the setting must be persuasive. Most viewers will have attended high school. Setting *BTVS* in a high school allows viewers to recall their own high school experiences, both positive and negative. For example, the setting appeals to viewers who might have been a bit nerdy and shy. With *BTVS*, those viewers become the slayer, regardless of age or gender. The show allows viewers to imagine themselves in high school with a secret identity. Once students have a general introduction to rhetorical situations, they can explore how to expand it.

The second rhetorical theory of the unit, Burke's dramatism (also called the pentad), offers a chance for students to see more specifically how individual components of rhetorical situations are represented in a televisual text. The word *dramatism* seems appropriate for televisual literature because it is a theory of human drama, often the focus of televisual literature. Dramatism seeks answers to the question of why we do the things we do. Kenneth Burke suggests human beings are motivated by their immediate environment. He breaks down the elements of that environment in order to figure out what drives people. He identifies five important elements. First, *agents* perform the action of the moment and are affected by the surrounding environment. Second, agents *act*; that is they do things. Third, agents perform the act with appropriate *agencies* (tools, strategies, language); an agency carries out the act. Fourth, agents act because they have

a *purpose*—they accomplish something. Fifth, agents act in a specific *scene*, or environment. Each of these five elements are intertwined—one affects the other.

In televisual literature, viewers analyze how the five elements of the pentad work together. Common approaches to analyzing print literature have students working with terms like *plot*, *characterization*, *theme*, *setting*, *point of view*, and *symbolism*. These terms do not strictly correspond to the rhetorical elements of the pentad; however, there are parallels. For example, an analysis of character may ask the same kinds of questions one would ask of agent. Who is the agent? What qualities enable the character to be the agent? What has been accomplished so far as to make this character the agent? Similar questions may be asked of setting and scene: how does the scene contribute to the action of the situation? Does scene affect the agent?

Burke argues that not all five terms of the pentad are equal in a given situation. Usually, one will be the dominant term; that is, one term will overshadow the others at a given moment. To determine which one is dominant, Burke pairs the terms to form ratios. He says, "ratios are principles of determination" (*Grammar* 15). As a method of analysis, ratios are useful for rhetorical analysis because they ask readers to identify which one carries the most persuasive force in a given context. For example, if I analyze the act-scene ratio, I consider all the ways the act contains the scene (act-scene ratio) and consider all the ways the scene contains the act (scene-act ratio). The dominant term comes first in the ratio. Thus, twenty ratios are possible. In applying ratios to their own lives, readers will better understand which term is dominant in a given situation.

Discovering the dominant term is but a means to a greater end in dramatism: the

discovery of a worldview. Foss notes, "Once the critic discovers the dominant term, it

can be used to identify the philosophical system to which it corresponds, with that system

generating ideas about the definition of a situation, its meaning for rhetors and audiences,

and its possible consequences" (461). According to Burke, when scene is dominant, the

corresponding philosophy is materialism; for agent, idealism; for agency, pragmatism; for

purpose, mysticism; and for act, realism (*Grammar* 128). Understanding these

philosophic systems allows students to locate the text within a larger perspective.

Students may also identify with a philosophical system the text advances. Determining

which philosophical system underlines the events in the show (if indeed one philosophic

system can be said to be the majority) allows students to understand why characters acted

in certain ways and why certain values may have been expressed. Investigations into the

philosophy of the show might ask whether the show's events are largely consistent with

the worldview expressed at key moments. Dramatism then affords students the

opportunity not only to identify the philosophic system of *BTVS* but also to understand to

what extent they identify with it, thus revealing why they enjoyed it or did not enjoy it.

With its roots in presenting actual plays (drama), television encapsulates the basic

elements of Kenneth Burke's pentad. In its beginning television was "regarded as no

more than a convenient way to transmit existing stage plays to larger and larger masses of

spectators" (Esslin 35). Television gradually evolved into the specific demographic

programming it now boasts. Even today, television still presents dramas—that is,

television still portrays humanity, whether that humanity is in a daytime soap serial, a

prime time sit-com, or a late night crime show. Television brings the basic elements of

the pentad to life in a way that prose cannot. For example, Esslin argues that "Whether

we look at self-contained weekly or ongoing daily episodes, the recurring characters in

this type of dramatized fiction remain constant and become ever more familiar to their

audiences. They are experienced by viewers in a curious manner that amounts to a kind

of split consciousness" (41-42). As an audience, we connect to the characters and the

situations they are in. We watch them from the comfort of our own personal spaces—our

homes, our living rooms, our bedrooms. We watch as these characters handle the unique

situations of their existence. We applaud when they make "right" decisions and cringe

when they make "bad" choices. Ultimately, television allows us a peek into a world that

we do not and cannot live in. When we watch a television show, we imagine ourselves in

Smallville, Glen Oak, Cabot Cove, or on the starship Enterprise.

If we track a character like Buffy Summers through season one, we discover she

is more than just a high school student. She takes on the forces of evil and defeats them,

thus becoming an archetype. The series creator, Joss Whedon, states, "I designed *Buffy*

to be an icon, and emotional experience, to be loved in a way that other shows can't be

loved" (qtd. in South 1-2). Though he is speaking about the show, he might easily be

talking about the character of Buffy Summers. Esslin argues that "Fictitious figures who

become more real than real people, who become archetypes of conduct, are a

commonplace of human culture" (42-43). With her cadre of allies, Buffy steps outside

her high school role to complete the hero's journey of Campbellian mythos. The

obstacles on the journey are many, but she has help. She even dies to achieve the

ultimate goal of defeating the Master (season one's villain, or "big bad") and making the

community of Sunnydale safe from harm (at least until the next season). All along this hero's journey is an opportunity to examine the full scope of her situation by breaking down the elements of the pentad.

Ultimately, *BTVS* plays out the fears we as a culture seem to have. As a scene, Sunnydale is a serene-sounding name for a Southern California city—a place where, historically, dreams are supposed to come true. Instead, in the case of the show, everyone's nightmares are what come true. A community that appears insular and safe can be infiltrated by demons, monsters, vampires, and other hideous and dangerous creatures. These creatures pose a clear and present danger to the safety of Sunnydale's citizens. The late 1990s were a time of prosperity, a time when most people felt relatively comfortable with their situation. *BTVS* asks what happens when that comfort zone is threatened.

Because the pentad has many possibilities for analysis, instructors will want to push students beyond a simple analysis of the five terms. Rhetorically speaking, for instance, the pentad can uncover why *BTVS* enjoyed such widespread appeal. Students conducting a dramatistic analysis can draw on culture, myth, and history to form their original analysis.

The third rhetorical theory in this unit is that of character introductions. This comes only after students have studied rhetorical situations and dramatism because it asks students to engage in analysis of a specific rhetorical element: character and how character is introduced in the show. Taking a concept like an introduction and figuring out how it works in televisual literature asks classical rhetoric to adapt to contemporary

discourse.   First, let us look at what Aristotle says about introductions. He teaches that

an introduction provides the information necessary for the audience to stay focused

throughout the speech. Back in his time, rhetoric applied to oral discourse first and to

written discourse second. Aristotle writes in the *Rhetoric*: "The prooemion is the

beginning of a speech, what a prologue is in poetry and a *proaulion* in flute-making; for

all these are beginnings and, as it were, pathmakers for one who is continuing on" (260).

Aristotle notes that the type of introduction depends on the genre of rhetoric one uses.

He identifies three genres of rhetoric: epideictic (present), judicial (past), and deliberative

(future). The strategies for judicial prooemia seem to have the most potential for

adaptation to televisual literature. For introductions in judicial speeches, Aristotle says:

"There is a sample of the argument in order that [the audience] may know what the

speech is about and [their] thought not be left hanging […]. The most necessary and

specific function of the prooemion is this: to make clear what is the "end" [*telos*] for

which the speech [is being given]" (262). He goes on to suggest that an audience will be

made attentive throughout the speech so not every attempt to keep the audience's

attention should be made in the introduction.

   In order to bridge the classical concept to contemporary concepts, I examine a

sample of current attitudes toward introductions. *The Writer's Harbrace Handbook* says

that "An effective introduction arouses the reader's interest and establishes your topic and

tone" (Glenn, Miller, and Webb 72). The advice seems familiar to writing instructors,

right? Hook the reader, say what you're doing, and set the tone. If nothing else, our

students will have heard this advice before (perhaps in the form of resolute directives).

The Wadsworth Handbook echoes the sentiment of Aristotle's introductions as pathmakers: "An introductory paragraph prepares readers for the essay to follow" (Kirszner and Mandell 135). The introduction becomes a roadmap, one in which the entire course of the essay is revealed in miniature. According to *The HarperCollins Handbook*, the introduction has a special relationship to audience: "In the opening paragraph of an essay, you invite readers to learn about a subject, explore ideas, share an experience, or examine a line of argument. You need to build a relationship with your readers so they will want to continue reading" (Anson and Schweigler 125). However you look at it, the introduction is a rhetorically created piece of prose that is the first thing readers encounter when they read a written document.

Introductions, however, vary from genre to genre. That is, an introduction for a literacy narrative may feel different from an introduction to a research paper. Introductions are tailored to the specific writing task at hand; no set formula exists, although certain characteristics are likely to appear among introductions. Can the classical concept of introductions as we understand them in a course like first-year composition apply to analyzing televisual literature? And if so, how?

There are at least two approaches to take when working with introductions in a televisual medium. The first is an analysis of the introduction of an episode, typically called the teaser. Usually, the teaser appears for several minutes before the opening credits. The teaser is a snippet of action created to tease or convince viewers to stay for the duration of the episode. The teaser must be persuasive if it hopes to succeed. A larger perspective with teasers is to consider the entire first season as a teaser for seasons

two through seven. Knowing *BTVS* continued for six more seasons gives viewers the chance to look at season one itself as an introduction of sorts. Students will want to ask what actions or themes set up future story lines.

The second approach is an analysis of the introduction of characters. That is, one can spend time identifying when a character first appears, where that character is, how the character is introduced, and why the character is even needed. Students will note the connection to Burke's pentad when they consider the character in this instance to be an agent within a scene. One goal of this approach is to see whether characters remain true to their introduction based on what they do and to see what effect they initially have on the audience. In either instance (teaser or character), the introduction serves as a pathmaker. We will then be prepared to see whether or not the introduction achieved its purpose to prepare us for the path of the episode or the journey of the character. The idea of pathmakers has several possibilities for exploration. Viewers can track the character through the episode (especially if the character is only around for just that episode), through the season, or through the entire course of the series and its spin-off. This last option is beyond the scope of the model course presented here, but it should remain a possibility for students wishing to explore it on their own.

A rhetorical analysis allows students to read the critical discourse on television and on *BTVS* and begin to discover ways to participate in that conversation by writing their own rhetorical analysis of the show. The final unit asks students to write a critical review of season one to ground the show in the experiences of others. That is, students will study how the show affects other people in our culture.

Unit Three: Writing about Televisual Literature

In this unit students write a review of the first season of *BTVS*. This assignment

comes after students reflected on their relationships to television in the first unit and

studied the critical scholarship about television and *BTVS* in the second unit. A critical

review assignment asks students to write in a different genre because the conventions and

choices one makes are not the same as in a personal narrative or rhetorical argument. By

the end of the course, students should be ready to experience being a rhetorician in the

fullest sense as they take on the task of determining purpose and audience for their

review.

The assignment of a review falls into the general category of evaluative writing.

Louise Rosenblatt believes evaluative thinking and writing to be a critical component of

working with literature. She notes, "The reader or critic is faced essentially with a

problem in communication—to make clear *what* is being interpreted as well as to

comment on it" (*The Reader* 135). Martin Esslin puts out the call: "The educational

system in a television age must teach students how to view TV critically, with

intelligence and discrimination" (119). He believes that such a critical approach to

television should begin in the earliest grade schools. By the time students reach first-year

composition, "there would be an application of the methods of dramatic criticism to the

assessment and evaluation of TV programs" (119). Esslin believes that enlightened

critics would be able to generate and maintain better standards of programming. His

point about people being critical of the literacies they encounter on a daily basis is sound.

The hallmark of an informed society is one that can look at its instruments and decide

which are worth keeping and which are worth ditching. Conceived this way, the review becomes the working out of a civic rhetorical problem, a problem in which purpose and audience are essential matters to solve.

The purpose of writing a review of a television program is to convince other people to share or consider your opinion of the show. As a critic, "Your primary aim is to convince readers that your judgment is well informed and reasonable and therefore that they can feel confident in making decisions based on it" (Axelrod and Cooper 417). Notice that the goal is not necessarily total persuasion. The best outcome is to make a well-reasoned case complete with support for why the show should or should not be watched by members of the audience. In this way, reviews carry a civic responsibility because people read them in order to "learn more about a subject so that they can make an informed decision themselves" (417). The argument, then, is not overtly forceful or aggressive, but it is clear and direct. This approach will sit well with most readers who will take time to consider what the writer has to say about the television program.

Another purpose of the review is to show knowledge about television. As a result, it should reflect the work that has already been done in the course: recounting the student's own history with television and conducting an analysis of a specific television series. Throughout the course, students have been exposed to the vocabulary of television. As critics, they will be expected to employ that language as they recommend whether other people should watch the show.

Because most students have experience with television, they will be able to evaluate *BTVS* in light of other popular television programming, past and present.

Axelrod and Cooper argue that "Showing readers you understand how your particular subject relates to other subjects in the same general category demonstrates that your judgment is based on standards that readers recognize as appropriate for judging that kind of subject" (391). For example, *BTVS* is fantasy drama, not situation comedy. Comparing it to a show like *Everybody Loves Raymond* would be inappropriate because the standards for what makes each show work are different. To that end, then, using humor as a gauge for whether the show is successful will not work. While humor is present in *BTVS*—especially as a way to diffuse tense moments—it is not the purpose of the show. However, because elements like character, tension, conflict, suspense, climax, twists, and mystery are elements of *BTVS*'s genre, comparing it to other dramas (fantasy or not) will be appropriate. That is, reviewers will want to convince their audience that if they like watching shows like *CSI: Miami*, *NYPD Blue*, or *The X-Files*, then they will probably also like *BTVS*.

In choosing an audience for their review, students have a number of options. I suggest that teachers ask students to select a periodical published regularly. Students will have to study the periodical and learn who reads it. They will also come to understand what sorts of televisual literature is endorsed by the publication. This research is a wonderful examination of rhetoric's effect on people. That is, do *TV Guide*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Newsweek*, or the local newspaper support the same type of programming? Students should read far and wide in determining where they want their review to appear.

One of the first decisions a reviewer makes is whether to give the show a positive

or negative review because few people want to read a neutral review. In some ways this assignment will resonate with students in the class who really did not like *BTVS* and who may have resisted the reading and programming of the course. They can then pen a review stating their reasons why the show deserves not to be watched. Students who liked the show or were fans of it prior to the course will most likely wish to compose a positive review. The danger in the review assignment is letting emotions carry the review, and this is not the purpose because readers will simply not care how someone feels about the show. Instead, reasons must be offered that support the overall opinion of the show. These reasons can (and perhaps should) come from the rhetorical thinking strategies presented in the second unit. The units are not meant to be separate sections because each informs the others.

There are a variety of ways to organize the review, and whichever way a student selects must depend in part on purpose and audience. Because of that, I will only suggest two ways here. One way is to focus on character, for example, the protagonist Buffy Summers. Students will first describe Buffy's physical and emotional attributes to show they know the character. Then, they will assess her character—that is, the standard she uses in her fight against evil—by asking questions like: What sort of qualities does she possess? How does she act on her principles? How do others react to her presence? Students will then place Buffy in a general category of other crime fighters on television like Horatio Cane, Andy Sipowicz, and Fox Mulder and Dana Scully. By doing this, students demonstrate a knowledge of television beyond *BTVS* to help convince fans of other crime fighters that Buffy is in their league, too. On the other hand, if the review is

negative, then students can show how Buffy does not live up to the standards of other crime fighters on television, being a mere caricature of the "hero."

Another way of centering the review is to place it in the larger context of contemporary culture. Students with a positive review will write that the show emerged from culture for specific reasons—that is, to fulfill certain needs that were not being met by other programming. For example, the show updates the 1960s Scooby-Doo episodes by featuring a group of teenagers who fight supernatural forces, not merely people in costume. Or, perhaps the show's overall message of good triumphing over evil needs to be reinforced among the younger viewers in the audience. However, students may compose a negative review in which they argue that Buffy's crush on Angel is deranged not only because he is a vampire but also because he is older than she or that violence on *BTVS* is present in every episode, thus encouraging a violent nature in the youth who watch the show.[25] In any event, the aim of the review is to connect *BTVS* to elements of the larger society in which it aired and continues to air in syndication.

Unit Four: Synthesizing for a Final Exam

Most first-year writing courses require a final exam as a measure of assessing writing proficiency, something Edward White recognizes as "one of those slippery terms that hide an even more slippery concept" (150). The slipperiness rests in how to determine proficiency. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address this issue in its fullest ramifications. I will, however, say this: notions of proficiency are arrived at based on the goals of the course. However, I am aware that many writing programs have

"master goals" that all composition sections must teach regardless of what texts are assigned. My assumption for this course has been that students will learn rhetorical ways of reading, thinking, and writing about texts such as televisual literature. Therefore, any final exam designed by a general committee should keep this in mind.[26] It is best, then, that an exam is written based on the specific goals of a specific course.

One way to demonstrate to what extent students have met the goals of the course is to ask them to synthesize what they have learned. Ideally, a synthesis for a course such as the one in this chapter would ask students to combine concepts they learned from writing a teleliteracy narrative, a rhetorical analysis, and a review. Any final exam that asks for demonstration of what students learned from any unit is challenging because every student will have learned something different. That is, during the run of the course, students wrote assignments from different perspectives on different accepts of television and *BTVS*. This is hardly news to instructors, but the final examination must play to this strength and not attempt to get each student to respond in the same way. In other words, students' responses to the final exam will be a synthesis of the skills they have learned individually. For example, if a student's rhetorical analysis focused on Xander's introduction in episode one of *BTVS* and tracked the introductory characteristics across the season, then requiring that student to write about Buffy's agency in the presence of the Master may not play to that student's strength because the focus of the rhetorical analysis was on introductions and not on Burke's dramatism. To this end, then, final exams should have a number of questions rather than one and should be open enough for students to show that they learned something from the course.

I offer here two questions that can be used as a way for instructors to assess what students processed through the course:

- Write an essay in which you analyze how your teleliteracy affected your reading, thinking, and writing rhetorically about *BTVS* and your subsequent review of the program.

- Write an essay in which you analyze and assess how your work with rhetoric will affect your teleliteracy and evaluations of television programs you currently watch.

Other questions may ask students to write a letter to the University's writing program defending (or not defending) the use of television to teach first-year composition. A letter, for example, asks students to write in yet another genre, thus furthering the goals of the course to think and write in multiple genres. Whenever possible, final exams should be a natural conclusion to the aims of the course proper, not a divorced set of questions devised by a committee who knows nothing of what happened over the term. Instructors and administrators owe it to their students to support an exam that privileges what they have learned.

Conclusion: Beyond Sunnydale

Part of the purpose of this course is to expose students to writing in different genres as they think critically about a genre they grew up with. Writing a literacy narrative, a rhetorical analysis essay, and a critical review can be rendered smoothly by working with a text like *BTVS*. The three rhetorical strategies are not designed solely for televisual literature, however. Each can be applied to other texts that students will

encounter in the academy and beyond. For example, understanding the dynamics of rhetorical situations can aide students in any text or genre they have to read. Dramatism, too, can be used to break down a scholarly article by making them think about where and when it was published (scene), who wrote it (agent), why it was written (purpose), what language it used (agency), and the actual content of the article (act). A rhetorical approach to introductions is a valuable tool to have when reading anything. How a text begins is important because most introductions establish the focus of the entire discourse. Students who study how introductions begin can better track the argument through to its conclusion.

As much as we live in a time of opportunity, we also live in a time of change. Writing courses must continue to evolve with our students. Only when we connect what we do in a classroom to what they do in their life can we begin to reach them enough to show them the writing maps they will need throughout their life journey. Not every student will leave the course with the same map, and many students will leave us with several maps. Teaching writing in a postmodern age is not clean or tidy or even coherent. If we want to keep our students regularly committed to improving their writing abilities, then teaching writing must involve working with popular discourse like television.

One of the benefits of using television to teach English (as it is formally understood) is that students may not always be aware that they are in an English class. How many writing teachers remember their own experiences in college composition with its focus on rules and exceptions or its rigid adherence to a standard writing process model? Learning to write is learning to communicate. Using television as the basic

foundation reduces the tension and anxiety of the learning process. A course such as this does not emphasize the correctness of English in its daily activities, but rather what students think about television, culture, and themselves.[27] At the end of the semester, teachers can remind students that they have indeed finished a term in writing. Some may be surprised and elated. Others simply will not care one way or another. But hopefully, teachers will have reached them all at some level by insisting that televisual literature is discourse worth looking at more critically than they may have thought. And this critical awareness—so difficult to teach with barren academic prose—will help them in other areas.

Finally, learning, as well as teaching, should be fun and creative, not burdensome and boring. Infusing television into first-year composition stimulates interest not only in what is studied but in what is written. Students can write about something they knew about prior to the course, and teachers can read fresh student writing (not the same basic stuff they have read for years). Keeping first-year composition connected to the evolution of literacy is the motivation for using televisual literature to teach critical reading, thinking, and writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHING GRAPHIC LITERATURE RHETORICALLY

IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Graphic novels are not your grandparents' funnies. In fact, there is very little that

is actually funny about graphic literature any more. When I use the phrase *graphic*

literature, I am referring to graphic novels or what most people would recognize as

comic books. There is no deception intended by the use of these words. They mean

slightly different things. If I were to sketch a genealogy of the medium, I would begin

with comic books. Most people imagine the comic book in its traditional format as a

"stapled, magazinelike product" that tells stories that are either self-contained in that

issue or serialized over multiple issues (Lyga and Lyga 162). Comic books are printed on

fairly thin paper and can be easily rolled up and slid into the back pocket of a pair of

Levis.

But comic books evolved as the technology to produce them evolved. The term

comic book "evolved to describe *any* format that uses the combination of words and

pictures to convey a story" (162). Graphic novels have "greater production values and

longer narrative. […] The graphic novel is more like a traditional novel, in that it is

published on an independent schedule" (162). Essentially, it is a more advanced version

of the comic book—slicker, with more vibrant colors, and heavier paper. Rolling up a

graphic novel and sliding it into a back pocket is harder to do, and many consumers

would wonder why, because graphic novels are considered more a piece of art than

traditional comic books. Perhaps the best way to describe the difference is by stating that

graphic novels have superior scripting, artwork, coloring, and lettering. Just as with comic books, an entire team of people join together to create a graphic novel. In the end, an easy way to remember the difference is this way: "all graphic novels are comic books, but not all comic books are graphic novels" (162).

Like traditional comic books, graphic novels will run a storyline over several issues, thus creating a story arc. When enough single issues of the story arc have been published, the publisher may issue a collection called a trade paperback graphic novel. These trade paperbacks have cardstock covers and are extremely durable. Such trade editions are what students would be asked to purchase for the course I design in this chapter.

A recent newspaper article promotes comic books in education. The article concentrates on librarians looking to "give struggling or uninterested readers a bridge to more advanced literature" ("Comics in Vogue" A9). While the focus is on high school or earlier education, I can see possibilities for using graphic novels in first-year composition to teach reading, thinking, and writing from a rhetorical perspective.

In this chapter I first provide a rationale for using graphic literature in first-year composition. I then defend my case study of graphic literature from the *Star Wars* extended universe.[28] Next, I suggest three modes of inquiry for graphic novels: generic rhetoric which investigates to what extent my case study examples meet expectations of the conventions of graphic novels, visual rhetoric which identifies how graphic literature makes arguments through visual elements, and social rhetoric which considers how themes like cloning and war are represented my case studies. After that, I present

questions for a final exam that push students to think about the larger rhetorical issues involved with graphic novels. Finally, I conclude with a discussion about how these rhetorical strategies are valuable beyond graphic literature and *Star Wars*.

Why Use Graphic Literature in First-Year Composition?

Teaching graphic literature in first-year composition is not something brand new or even novel anymore. Thirty years ago, Harris Leonard wrote about his experiment with using comics to get students interested in reading the so-called classics of literature. He ultimately had students imitate the medium by actually creating their own comic book version of a literary classic. However, Leonard's point is that before such imitation occurs, students had to have a grounded knowledge of how a comic achieved meaning through layout, plot, character, and theme (406-07). The approaches I develop in this chapter update Leonard's experiment by injecting rhetoric into pedagogy as a means to read, think, and write about the comics.

Perhaps the most renowned example of a graphic novel being used in academia is the case of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a two-volume story of Speigelman's father who survived the Holocaust. Rocco Versaci argues that "Spiegelman's book is challenging in every sense of the word, from the complexity of his visual arrangements, to the weight of the subject matter, to his brilliant use (and deconstruction) of an extended animal metaphor by which the nationalities of the people involved are represented by various animals" (63). The black-and-white images are arranged in mostly balanced panels and are reminiscent of comic strips. According to Hajdu, "Although Spiegelman rendered the book in the same kind of scratchy, black-ink sketches he had been using in his anarchic

underground comix, *Maus* is a relatively straightforward work of dramatic nonfiction.

He had recorded his father's recollections on cassette tape and altered little except the

characters' species. (Jews became mice, Germans cats)" (1).

   Maus is known within the field of English studies. Andrea Loewenstein says that

she routinely assigns "*Maus* in English 150, the second semester of a two-semester

freshman composition course which also functions as an introduction to literature" (397).

Loewenstein's reasons for choosing to use *Maus* in her courses relate a great deal to her

rhetorical context. In short, she considers who her audience is (mostly African-Caribbean

working people in their thirties who may not have much experience with their Jewish

neighbors), who she is (a Jewish lesbian English teacher), and where she is (Medgar

Evers College in Crown Heights in Brooklyn, New York, a place where violence erupted

in 1991 between Hasidic Jews and African-Caribbeans). Lowenstein argues that "*Maus*

lends itself equally well to a sociopolitical, historical, or family systems perspective" thus

underscoring the range of discussions and writing assignments a graphic novel can

generate (403). While *Maus* is not one of the examples I use in this chapter, it provides

the opportunity to introduce other graphic novels into English courses.

   Like adolescent and televisual literature, graphic literature has rhetorical issues

for instructors and students to address. For example, audience is an important element of

the rhetorical situation. With graphic literature, the typical audience is assumed to be

children. Sabin notes that the traditional age range for children's comics is 8 to 12 and

for adult comics 16 to 24 (3). *Adult comic* is the "terminology the industry itself prefers

[…] and in general terms describes a comic with a mature bent" (3). Sabin recognizes

that pinning down precise divisions of comic books based on age is ultimately

unproductive. In some ways, he promotes a type of common sense when deciding

whether a comic is for children or for adults. Sabin recommends that the distinction

might be better revised as "children's comics and comics for a general readership" (3)

because even children often read adult comics. A rhetorical approach considers how

graphic literature appeals to a variety of audiences, young and old. As a way of

introducing graphic novels as the reading assignments for the course, instructors can

spend the first few days getting students to think about the purpose and context of graphic

literature.[29] I now argue why graphic novels can be used in first-year composition to

teach reading, thinking, and writing from rhetorical perspectives.

Graphic novels are more accessible reading material than traditional print novels

and academic texts. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) guidelines

issued in November 2004 showcase close connections between writing and reading. For

example, the guidelines state, "Most research indicates that the easiest way to tap

motivation to read is to teach students to choose books and other texts they understand

and enjoy, and then to give them time in school to read them. In addition to making

students stronger readers, this practice makes them stronger writers" (Writing Study

Group). Throughout this dissertation I have argued for using texts that students will have

some familiarity with so that writing instructors can begin teaching them how to read,

think, and write critically. Most students who come to our course having read graphic

novels will not already possess the necessary critical skills. The course aims, then, not

only to encourage their reading habits, but also to instill in students a critical vein for

when they do read texts on their own time.

Reading graphic literature appeals to students with varying learning styles. Lyga and Lyga suggest that graphic novels engage three out of seven of Howard Gardner's intelligences. For instance, students who have predominantly linguistic intelligence "are good with words and possess incredible vocabularies" (2). Graphic novels challenge students who possess linguistic intelligence because the medium's visual nature pushes students to infer meaning from panels without any text or to connect action sequences between panels without obvious direction to do so (2). Another intelligence that graphic novels appeals to is spatial learning. Spatial learners "think in images and pictures" and as such identify strongly with reading assignments that embrace this way (2). Graphic literature legitimizes this type of learning style, and students may be encouraged by the educational system to become more comfortable with other, traditional reading materials. Finally, students with interpersonal intelligence possess a natural ability to lead in part because of their strong communication skills which gives them an almost innate ability to sense other peoples' feelings (2). For these students, graphic novels communicate "through the visual—facial expressions, settings, sharp lines, and shadings" (2). Graphic novels, then, have the potential to reach out to students with different learning styles who might feel alienated by traditional print texts in the form of academic essays or novels.

Because graphic novels are a highly visual medium, they help students who have difficulty visualizing become better readers. Lyga and Lyga point out the presence of students who "do not mentally connect with the print. They are so busy trying to decode the words that they fail to create images associated with meaning" (3). And when this

happens, the process of reading, thinking, and, ultimately, writing is derailed. Graphic novels "may have entire pages without text, thus forcing readers to decode meaning from panels of pictures rather than threatening text" (3). The process of interpretation (or decoding) is still occurring, just with a different stimulus. Bongco argues that "Reading a comicbook [sic] is as [sic] a complex semiotic process—it involves understanding how the interactions between words and images have been manipulated in order to achieve a story or joke" (46). The presence of the images helps those students who do not have great skill working with words alone. This is not to say a graphic novel is utterly void of print. Most graphic novels utilize words in two ways: as narration and as speech. Even students who find difficulty with print will still have to process words; however, for their first term in college they may not feel quite so overwhelmed by the assignment.[30]

First-year composition also has a population of students who are capable of reading but lack the motivation to do so. Graphic literature can help these reluctant readers in a number of ways, in part, because it offers something students are not likely to have encountered before in an English class. Many students may have read comic books as a kid and will be surprised to see them assigned as reading material for a college writing course. This alone may spark the curiosity to propel students to do the reading, follow through on the thinking, and engage the writing—especially if they know they have something to say about a graphic novel. Finally, reading graphic literature may appear as more fun than reading traditional print novels, thus encouraging reluctant readers to give it a try. Those of us who teach writing know that half the battle is getting students to engage with the assignments. If graphic novels can help motivate just one

student to read, come to class, and share his or her ideas, then we should be optimistic. Of course, the other half of the battle remains: fostering critical thinking and guiding the student through the writing process.

The NCTE guidelines on writing point to the value of reading in different genres. The following statement can be useful for justifying the presence of graphic novels in first-year composition:

> Students should also have access to and experience in reading material that presents both published and student writing in various genres. Through immersion in a genre, students develop an internalized sense of why an author would select a particular genre for a particular purpose, the power of a particular genre to convey a message, and the rhetorical constraints and possibilities inherent in a genre. Students should be taught the features of different genres, experientially not only explicitly, so that they develop facilities in producing them and become familiar with variant features. (Writing Study Group)

In using graphic novels, I extend the NCTE's guidelines to include different media. For every place the guidelines mention "genre," I would substitute "medium." We then have several possible avenues of analysis to examine: why writers select graphic novels for their purpose (as well as an analysis of their audience), the power of graphic literature to convey messages, and the rhetorical possibilities available to a media like graphic novels. Although students will not produce their own graphic novels in the course, they will be taught how to read, think, and write critically about them—abilities that can be applied to

a variety of media.

In addition to their role in reading, graphic novels also require students to think about representations of reality, thus conducting a sort of social rhetoric. Richie argues that "Comics show the world and life in a novel way by taking the serious and animating it" (35). She does not mean that reality is rendered amusing, just interpreted in animation. The translation of something serious into something animated has the potential for readers to see something they might not have noticed before in their own world. For instance, the *Star Wars* texts I use in my case study are science fiction and thus present a different reality than our own, but we can still draw conclusions from how different aspects of reality are animated. I might also add that this is true for the outré literature I work with in this dissertation. These works have an overt fantasy or sci-fi element that defamiliarizes the environment readers live in.[31]

If we assign graphic literature in the first-year, literature-based writing course, then we expand the notion of what literature is. Versaci argues that "we increase and diversify the voices that our students experience in the classroom and suggest to them that literature may take various forms, even comic books" (66). This argument opens up new avenues for discussion including answers to these questions: "What is considered 'literature'? What is not? Who decides this? What are their interests?" (66). These questions are rhetorical because they ask for answers to purpose, audience, and context—key elements of the rhetorical situation. And if students begin to formulate rhetorical questions of this sort based on discussions of graphic literature, imagine what sorts of texts they can ask similar questions about in other coursework. First-year composition

becomes a site where students learn to ask critical questions by thinking rhetorically about texts.

Instructors who use graphic novels also get students to think critically about the particular characteristics of the medium under study. For example, Versaci argues that graphic novels "provoke [his] students to think more deeply about how artistic value is accorded to particular works or genres" (65). Not only will students think about what literature is, but how literary texts achieve artistic status. Because students are likely to have read other media, they might be able to argue what the differences and similarities are between graphic novels and traditional print novels.

Graphic novels are also helpful in the teaching of writing. One of the misconceptions that needs to be addressed is the belief that writing teachers assign texts in order for students to imitate them in their own writing. The NCTE guidelines suggest this happens. In the course I envision, I will not require my students to create their own graphic novel as an assignment. To do so would require a unique course that blends instruction in drawing ability with writing. Rather, I use graphic literature as the subject for writing instruction. Not every student in first-year composition will be able to imitate the kinds of academic discourse they will read. The very notion seems improbable. When I use academic discourse, for instance, the best I can hope for is that my students become more efficient at developing ways to read, understand, and think clearly about the text. I have no expectations that they actually write like the authors they read. From my point of view, such imitation is beyond the scope of the first-year course.

Finally, writing about graphic novels will likely represent something new and

different for most students. Versaci argues that because of today's increasingly diverse

and challenging media, students who encounter the typical reading material in first-year

composition may find it "dull, irrelevant, or both" (62). But, Versaci notes, "placing a

comic book—the basic form of which they no doubt recognize—into the context of a

classroom, teachers can catch students off guard in a positive way, and this disorientation

has, in my experience, led students to become more engaged by a given work" (62). One

of the challenges writing instructors face is making writing assignments interesting

enough for students to invest their time and energy in to do a good job. Part of the

problem rests in what students are asked to write about. There are always students who

do not resonate with the assignments. If graphic novels inspire students to think and

write rhetorically, then we have addressed—not solved—one of our challenges. Graphic

novels will, of course, not inspire every student. Some students, in fact, may resist the

idea all together. In that case, students "are still forming an argument for their rejection

and thinking about the issue, their own definitions of 'literariness,' and the work itself in

a more critical way" (66). To what extent students embrace graphic novels is not the

main issue. What is at stake are the tools students will need to read, think, and write

about discourse generally and graphic novels specifically.

Reading *Star Wars* Graphic Literature as a Rhetorician: A Case Study

In contrast to the previous two chapters, the case study I propose for this chapter

does not come with a range of scholarly materials for students to use in their research.

Star Wars graphic literature has not generated scholarly interest perhaps because there are

so many texts or they are yet too fringe. Instructors need not worry over this because, in spite of the obvious disadvantage of lack of resources, there is an important advantage. The rhetorical strategies I offer in this chapter provide critical frameworks for students to develop original analyses of the texts. Students can consider themselves pioneers of a sort because so little scholarship has been written on these texts. As students read, think, and write about the issues the see in the texts, instructors can encourage their young writers to find legitimate outlets for their work.[32]

I propose using two sets of graphic novels. One set is commonly called the Thrawn trilogy[33] and is a graphic adaptation of the traditional novels written by Timothy Zahn from 1991 to 1993. *Heir to the Empire*, *Dark Force Rising*, and *The Last Command* represent the first major *Star Wars* storyline since *Return of the Jedi* in 1983. The Thrawn trilogy became bestsellers on the *New York Times* list. The graphic novels' adaptation was written by Mike Baron and published from 1996 to 1998. I use the Thrawn trilogy in the first unit for three reasons. First, students will read three graphic novels, thus sending them a not-so-subtle message that they will be required to read—and that the reading will not be light. Second, anyone interested in exploring the *Star Wars* extended universe is encouraged to begin with the Thrawn trilogy. Third, even people who are only marginally familiar with the *Star Wars* saga will recognize main characters from the original cinematic trilogy.

The second set of graphic novels I use is the five-volume *Clone Wars* series. These novels were published from 2003 to 2005 and tell the *Star Wars* prequel story between *Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith*; thus students are most likely to be

familiar with the events. These novels address contemporary social issues such as

cloning and war—issues students are likely to know something about despite the genre of

science-fiction. Rick Lowell argues that "Once you get into middle and high school,

there are more mainstream books that might be more immediately recognizable, such as

Spider-Man and *Star Wars*, which are very popular" (qtd. in Lyga and Lyga 91). Since

most of the student population of the first-year course just graduated from high school,

using texts that are still within their reading level will help them process new rhetorical

ways to read, think, and write.

The stories told in these comics are often just as vibrant as what people encounter

in the original films. Kevin J. Anderson notes, "The *Star Wars* films are such visual

masterpieces that it seems perfectly appropriate that the stories be extended into a graphic

novel format."[34] Marvel Comics was the original publisher of the *Star Wars* comics

having been licensed before the first film was made (Benton 86). In the early 1990s,

Dark Horse Comics took over and has since produced hundreds of individual issues that

have been collected into trade paperback volumes.

With the number of graphic novels growing larger every month, using *Star Wars*

in particular needs some explanation. First, *Star Wars* is keeping fully in focus with the

overall theme of this dissertation: outré literature. To that end, it represents the first

science-fiction case study (both Harry Potter and Buffy are fantasy texts). Benton argues,

"The zip, bang, and boppo of *Star Wars* made it an ideal candidate for the comic books

and Lucas knew it" (85-86). Full of action and reaction, the *Star Wars* stories provide

ample material for a graphic novel medium. Second, *Star Wars* has enjoyed unparalleled

popularity since it debuted as a film in 1977. The final cinematic installment in 2005 is not likely to dampen that popularity any time soon. Third, because of this popularity, most incoming students will likely have at least heard of the movies, if they haven't seen them yet. Even though most incoming students for the 2005-06 academic years will have been born after *Return of the Jedi*, they may have experienced *Star Wars* at the movies with the original trilogy's special editions in 1997 and the prequels starting in 1999. Of course, the availability of all the movies on DVD increases the chances of our students having seen these films. Fourth, critical scholarship on *Star Wars* graphic novels is sorely needed. Armed with this knowledge, our students might be inspired to write critical essays that make a genuine contribution to *Star Wars* scholarship. Although this goal is lofty and perhaps unrealistic, it can provide needed motivation for engaging the writing.

The remainder of this chapter offers three rhetorical frameworks for reading, thinking, and writing about these outré *Star Wars* graphic novels. First, I define and argue for a generic rhetoric approach. Graphic novels are as much about form and convention as they are about content and story. I start with this type of rhetoric because it considers the medium of graphic novels, rather than particulars of individual texts. Second, I consider graphic novels as examples of visual rhetoric. In this unit, students are asked to focus on the persuasive power of visual strategies like color, images, words, panels, pages, etc. Third, I provide ways to analyze graphic novels in terms of social rhetoric which challenge readers to see how divisive issues in our society are reflected in a graphic novel. A fourth unit comprising a final exam suggests ways for students to

think about the overarching issues raised by the course.

Unit One: Generic Rhetoric

In order to have a unit on generic rhetoric, we must have a genre. Depending on your point of view, graphic novels are considered a medium or a genre. As a medium, graphic literature consists of the "written word and drawn pictures. The artwork forms a sequential narrative which depicts the events, while word balloons and captions explain those events and tell the reader who said what" (McCue and Bloom 5). These characteristics are conventions of comic books, just as moving images, dialogue, and sound are characteristics of televisual literature; and televisual literature is ordinarily considered a medium, not a genre. If graphic literature is a medium, then it must have genres within it; for example, superhero, science-fiction, fantasy, mystery, classic literature, etc.

However, there is a possibility that graphic literature is a genre. If we think of graphic literature in relation to other fiction, then it becomes another type of literature just as the poem, the play, the short story, and the novel are genres of literature. But this line of thinking breaks down quickly because graphic literature includes an element not native to traditional literatures: the visual, and the visual is more significant in graphic literature than the words.[35] In defining the comic strip (the predecessor of the graphic novel), historian David Kunzle identifies four characteristics, one of which is "a preponderance of image over text" (qtd. in Carrier 3). Because of the presence of visual elements, graphic novels cannot be placed within the same genre as traditional novels.

But is this enough to consider it a distinct medium? Sabin believes the answer is yes: comic "strips have their own aesthetic: they have a language, with their own grammar, syntax, and punctuation. They are not some hybrid form halfway between 'literature' and 'art' (whatever those words might mean), but a medium in their own right" (9). And they, too, have their array of genres or types of stories. Even though I accept the argument that graphic literature is a medium, it can still be subjected to generic analysis.

Generic rhetoric is an ideal way for students to think about graphic novels initially because it calls attention to how form or convention is persuasive.[36] In this first unit, students will focus on the form of graphic novels and ask questions that relate to audience and purpose, for instance. These issues tend to be more global and help students visualize the text as something that is part of a larger community of discourse. To make the analysis more local, students can analyze how specific graphic novels adhere to the format.

Thinking about genre as "shared names" might be a useful way to understand generic rhetoric better. According to Ann Johns, "experienced readers and writers tend to share names for categories of written texts" (22). Thus, she says, those in literary communities use the shared names of poems, novels, short stories, and plays to recognize distinct pieces of written discourse. "When a name is shared," for instance, "it evokes in experienced readers and writers certain expectations: for particular features or conventions of the text, for certain reader and writer roles, and for specific contexts in which the texts are found" (23). These evocations are rhetorical in many ways because

they ultimately engage questions of purpose, audience, construct, and context.[37] Even though Johns references *experienced* readers and writers, I believe a genre approach is critical to first-year college students because exposing them to the idea of genre early in their college education will benefit them as they continue to consume and produce prose in a plethora of genres.

In essence, then, generic rhetoric investigates how form creates meaning, how it persuades. Foss argues that "Generic criticism is rooted in the assumption that certain types of situations provoke similar needs and expectations among audiences and thus call for particular kinds of rhetoric" (225). With graphic novels, generic rhetoric asks what expectations must be met for the audience. Answers come quickly: art work, panels, word balloons, etc. Once these expectations are identified, we can begin to address how these expectations achieve meaning in specific texts.

According to Foss, there are three strands of generic criticism: generic description, generic participation, and generic application. Of these, generic application seems to be the most useful for the first-year writing course I envision. Foss says, "Rather than simply determining if a particular rhetorical artifact belongs in a particular genre, the critic uses the description of the genre to evaluate particular instances of rhetoric" (233).[38] Only part of the goal, then, is to determine whether the text in question is a good or bad representation of the medium (233).   Matters of evaluation, however valuable they may be, will not be the focus of this unit. Instead, I consider the writer's ability to understand how the text meets readers' expectations more important because questions that explore how something is persuasive involves rhetoric.

But generic rhetoric is not only concerned about conventions. Recent studies have extended generic rhetoric to include social action. Bawarshi notes, "genres do not simply help us define and organize kinds of texts; they also help us define and organize kinds of social actions, social actions that these texts rhetorically make possible" (335). Although defining and organizing texts according to genre can be valuable to first-year college students, instructors will want to push students' thinking further to consider the social actions the text provokes. In the scope of this chapter, there are a number of questions to consider in this regard. How does reading a graphic novel constitute a social action? How do rhetorical elements in the text make this social action possible?

A generic analysis has multiple purposes for first-year composition writers. First, "A study of genres enables critics to understand social reality and its relationship to rhetoric because genres represent conventionalized patterns for thought or structures for meaning, they can serve as an index to the social reality in which they figure" (Foss 226). This way, we begin to understand what it is readers are responding to when they engage a graphic novel. Graphic novels are mass media, and as such, are produced and distributed across the country for readers young and old. A focus on conventionalized patterns helps uncover how persuasion works in selling comics.

Another purpose for a generic analysis of graphic novels is to heighten "awareness of the way in which classification operates in any critical approach" (227). Rhetoric itself has a historical relationship with classification. Aristotle's classification of rhetoric into deliberative, judicial, and epideictic, for example, still survives. Understanding what constitutes a graphic novel is an important first step in a course

devoted to the medium.

The texts I propose for the course lend themselves to a double analysis of genre. Students will first demonstrate how the individual text is a part of the discourse of graphic novels and will second demonstrate how the individual text is part of the science fiction community of texts. Both of these points address larger issues involved with classification.

Ultimately, students gain critical knowledge of texts and their conventions. This skill is useful for them as they read, think, and write through the curriculum because they encounter texts in every course they take. Understanding that texts have built-in conventions may help ease the reading process. A rhetorical approach to genre aids students because they search for cues within a text that convey aspects of the overall genre. Being able to read a text and classify it helps students process information more efficiently.

When determining the audience for this assignment, students conduct their own generic analysis. In other words, students will think about what expectations their audience might have of writing. Students can then shape their essays to fit the conventions of their audience. This holds true especially if they write a traditional academic essay. Academic essays are the epitome of form. Just as students are learning how to analyze form, they are, in a very real sense, learning how to negotiate the demands of collegiate writing—a negotiation that will come in handy for many semesters.

There are a number of avenues for generic analysis of graphic novels. Let me

demonstrate one such possibility. For the first unit of the course, I assign the Thrawn

trilogy, starting with volume one, *Heir to the Empire*. The brief analysis I provide here

references only the first three pages. The first page has an opening crawl which has

several purposes. First, it serves as the formal convention of an introduction, orienting

readers to what this story will be about: "Five years after the destruction of the second

Death Star, the Rebel Alliance has driven the remnants of the old Imperial Starfleet to a

distant corner of the galaxy" (Baron 1). Second, the crawl is printed in white sans serif

text against a black background speckled with white dots meant to represent stars. The

effect is to simulate outer space, thus identifying the genre as science fiction. But, the

page also serves another purpose; it links the graphic novel directly to the films. This

link is critical if the graphic novel is to persuade fans of the films to read a new *Star Wars*

story. But there are differences. For instance, the text is stark white, while the text of the

films' crawls is yellow. Also, the films' crawls are composed of three paragraphs, while

there are only two paragraphs in the comic. Thus, the page is similar yet different for

obvious reasons: the media are not the same, and thus the *Star Wars* experience will not

be the same, either.

Expectations continue to be met on the second page where a single point of white

light is off center in outer space with hues of blue and purple streaking outward. The

overall effect is to draw the reader's eye to that center point. The point is to foster

anticipation. Something is going to happen with that white spot. No words are necessary

to convey this anticipation. If the first page's opening crawl set in space left any doubt,

the second page clearly places the story in a science fiction environment.

On the third page, readers encounter familiar space craft from the original trilogy of films. A one-and-a-half inch high panel spreads across the top of the page and shows four Imperial TIE fighters emerging from the white dot first seen on page two. In the films, the one-person TIEs were incapable of lightspeed. This is yet another difference suggesting that we are not completely in the *Star Wars* genre *as we knew it*. The bottom panel dominates the page in part because the image of the star destroyer it contains dominates the region of space it is in. In a move reminiscent of *A New Hope*, the authors pay homage to the famous opening fly-over. Only with the comic rendition, readers are already familiar with the tactic, so there is no need to impress; readers see at once the entirety of the ship.

When rhetoricians think about genre, they primarily consider *how* the elements engage expectations. But genre is only one feature of a graphic novel to examine. Its emphasis on form excludes to a certain degree a recognition of content. A visual approach to graphic novels helps restore balance to the course by considering the role of other content-based features of the novels.

Unit Two: Visual Rhetoric

Understanding that graphic literature can be analyzed as part of a larger genre of discourse is only the beginning. With visual rhetoric, instructors introduce the idea that graphic novels make arguments via images. Visual rhetoric still deals with form, but it also brings content into the analysis. If *rhetoric* can be said to be the practice of discovering the means available to persuade a given audience, then *visual rhetoric* can be

said to do the same but with a *visual* medium, that is, a medium composed of images, rather than of printed words.[39] Visual rhetoric, then, seeks to examine how images (graphics) persuade audiences.

But a definition of visual rhetoric becomes more complicated when it is considered from a pedagogical point of view. Hill argues that a pedagogy of visual rhetoric has not yet been developed "partly because no one recognizable discipline has staked a claim around the immense and vaguely defined area that is variously referred to as 'visual communication,' 'visual rhetoric,' or 'visual literacy'" (127). Any attempt to locate a coherent philosophy for visual rhetoric will ultimately fail for several reasons. First, rhetoric is interdisciplinary because its primary purpose (to uncover how persuasion operates in a given situation) is useful for a range of disciplines. Second, visual texts are everywhere and cannot be reduced to any one academic department. Third, individual instructors of writing and rhetoric will approach a course and its texts from their own experiences with pedagogy. Intelligent instructors ultimately know how to adapt their pedagogy to the needs of the students they are currently working with.[40] For these reasons and others, any theory about visual rhetoric will fail in spite of Hill's "early step in the development of a coherent undergraduate pedagogy of rhetoric" (133). What we can do is locate useful rhetorical strategies that apply to the visual texts we work with and present them not as a unified set of principles, but as several ways to examine how persuasion works in texts. Teaching visual rhetoric, then, does not necessitate developing a brand new lexicon. Instead, teachers work with what is out there, folding it into their lesson plans and relating it to graphic literature in specific and texts in general.

Visual rhetoric deals directly with the very nature of graphic literature: the images that make it a unique medium. John Berger argues that "Images were first made to conjure up the appearance of something that was absent" (624). Fictional images take the concept of absentia further by suggesting that what is not there (fiction) is actually visualized for readers. That is, the imaginative worlds of fictional literature is made real by drawing the images and characters of that world for everyone to see. No longer do readers have to guess at what is absent, they can now see what a character looks like, what the environment is like, and how the action develops. Thus graphic novels persuade readers to adopt a uniform sensory experience toward the story; while print novels offer individual reading experiences, like film, graphic novels show us what to think.

Because of this rhetorical effect on the audience, graphic literature joins the cadre of texts that make arguments. Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz point out, "As images—and copies of images—have become more persuasive in modern life, many people have noticed the ways in which images make arguments of their own" (232). One purpose of this second unit on visual rhetoric, then, is to understand how graphic novels make arguments. To that end, I ask what kinds of arguments graphic literature can make and what strategies they use (visual rhetoric) to achieve their arguments.

Another reason to use visual rhetoric is to strengthen students' ability to work with texts that convey information in nonprint ways. Often, the focus of first-year writing courses is on traditional, print works (whether these are literary or nonliterary). Hill argues that "One might assume—or at least hope—that a major goal of the educational system is to help students develop the abilities necessary to comprehend,

interpret, and critically respond to the textual forms that they will encounter as members

of the culture" (124). Hill's own vocabulary of *comprehend*, *interpret*, and *respond*

mirrors my own of read, think, and write. Hill and I are on the same page when we create

writing assignments that engage visual texts like graphic novels. The purpose is to make

our students better members of the communities they live in.

Stephen Bernhardt develops four categories of visual rhetoric that can be helpful

in a first-year composition course such as this one. He argues, "To attend to the layout of

the text requires considering the text as a visual gestalt, focusing attention on the total

visual impact of the text on a prospective reader" (71). Bernhardt's idea of using a

gestalt approach means that visual elements should not be considered in isolation, but as

part of the entire image or how one element relates to the others. Bernhardt's example is

of an advertisement; my case study is of graphic literature, and this warrants some

explanation. Graphic novels have images on every page, so when we take a visual

rhetoric approach, we must make certain to ground the discussion in specific examples.

One way to achieve a useful analysis is to concentrate on one page of the graphic novel to

illustrate a particular persuasive visual element and another might be to show how one

visual element is consistently (or not) represented throughout the novel.

To help the analysis, Bernhardt presents four laws of gestalt. The first is "that of

equilibrium, or *pragnanz*, which suggests that items in a visual field strive for balance or

equilibrium with other items in the field" (71). In graphic novels the principle of

equilibrium is most evident in how panels are arranged on a page. While there is no

governing doctrine on how to compose a page, there seem to be three basic models.

First, a page can be horizontally divided into three sections of more or less the same size. Usually the panels are rectangular and stretch from the left edge to the right edge. The panels are read from top to bottom. Second, a page can be arranged with multiple panels overlapping one another. In this case the panels which overlap usually succeed in drawing the reader's attention and contain the page's most significant text. Third, a page can be composed of one complete image. A one-page panel is rare and usually reserved for the most significant moments of the entire novel. A variation of the one-page panel is when one image is spread across two pages. This variation is not often used, but when it is, the images become beacons of persuasion.

In the second unit of the course, I use novels from the five-volume *Clone Wars* series. An example of using equilibrium strategically can be found in *The Defense of Kamino and Other Tales* (volume 1).[41] The entire volume has only two one-page panels. The first depicts three Advance Recon Commandos (ARC) troopers descending from on high with their blasters firing. The scene is impressive because it introduces readers to this new breed of clone soldier. The second one-page panel depicts a chaotic space battle with a Trade Federation battle ship being attacked by Republic cruisers. The scope of the battle is large enough to warrant a full page, and even then one page cannot do justice to the war that is engulfing the Republic.

The second principle of gestalt mentioned by Bernhardt is that of good continuation, or good figure. He says this law "suggests that visual perception works to pull figures out of the background, to give them definition against the undistinguished field in which they are located" (72). Another word for this is *emphasis*. In a sense, this

idea is reminiscent of Kenneth Burke's pentad in which five elements of a situation

compete for attention, with one being recognized as the dominant term.[42] When images

are used as the dominant medium, the eyes need to focus on one that is most central,

otherwise the message can get lost in the sea of images. In graphic novels, this principle

operates on two levels. First, a pages may have a panel that is larger than other panels,

therefore making that one panel appear more important to the narrative. Second, images

within panels compete with one another. In most individual panels, one image stands out

as the central image for readers to focus on.

The third theory of gestalt is that of closure. According to Bernhardt, "When

good continuation or good figure is not provided by the visual stimulus, the perceiver has

a tendency to fill in the missing gaps, to provide the missing definition" (72). The idea of

closure is akin to Iser's notion of filling in the gaps during reading. Iser argues,

"whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the

opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing

connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself" (959). The rhetorical impact of

gaps is witnessed when one considers that "one text is potentially capable of several

different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each

individual reader will fill in the gaps in his [or her] own way" (959). The process of

filling in the gaps is appropriate for a medium like graphic literature because readers have

to move their eyes from one panel to the next, literally jumping over the gaps between the

panels. Readers work quickly to understand connections between the panels because

there is usually no guidance from the authors. The process can be complex when there

are five or six panels occupying one page. Readers must determine which panel should be read first and then follow the story from one to the next. Because panels can only offer so much in the way of text and images, readers must complete the transition from panel to panel by creating in their mind what might have happened in the gap.

The fourth and final gestalt law Bernhardt provides is similarity. This principle "suggest that units which resemble each other in shape, size, color, or direction will be seen together as a homogenous grouping" (72). This is also known as proximity, or when like images are placed together to make the decoding process easier. In the *Clone Wars* novels we see this principle illustrated in numerous ways, one of which is with color. If a page has multiple panels, then something must be present to lend a certain coherence to the panels. Frequently, color is what unifies a page. In *Last Stand on Jabiim* (volume 3), three colors are dominant: a blue-gray that represents the inclement weather on Jabiim, a dusty brown that represents the landscape and the Jedi's robes, and a combination of red, orange, and yellow that represent the firepower of war. Turning to any page, readers are likely to see similar colors washed across the panels. In addition to these four principles of visual design, there is one more visual element that needs to be considered.

Speech balloons[43] are another visual feature of graphic literature that need to be discussed. While some graphic novels may rely solely on images to tell the story, most include word balloons or narrative squares to assist readers in following the storyline. In addition to being a visual representation of thought or speech, word balloons are also a key convention of the medium and are thus a part of generic rhetoric. The words within a speech balloon are usually consistently reproduced throughout the novel in the same font

and size. Unless, of course, certain words need to be stressed. If this is the case, then a bold typeface is used, thus signaling for appropriate stress. Sometimes, when strong emotion needs to be conveyed, the word is double or triple its normal size. Barker argues that when this happens, "The balloon itself conditions the meaning, by showing us the kind of force the words are to have" (11). Although speech balloons may appear to be uncomplicated features, they are highly rhetorical because they help readers form connections to the characters and events in the novel. A word balloon "conditions that meaning, and establishes our relationship to that meaning. Conventions in comic strips condense social relationships; they help to determine the kind of reader we become. They make reading a social relationship between us and the text" (11). Thus, in the eyes of Louise Rosenblatt, for instance, speech balloons can be a critical nexus for how a transaction occurs between readers and the text.

No study of graphic literature can be complete without attention to the generic and visual rhetoric of the medium, two methods that reveal secrets of form and content. Aside from these two rhetorical frameworks, there is yet another that students may find valuable as they read, think, and write about graphic novels. Social rhetoric asks students to consider the extent to which the characters and events of graphic literature are influenced by or representative of society. This type of social reflection helps humanize graphic novels.

Unit Three: Social Rhetoric

James Berlin notes that social rhetoric started to develop in earnest during the

Great Depression, a time when people in the United States made a commitment to helping improve social conditions for all. In terms of a social rhetoric, Berlin views writing "as a social activity, growing within a social context and carrying social consequences" (*Rhetoric and Reality* 81). The goals of social rhetoric show how graphic literature is a social activity that exists within a social context and has social consequences.

One of the results of the move toward a social rhetoric of writing is an emphasis on collectivity or collaboration. Although Berlin's frame of reference is classrooms, in terms of my case study, the collaboration is among the people who write the story, pencil it, color it, and letter it. This means that the writer thinks up the plot and communicates it via a script. Another person pencils or draws the images and empty speech balloons based on the story. A third person then colors the images according to how the writer imagines the story. It is possible, of course, for the pencil artist to have input as to which colors will work best for a given panel or page. Finally, another person draws the letters in the speech balloons. There are, of course, other people involved in the process of putting graphic novels together, but these four are thought of to be the main authors. Because of the teamwork involved in creating a visual text, graphic literature represents an ideal embodiment of social rhetoric.

Berlin uses the idea of social rhetoric as groundwork for his own theory of a social-epistemic rhetoric that can be useful for analyzing graphic novels. He defines social-epistemic rhetoric as "a notion of rhetoric as a political act involving a dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as

the agency of mediation" ("Rhetoric and Ideology" 488). He qualifies these terms by saying that the *material* means the material conditions of existence, the *social* means the discourse community, and the *individual writer* means the observer. He further notes that all three of these elements are "grounded in language" as verbal constructs (488). These elements are "social constructions—all specific to a particular time and culture" (488). This terminology can be useful for analyzing graphic literature because as discourse it is the product of a specific time and culture. The graphic novels in this chapter are of the present moment and imbedded within a culture brought up on science-fiction and fantasy—a popular culture of *Star Wars*, if you will. Because of this, these texts will resonate with people who understand the *Star Wars* culture. The graphic novels are also reflective of the social conditions of our time: cloning and war chief among those. The material conditions of a graphic novel can be the blending of text and visual to create a genre suitable to readers/observers in society at this time and place. The textual-visual language innate to graphic literature speaks to these readers in a more direct way than any other form of language can. If I have the essence of Berlin correct here, graphic novels are popular because people see them as an accurate use of social discourse to express social conditions.

One purpose for using social rhetoric is to connect issues in a graphic novel to issues in the reader's society. Not all graphic novels engage social issues, of course, but because they are temporal and special products of a society, all comics reveal something about the society in which they were produced—even if the focus is on how the characters were drawn. I use the *Clone Wars* novels because they reflect current issues in

society that allow students to connect what they read about in class and what they see

happening in the world around them. In what follows, I develops ways to use the graphic

novels to talk about cloning and war and suggest outcomes for student writing.

In the last decade or so, cloning has become a topic for debate in today's political

climate. Animal cloning has already occurred successfully in scientific communities, and

governments across the globe are pressing to allow or disallow research on *human*

cloning. The issue of human cloning raises important questions: What values are held by

those who support human cloning? Oppose it? What status would a human clone have in

our society? What roles would they be expected to play?

Each of these questions are raised in the *Clone Wars* novels. Richard Hanley

notes a series of questions to ask: "Can it be permissible to produce clones of whole

organisms? […] What if the organism is a person, like Jango Fett? Can it be permissible

to manipulate the process to engineer clones' characteristics, the way the clone army is

engineered on Kamino?" (94). A notorious bounty hunter, Jango Fett provided the

genetic model for the Republic's army. Most of all, though, he was a fighter. And

because he knew how to fight and win, he became the perfect person to replicate into an

army of millions. Hanley's questions raise numerous moral issues. For example, if we

permit human cloning, then which humans should be cloned and why? Are convicted

criminals worth cloning? Are scientists and medical practitioners worthy of being

cloned? What about our children in case one of them dies too young? We need more

police officers and fire fighters, so we should clone them, right? An analysis along these

lines shows students that there are no easy answers, but within in their life time, answers

will no doubt have to be offered.

The answers are no less difficult when we ask *why* humans should be cloned. In the *Clone Wars* storyline, the clones are grown for one purpose: to be soldiers in a coming civil war. Within this scenario, it is morally all right for clones to be grown as soldiers in a war for which they have little role other than to defend the Republic. But there could be other reasons why humans should be cloned. Clones can provide organs for non-cloned humans who are suffering from organ failure. Clones can do the jobs non-cloned humans do not wish to do anymore such as garbage truck drivers or sewer cleaners. Clones can perform high-risk jobs or be sent into outer space. Before any cloning becomes legal, students might note, sound reasons must be accepted for who should be cloned and why they should be cloned.

If we grant human cloning, then we have essentially created a new class of beings who will need to be integrated into society. Serious discussion about what status to accord them will generate debate. Will they have the same rights as everyone else in the society in which they were created? Will they pay taxes and own property? Will we think of them as human? In the *Clone Wars* novels, the clones are essentially conceived of as commodities—not people—that are easily expendable and replaceable. In the story "The New Face of War" (volume 2), Jedi Obi-Wan Kenobi asks a clone trooper for advice. The trooper responds with: "That's our assessment as well, General Kenobi. The moon's a perfect staging site for an attack on Naboo." Zule, a Jedi apprentice along for the mission, overhears the exchange and asks, "The clone has a mind of his own now?" Even though the Jedi are supposed to represent an enlightened order, the idea of thinking

of clones as human with the ability to think is still difficult to accept. Another apprentice,

Anakin Skywalker—his face shadowed by anger, tells Zule, "He's not just a clone. He's

an ARC trooper, a prototype super soldier—just one step removed from Jango Fett." The

exchange is notable for not only what it reveals about the clones' status in society, but

also for the hierarchy within the clone population. The aliens who grew the clones took

some aside for additional training as ARC troopers. In theory, these ARC clones have

the ability to order other non-ARCs into battle to die. Clones may think creatively, but

not all clones think alike.

In addition to cloning, war is another major contemporary issue that is reflected in

the *Clone Wars* novels. American readers will be able to relate to warfare issues because

their country has been engaged in warfare with other countries. In this sense, war is not

something only seen in comic books, but is also seen through news coverage or through

personal stories of family or friends who fought in a war. Hanley observes that "Warfare

involves death, injury, and myriad other kinds of suffering. The battles spectacularly

depicted in *Star Wars* are entirely typical in this regard. Warfare is inherently bad. But

this doesn't mean warfare is always wrong. Sometimes it's permissible to do inherently

bad things, such as killing a human being in genuine self-defense" (100). Applying

Hanley's words to the classroom, students reading the *Clone Wars* novels can ask to what

extent war are justified. Students may also take one of the two dominant positions

(Republic or Separatist) and argue their case for entering the war.

Hanley also thumbnails a series of circumstances when it is permissible to go to

war. In what he identifies as "Just War theory," Hanley says the following conditions

must be met: just cause, right intention, competent authority, last resort, reasonable prospect of success, discrimination, and proportionality (101). He argues that "These conditions are not easily satisfied, and all must be satisfied for warfare to be permissible" (101). As classroom exercises in argument, teachers can introduce summaries of major conflicts in history for students to apply the Just War theory. Eventually, students will turn to the *Clone Wars* novels and decide whether the warfare can be justified according to the seven conditions. In all cases, students are learning not only how to analyze a text, but also how to formulate an argument.

The *Clone Wars* volumes are filled with visual representations of the effects of war on a population. Students will need to be prepared for the shocking closeness of the effects before reading them, especially if some students are sensitive to graphic images of war. In "The New Face of War" (volume two), a double-page layout emphasizes the horror of war. As stated earlier, a two-page panel is rare and only used for intense dramatic effect. In this case, the scene depicts the fallout from a toxic gas unleashed on an unsuspecting group of Gungan colonists. The Jedi sent to investigate are seen at a distance in the far upper left hand corner, looking down at the scene of a massive holocaust. Only several medical droids meander through the devastation. That Gungans were the victims is especially heartfelt given that many readers will think of Jar Jar Binks as representative of the Gungan race. Jar Jar is seen in the film *The Phantom Menace* as a happy-go-lucky but clumsy being who exudes playfulness and a genuine zest for life. To see his species murdered and left to rot will upset readers who empathize with Jar Jar and his outlook on life. The *Clone Wars* novels show the sheer brutality and

hopelessness of warfare for their audience. Thinking critically about why fictitious

governments go to war will help students think critically about why real governments go

to war.

Another goal of social rhetoric, then, is not only to promote critical thinking, but

also to develop a degree of social consciousness about matters such as war. Students will

leave the academic space of their classroom and carry questions about Just War theory to

their everyday lives. An informed populace will be able to enter conversations with

others about war.

The three varieties of rhetorical analysis offered in this chapter clearly show

different perspectives for interpreting a text. Equipped with rhetoric as a means of

reading, thinking, and writing about graphic novels, the classroom learning community

will rarely run out of things to say, since each page of the comic offers something new to

consider. Even though students have studied rhetorics of genre, the visual, and the social,

they are not yet concluded in the course. Most courses require a final examination to

demonstrate that students can read, think, and write intelligently about a given topic.

Unit Four: Synthesizing for a Final Exam

Final exams are opportunities to consider the subject matter of the course in larger

perspectives than was perhaps possible during the term. Reflecting on what has been

done in order to find points of connection is an important practice for anyone to learn.

Synthesizing a course of information into a coherent argument, for example, is useful for

a variety of college courses. In first-year composition a goal of the final exam is to

evaluate how well students have read, thought, and written about the various texts they studied. The exam does not need to require specific examples from the texts, since in some institutions, students are not permitted to use the texts during the examination. Instead, the exam should call upon the students' ability to work with the texts they are most familiar with after having written about them in longer essays.

Exam questions should provide for a more general response. For example, the following questions serve to bring about a sense of closure to the course without demanding specific quotations from the course texts:

- Write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical situation of graphic novels/comic books in today's culture. When discussing issues of purpose, audience, and context, draw on the experiences with graphic novels from this course.

- Write an essay in which you argue for or against using graphic novels to teach first-year college writing. You have some authority to do this since you have taken such a course yourself. In your argument, you should address to what extent graphic novels have literary merit as well as how well they teach reading, thinking, and writing skills.

Each of these questions pushes students to think beyond the course itself while still keeping the exam focused on the overall nature of the course. That is, the exam does not merely retread old ground or comprehensively assess what students have learned from week to week during the course. Students are asked to take a fresh look at the content of the course, hopefully stimulating them to a positive writing experience.

Conclusion: Beyond a Galaxy Far, Far Away

Imagine students who took English 101 as designed in this chapter and in their junior or senior year asking their professors what the conventions are for writing in their specific discipline. For instance, one of the goals of a first-year writing course that focuses on genre is for students to develop an awareness that not all writing is the same across disciplines. Different disciplines have different conventions. As students take other courses, one of the avenues of interrogation with the texts they encounter is to ask to what extent these texts are representative of the genre they are supposed to fit into. Not only will this line of questioning help students be more efficient readers, but it will also help them become sharper critical thinkers as they enter a dialogue with the authors. By this I mean that students will expect authors to make certain moves (analyze data, offer a counterpoint, insert equations, etc.), and students will be able to evaluate the extent to which these moves are successful. This response, whether in writing or in class discussion, constitutes meaningful dialogue and leads to higher levels of thinking.

Imagine our students being able to read and see a text at the same time. A first-year course that focuses on visual elements of discourse will strengthen students' abilities to read, think, and process a range of texts. Something as seemingly basic as proximity can quickly tell students that a table, a figure, or a picture is related to the words next to it. All students have to do is glance at the page and to make connections between the visual and print elements. Understanding how elements on a page work rhetorically will ideally make them more efficient readers.

Imagine our students thinking about a typical history book from multiple social perspectives. Experiencing a first-year composition course in which reading, thinking, and writing about cloning and war, for example, gives students the tools necessary to navigate the network of cultural assumptions found in an array of texts and situations they are likely to encounter. Our students will look at Supreme Court decisions and physics reports to examine the masculine persona or language and wonder how this might have been different if a woman wrote it. Our students will be better able to debate contemporary issues after having been asked to formulate arguments as part of their first-year curriculum. In short, what they learn in first-year writing extends beyond the sixteen-week scope of the course and into their professional and personal lives.

CHAPTER FIVE

BRINGING FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION, PEDAGOGY, AND TEXTBOOKS INTO

RHETORICAL ALIGNMENT

Thus far, the dissertation has examined the role adolescent novels, television, and graphic novels can play in helping students acquire critical reading, thinking, and writing skills that can help them navigate the course, transfer knowledge to their other courses, and apply what they learn to texts in their own lives. I have worked from the assumption that texts students are already familiar with will help them learn rhetorical skills they may be unfamiliar with. Rather than present incoming students with new texts and new theories, instructors teach the unknown (rhetorical theory) via the known (texts from popular culture). I also point out how the nine rhetorical strategies I define and discuss in the previous chapters can be useful for texts other than fiction.

As the conclusion this chapter provides reflection on how the issues I raise in the dissertation play out rhetorically in a typical first-semester composition course. To that end I first examine the rhetorical dynamics of first-year composition by showing how administrators and instructors need to think about audience, purpose, content, and context in order to bring the course into better balance. I next argue that within a rhetorically motivated first-year composition space, a rhetorical pedagogy can be adopted to further illustrate the goals the course. I will argue that William Covino's definition of rhetorical pedagogy as a content-based pedagogy is too limited, and we need to embrace a larger vision to be more successful. Finally, I provide a practical example of how rhetoric works in first-year composition by examining how literature-for-composition textbooks

often work against a rhetorical pedagogy as I have defined it. What I have argued for in this dissertation provides a valuable alternative to what can be found in typical mass-produced literature-for-composition anthologies.

Understanding the Rhetorical Dynamics of First-Year Composition

In many typical first-year composition courses, purpose, audience, content, and context are often out of sync with one another as is evident in the recent debate about outcomes for first-year composition. When instructors first considered a series of outcomes for the first-year course, White recalls that teachers had different ideas about what should happen in the course. He notes that the "problem was not so much with the different approaches taken by different teachers—that could in fact be considered a strength—but with the different goals and expectations they expressed" ("The Origins" 4). Negotiating differences was one of the challenges in generating a list of potential outcomes for the course, but such outcomes only speak to one of the rhetorical elements—purpose. As the rest of this chapter shows, we need to consider how audience, content, and context interact with purpose to create a rhetorical learning space for ourselves and for our students.

Historian Sharon Crowley notes that over the years, many purposes for first-year composition have been proposed, tested, adopted, implemented, evaluated, discarded, and replaced. Crowley articulates a list of rationales for the course in somewhat chronological order:

it has been argued that students should be required to study composition in

order to develop taste, to improve their grasp of formal and mechanical

correctness, to become liberally educated, to prepare for jobs or

professions, to develop their personalities, to become able citizens of a

democracy, to become skilled communicators, to develop skill in textual

analysis, to become critical thinkers, to establish their personal voices, to

master the composing process, to master the composition of discourses

used within academic disciplines, and to become oppositional critics of

their culture. (6)

While this list may seem unduly long and perhaps painful to glance at, it is by no means

comprehensive. Crowley's argument is that throughout the history of the first-year

course there has been no consistency on what the course ought to be about. From her

perspective, purpose in first-year composition is nearly impossible to discuss because it

often occurs at a global level. With a rhetorical approach, however, thinking about

purpose becomes a local issue to be determined by specific institutions. Rhetoric

operates within specific contexts that are embedded in history. We can write a list of

reasons and then judge current first-year requirements based on those lists, as Crowley

appears to do. Such inconsistencies among the purpose should be completely expected

and accepted if we think about this as rhetoricians. Consider this: ideally, WPAs and

their faculty develop aims and goals for their students' needs at the time. The time

changes and so do the students. Hopefully, so does the purpose. Crowley will be right if

she agrees that first-year composition is a hindrance if it adheres to models that are no

longer in sync with what students need to study. Conceived rhetorically—locally, that

is—we can see that first-year composition is a necessary component of a college curriculum because it responds directly to what students need as they continue to move through college and life. Even if we argue no further than this, we can see how necessary and useful the course can be.

One way to ground a discussion of purpose is to use a case study. Here, I use the University of Arizona's *A Student's Guide to First-Year Composition* (*Guide*), a publication I have taught from for five years. All sections of first-year composition at the University of Arizona are required to purchase the *Guide*, so it serves as a representation of what the University's writing program considers to be the purposes of first-year composition. In the context of my dissertation, I have defined first-year composition as the first-semester course of a two-course requirement (or the course that typically uses a literature-based curriculum); at the University of Arizona, that course is English 101.

Chapter three of the *Guide* begins with the enumeration of seven goals of English 101. Each of the goals represents the purposes of the course. The goals are these:

> Analyze complex texts through close reading; Develop strategies for analyzing texts for particular purposes, audiences, and situations; Analyze how authors use textual conventions to achieve their purposes in specific contexts; Write essays that develop your analyses with evidence drawn from the texts you read; Incorporate other writers' interpretations into your analyses; Learn research, reading, writing, and revision strategies that can be applied to your work in other courses and your profession; Create multiple, meaningful revisions of your own writing. (Sharp, Brobbel, and

Ene 25)

For these seven purposes to be useful, they must be seen as rhetorical. By way of example, let us examine the first goal. Reading is the first of the three skills I have been arguing for throughout this project. As such, in a rhetorical learning space, reading is not solely the responsibility of the students. Far too often, I hear complaints that the students did not do the reading, so class time was a waste. When students do not complete a reading assignment, every effort should be made to figure out the reason. Sometimes it may be that the students did not know how to read the text. This may astonish some instructors, but not every student will have the same capacity to read, understand, and interpret the text we assign them. With familiar, outré texts instructors can spend class time teaching students how to do close readings of the text, so that when they are on their own, they will know what to think about when they read. Also, students should not be made to feel as if they have to know everything about the text that was assigned for homework. Instead, class time becomes a rhetorical moment when students ask questions that other students may be able to answer and instructors both pose and answer questions. Indeed, reading a text is not a solitary activity because it is a highly rhetorical activity.

In addition to reading critically, my approach to first-year composition also teaches students how to think and write critically. These three skills serve as a first step in developing a feasible rhetorical literacy that will propel students not only through their college education, but also through their daily lives by making them more critically aware of what they encounter outside of school. As I state throughout, the key to teaching reading, thinking, and writing is rhetoric. Reading rhetorically means engaging in a

dialogue with the text, asking questions in class, underlining important passages, etc.

Thinking rhetorically means asking important questions like how the author attempts to

persuade readers, how gender and race are constructed, and how introductions set up

characters. Writing rhetorically means deciding what genre to compose in, understanding

oneself as an author, and analyzing intended audience. A first-year composition course

that connects rhetoric to reading, thinking, and writing prepares students for a variety of

learning situations they will encounter in their future.

Rhetorically-based literature courses also expose students to multiple popular

media. Using outré literatures is an important way to connect what students do in a

general education course like first-year composition to what they do in their lives: read

popular fiction, watch television, and read comic books. Yancey argues, "This

connection—between the academy and the world—seems to be one of the distinguishing

attributes of current models of education; we see it expressed in service learning, in

internships, in volunteer service, in travel abroad programs" (97). If we adopt the model

of first-year composition I propose, then we can see Yancey's connection being made

within the courses we teach.

Finally, by strengthening reading, thinking, and writing skills, I aim to bolster

student literacies. Knoblauch rightly points out that literacy is "one of those mischievous

concepts […] that appear to denote capacities but that actually convey value judgments"

(74). I hope here to make as plain as is possible what value judgments I have made in

discussing literacy. First, I use literacies in the plural because I believe we possess many

different literacies in our lives. Huot and Stroble point out that "It is quite common to

speak of various kinds of literacy" (4). They identify a list of literacies including school, work, community, family, religious, political, and social literacies. Each literacy we possess entails a way of interacting with groups and institutions. Huot and Stroble say that critical literacies "refer to a cluster of skills centered around reading and writing that are valued by a group of people who have some recognized authority or whose assignment of value appeals to some recognized authority" (4). I agree that reading, thinking, and writing are critical literacies that I and many writing teachers have accorded value. The challenge in what Huot and Stroble say resides in getting our students to recognize why we value these literacies.

One assumption I make regarding literacy is that a rhetorical approach to reading, thinking, and writing is important. Histories of rhetoric show us that rhetoric has been valued for different reasons for centuries. But today's students will need to know why a rhetorical approach to first-year composition is an essentially valuable one. Corbett and Connors address this when they argue that "One of the chief values of rhetoric, conceived of as a system for gathering, selecting, arranging, and expressing our material, is that it represents a *positive* approach to the problems of writing" (25) and, I might add, to reading and thinking. The value in rhetoric, then, is seeing it as a system of strategies that has practical use for figuring out what a text means, learning how to engage its ideas, and expressing those ideas in writing. Knoblauch argues that "Literacy never stands alone in these perspectives as a neutral denoting of skills; it is always literacy for something—for professional competence in a technological world, for civic responsibility and the preservation of heritage, for personal growth and self-fulfillment, for social and

political change" (76). In my vision of first-year writing, literacy helps students become better communicators in order to interact with a variety of texts and people through the course of their educational experience and in the course of their life's experience.

The purpose of first-year composition, however, must complement the other rhetorical features, such as audience. While administrators acknowledge that it is impossible to create a first-year composition tailored to meet the needs of every individual student, there are ways to meet the needs of large classes of students. In chapter one I argued that one of the issues at stake in my project is the retention of students after the first year. If we hope to keep as many students as possible enrolled, then first-year composition must reach and connect with its audience. Writing teachers and administrators must not forget that first-year composition is there for the students. We have required it for so long because we believe in its value, even though over the years its purposes and audiences change.

One way to mediate purpose and audience is through an examination of the course's content, a third rhetorical feature. The choice of outré reading material is designed to appeal to the varied population of typical first-year writing courses. As a teacher, I recognize how increasingly difficult it is to motivate students to read. There are surely a variety of reasons why this is so (and a variety of other ways to achieve motivation), but perhaps one reason why students are unmotivated has to do with the standard texts we assign. These standard texts range from academic discourse to Victorian novels to contemporary short stories. Unless students have a penchant for this type of reading, most of the texts we think as standard will be unfamiliar to them as well

as boring. I stressed before that we have an obligation to teach students how to read,

think, and write in first-year composition, but we also have an obligation to give them a

chance to do so with materials they can identify with—at least initially.

The three case studies I offer provide examples of how content connects to

audience, for example. One of the tasks in selecting content is to choose something that

appeals to both male and females students. Rowling's Harry Potter novels appeal to both

sexes perhaps because they have both a male protagonist that young men can identify

with and a strong female secondary character that young women can identify with.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, on the other hand, drew a decidedly female audience in large

part due to the female protagonist who possesses supernatural powers. Obviously,

heterosexual men may have watched the show because of Sarah Michelle Gellar's sex

appeal or the interest in a super hero-type character. Assigning it in first-year

composition broadens the audience so that young men can see what a strong female

persona can accomplish on network television. The *Star Wars* graphic novels, in

contrast, have a decidedly male audience. For generations, men young and old have been

the target audience for comic books. *Star Wars*, in particular, has a strong male

following, even though there are plenty of female fans. Using graphic novels in first-year

composition brings this medium to many young women who may never have read a

comic book before. The opportunity to read and study a new form of communication

(especially one appropriated by men) may seem like an empowering moment for some

female students. In short, the readings I assign are designed to cross gender barriers in

the learning community I hope to create in the course. No text belongs to one gender,

and the sooner we recognize this fact as a group, then the sooner we can learn how to begin talking about the text.

Chapter three is a good example of how to bring purpose, audience, and content into rhetorical balance. I begin with a teleliteracy narrative that privileges students' experiences with the medium under study. Note that a literacy narrative of, say, Shakespearean literature may not be as successful because when writing a literacy narrative, the very subject must be owned to some extent by the writer. In other words, since experience is an important part of the narrative, how can students write about something they do not know much about? A teleliteracy narrative, then, is an ideal way to begin the course because it makes students feel as though they have something to say from the start. It also establishes a connection between student and text, two points of the rhetorical triangle. The instructor is present only through needed instruction and conferencing. In the second unit of the course, the instructor takes on a larger role in explaining rhetoric and the three rhetorical strategies students will be asked to work with. *BTVS* is used to explain the concepts. The students in the meantime are processing the assignment in order to generate ideas for the larger essay. In the third unit, the text itself becomes central as students write an evaluation of it. Acting more as editors than teachers, instructors guide their students through the process of communicating their ideas to a specific audience, while students cope with planning how to persuade their audience to accept their point of view. Neither teacher nor student is ignored in this model. Balance among teacher, student, and text can be achieved when we recognize these as connected, rhetorical elements—elements that make up the whole of first-year

composition.

In terms of a context for first-year composition, my dissertation suggests we adopt popular culture, which can be considered the world of our students' lives. Popular culture makes sense as a context given the purpose of teaching critical reading, thinking and writing about college and "real-world" texts, the audience of young men and women, and content, outré literature.

One of the facts writing teachers and writing program administrators often overlook or perhaps are not as aware of as they should be is that first-year composition is but one course among others that first-year students take. As I argued in chapter one, first-year composition is a *first*-contact zone among other zones. What I mean is that newly arrived students are engaged in a lot of other activities—both scholarly and social. They are connected to the university in ways other than first-year composition. Any discussion of the course needs to consider these contexts as relevant. As students navigate the often turbulent waters of the first semester, they learn how to look rhetorically at social elements in their lives with, hopefully, a more acute perspective.

Using outré literature opens up the possibility of having different departments be involved in first-year composition. For example, adolescent literature and Harry Potter may be taught in Education departments. Televisual literature and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* can find a home in Media Studies departments. Graphic novels and *Star Wars* might work well in Visual Arts departments. My point is not to suggest English departments cannot handle first-year composition (they have done so for over a century), but to suggest that first-year composition has outgrown English departments in scope.

Surely, some variety of first-year composition can remain in English departments, but I think the future of the course rests outward. If so, then other departments will have to find ways to offer the course if they value their students learning how to read, think, and write. Of course, the very idea of interdisciplinary funding will rile the professorial and administrative ranks to heated debates. My response can only be this: it is time for those debates to begin in earnest. If first-year composition is to continue being valued for incoming college students, then it must evolve to meet the needs of this population. Change happens in small steps, so we better get walking.

Finally, if first-year composition is truly about reading, thinking, and writing, then its very title is no longer representative of what its goals are. First, it implies there is a second-year composition, then a third, and possibly a fourth. Perhaps this was true one hundred years ago. But in a majority of schools composition courses are no longer required after the first year. Students will certainly continue writing, but they will do so outside of the English department. Second, writing instructors teach more than writing. Class days are often devoted to understanding the reading material or thinking about ways to interpret the texts. How can we continue to call the course first-year composition when composition is about so much more than composition?

When we conceive of first-year composition as a rhetorical entity, then everything associated with it must also be considered rhetorical or else the experience will appear disconnected for the people involved with it. Because the course is focused on teaching students reading, thinking, and writing from a rhetorical perspective, the nature of the course is pedagogical. In order to have a successful pedagogy of first-year composition,

we must think about how pedagogy itself is a rhetorical process.

The Need for a Rhetorical Pedagogy

Once we understand how to bring first-year composition into rhetorical balance, we need to examine how pedagogy works within first-year writing because pedagogy is what binds purpose, audience, content, and context together. In other words, instructors teach (pedagogy) students (audience) specific goals (purpose) using outré literature (content) from popular culture (context). Stenberg and Lee argue that "[w]hile pedagogy has traditionally been conflated with teaching, or used to signify the theory preceding and informing practice, more recent conceptions understand pedagogy to encompass both theories and practices at once" (328). If this is true, then pedagogy "is at once concerned with how knowledge is produced through specific practices and processes, as well as the values and assumptions that inform those interactions" (328). The rhetorical element of how knowledge is created via the practices and processes involves a close examination of purpose, audience, content, and context in order to discover the values and assumptions that inform pedagogy. This investigation is what I offer next.

In order to discuss rhetorical pedagogy from the perspective I propose here, I want first to recount what William Covino says about it. I contend that Covino does not go far enough in explaining how pedagogy is fully rhetorical. Covino's bibliographic essay on rhetorical pedagogy is both illuminating and problematic. It is illuminating for its acceptance of rhetoric as a central part of pedagogy. Covino narrates a useful history of rhetoric from the classical era through the current-traditional scene and into the

twentieth century. He argues, "Attention to the history of rhetoric reveals that rhetoric is a concept that expands and contracts, sometimes defined as a global art, other times defined as formulaic attention to correctness and style" (39). He believes that histories of rhetoric serve as the building blocks for any contemporary notion of rhetorical pedagogy. As such, he speaks primarily to content. Covino's essay is problematic, however, precisely because he defines rhetorical pedagogy mostly in terms of content, which is only one component of rhetorical situations. Clearly, instructors should have a basic understanding of rhetoric's long and sometimes complicated history, but Covino does not discuss how else pedagogy is rhetorical.

Rhetoric and Composition has a plethora of pedagogies that teachers use to teach their course, to embody their style, or to define their school's program (Tate, Rupiper, and Schick). So diverse is our repertoire of pedagogy, that we place adjectives in front of the word *pedagogy* to reduce its scope. For example, Susan Jarratt argues that feminist pedagogy is "an investment in a view of contemporary society as sexist and patriarchal, and of complicity of reading, writing, and teaching in those conditions" (115). She claims that a feminist pedagogy involves a commitment to the context—that is, to the situation around which we interact, such as society and schools. Her point is to bring the whole of society and culture into a critical discussion. She also ends her essay with the idea of using feminism as a topic in composition courses, thus making pedagogy more about content than the other rhetorical elements. My point here is that in many cases the pedagogy is defined in terms of the content alone and not in terms of the whole rhetorical situation.

George Hillocks writes, "Every teacher of writing has a set of theories that provide a coherent view of the field and means of approaching the task of teaching" (5). I object to Hillocks's ideal and elusive "coherent view" because a combination of variables such as purpose, audience, content, and context make teaching chaotic and unpredictable no matter how well teachers know their lesson plan for the day. In what follows, I articulate a fuller framework for a rhetorical pedagogy as it brings together purpose, audience, content, and context in the scope of first-year composition.

The purpose of a rhetorical pedagogy is to help our students read, think, and write rhetorically about texts. Although the focus of this dissertation is on outré literary texts, we need not limit ourselves to this textual genre. As I have pointed out, the purpose of teaching first-year composition rhetorically is to prepare students to read, think, and write both in their academic and personal worlds. For example, students learn to think about issues and situations that arise in the texts they read. In doing so, they can make arguments about issues that occur both in the text and in their life. To some extent, popular literature reflects the culture it is created in, and students learn to read that culture through rhetorical lenses, thus making students more acute observers of what is happening around them.

The audience in a rhetorical pedagogy is the students. Pedagogy exists because there are masses of people who need or want to be taught. If an instructor or a department treats every student in the same way believing they arrive at the college with the same or similar sets of values and assumptions about the world, then we have an inherently arhetorical pedagogy at work. However, when instructors understand that

every student is an individual who arrives with ideas and values that will contrast with other students' ideas and values, then the instructor has adopted a rhetorical pedagogy. Because students in first-year composition classes can be from different socio-economic and political backgrounds, teachers using a rhetorical pedagogy attempt to reach a broad audience by using outré literature like Harry Potter, television, and graphic novels. An appeal to a wide audience is a necessary component in a rhetorical pedagogy if communication is to stand a chance of being successful.

Paolo Freire teaches that students are not empty vessels to be opened and filled with mystical wisdom possessed solely by a teacher. Knowledge is created within the learning community of the particular class at hand. True, teachers know something about the topic, but precisely what parts of that knowledge get to be communicated is determined in large part by who is receiving it. For example, if instructors know a lot about the history of comic books in America, they may elect to bypass communicating this information because their students may not benefit from this knowledge. Students also create knowledge because they are the ones who process what happens in the class. Students also do not learn solely from the instructor, but also from other students in the class. Thus, we have exposed the rationale for learning communities and contact zones. Knowledge, however that term is understood today, exists in the class as an entity that is negotiated between audience and teacher and is ultimately created in the minds of each individual. Most of the time, students will learn the same reading, thinking, and writing skills. But not always. Each student processes these skills in different ways depending on who they are and where they are heading professionally. This is one way how

rhetorical pedagogy is effective.

A rhetorical pedagogy prepares students for future learning environments by equipping them with knowing how to think about a text rhetorically. The medium of the text itself does not matter as much as the strategies students learn for reading and interpreting it to the point where they can talk and write intelligently about the text. The strategies students learn in first-year composition are rhetorical, and because of their rhetoricality they are adaptable to a variety of texts.

In the dissertation, content is pulled directly from popular texts and represent texts that students may already be familiar with. Using texts like adolescent novels, television shows, and graphic novels shows students that the content of a college course can reach out to them and offer the possibilities for connection. Involving students in the pedagogical dynamics of the courses helps ease the communication between teachers and students. That is, students will know that the teachers care about texts that are active in the cultures they live in.

The purpose, audience, and content of a rhetorical pedagogy happen within a context, the place or environment. The most obvious context for pedagogy is the classroom. Because a typical research-one university schedules first-year composition in buildings across its campus, the physical dimensions of the room can vary considerably from building to building. For example, first-year composition may be taught in a anthropology laboratory, a small auditorium, a psychology classroom with immovable desks, or a generic room with small tables for two. Each room helps determine the pedagogy because the room dictates where students will seat themselves and where the

instructor can move. Some classes cannot put the chairs in a circle or move the desks to

form small groups. Forming circles and small groups are pedagogical possibilities

because they create learning in different ways. When this is not possible, the pedagogy

becomes arhetorical.

In addition to the actual classroom, the context of rhetorical pedagogy also

considers the institution itself. Where a school is located and what type of school it is can

determine what is read, how instructors present themselves, and how students behave in

the class. For example, a small, Catholic liberal arts school in the southern United States

may have a required curriculum, a traditional faculty, and a conservative student

population. On the other hand, a public, coastal research one university may find an open

curriculum, a liberal faculty, and unmotivated students. In either case, a rhetorical

pedagogy will be molded specifically to address the individuality of the school, but it will

also recognize that the pedagogy should evolve as the student population itself evolves

year after year. In other words, unlike some curricula, pedagogy cannot be written into

policy because pedagogy is inherently rhetorical. The content, the audience, the speaker,

and the context change far too often to have a set pedagogy that will apply to all

situations.

Another perspective on context and its role in rhetorical pedagogy is to consider

the personal contexts of both the instructor and the students. In cases where instructors

can choose the content, their background determines what approaches to take not only in

reading the material on their own, but in framing it for pedagogy. For a rhetorical

pedagogy to operate fully, the approach to the texts needs to be rhetorical. Instructors

can, for example, take a feminist approach toward a text but still manage to make it rhetorical if it considers such things as the writer's persona or the potential audience. The educational, political, and social background of an instructor also affects the pedagogy that occurs in the course. The same is true for students. Universities hire faculty and matriculate students from varied backgrounds. As I have pointed out in chapter one, because first-year composition is a requirement, it often ends up with a full representation of students from across the socio-economic and political spectrum. A rhetorical pedagogy responds to this assortment by forming an interpretative community in the class which sets its goals according to who the members are and work to accomplish those goals in the various assignments.

Using Textbooks to Teach Literature Rhetorically

The final section of this chapter addresses an important component of first-year composition and its corresponding pedagogy: textbooks. Textbooks help define the first-year course as well as help determine the type and style of pedagogy instructors adopt. While textbooks are an important commodity within Rhetoric and Composition, they are often adopted for courses without much analysis. In what follows, I examine three current textbooks written specifically for literature-for-composition courses in order to determine the extent of their rhetorical approaches to analyzing literature. To that end, I examine these three case studies in light of their purpose, audience, content, and context. My goal is to show that my dissertation provides a valuable alternative to the current selection of mass-produced anthologies.

I am only concerned here with literature-for-composition anthologies as represented by three case studies. The first anthology is *The Norton Introduction to Literature* (*NIL*) published in 1998.[44] The second textbook is *Literature for Composition: Essays, Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* (*LC*) published by Longman in 2003. The third is *Making Arguments about Literature: A Compact Guide and Anthology* (*MAL*) published by Bedford/St. Martin's in 2005. Each of these texts is designed for the type of course I outline in this dissertation, and each is available through one of the leading publishers of textbooks in our field. Surely there are countless other anthologies that could serve as case studies. I regret that space does not permit an exhaustive study of the many other possible textbooks.

Before beginning the four-part rhetorical analysis, I want to provide a few preliminary comments on defining textbooks in order to situate better their role in a course like first-year composition. A generic definition of a textbook is a book of texts; a specific definition of a literature-for-composition textbook is a book that contains selections of literary works for the purposes of generating student writing. Today's textbooks also contain authorial or editorial guidance that frames how readers are supposed to engage the variety of texts. The persuasiveness of textbooks make them highly ideological, or value-laden, artifacts because they impose specific ways to read, think, and write about the texts contained both within the book and in the nonacademic world. For example, Wendy Bishop argues that literature textbooks in particular "are high on canonized content and low on innovate teaching apparatus; in most large programs, textbooks are pre-ordered for teachers and function to teach the teachers.

Therefore, if textbooks provide current-traditional introductions, teachers receive current-traditional reinforcement" (442). A current-traditional method may be mostly outdated, but it still resonates with some teachers and departments. Bishop's point is that if a certain approach is favored in the text, then it is likely to be favored in the classroom as the modus operandi of instruction in reading, thinking, and writing about literature. Applying Bishop's argument to my own project, if literature-for-composition textbooks ignore rhetorical approaches to reading, thinking, and writing, then teachers who adopt the textbook are likely to do so as well.

The genre of textbooks available in Literature and in Rhetoric and Composition further complicates matters. Woods identifies four types of composition textbooks that were in print from 1960 to 1980: expressionist, language-based, rhetoric-based, and logic-based. The rhetoric-based textbooks, for instance, have at least six types: traditional rhetorics, neoclassical rhetorics, partial rhetorics, modern rhetorics, eclectic rhetorics, and method rhetorics. These texts, Woods notes, explicitly treat the fundamentals of rhetoric: "every text deals with invention; with the development and arrangement of an essay; and with the need for adapting the style to the reader, the situation, and the purpose to be served" (404). Whatever texts are included in these rhetoric-based textbooks, one can be sure they will mostly be nonfiction examples. Based on Woods' survey, up to 1980 it was not considered conventional to suggest that fictional texts could be used to exemplify rhetorical principles. In 2005, we now have a variety of anthologies for literature in composition courses.

Robert Connors' historical research confirms the close connection between

textbooks and pedagogy. He identifies "the dialogic relation between textbooks and teacher training" (70). When teachers are assigned to teach a course, one of the first tangible items they encounter is the textbooks for that course. Textbooks are a physical representation of first-year composition and pedagogy. In some universities and colleges, the writing textbook of choice defines not only the course, but also the program by cementing the goals, values, and assignments in one package. Often, the entire training agenda is centered around becoming familiar with the textbook. When this happens, the teachers in training absorb the ideology of the textbook. Sometimes, teachers are unaware that they are doing this, thus making textbooks one of the most persuasive artifacts in our field.

I want to examine purpose specifically in reference to the three case studies I have selected. The editors of the *NIL* say their book "offers in a single volume a complete course in reading and writing about literature. It is both an anthology and a textbook—a teaching anthology—for the indispensable course in which college student and college teacher begin to read literature, and to write about it, seriously together" (xxi). As an anthology the book includes an array of genres of literature; as a textbook it includes critical questions as well as writing suggestions after each chapter. Its aim, as the editors state, is to offer ways for students to read, think, and write about literature in many contexts, including composition courses.

While the *LC* is also both anthology and textbook, its purpose is more about integrating writing into literature courses. The editors state, "This book is based on the assumption that students in composition or literature courses should encounter first-rate

writing—not simply competent prose but the powerful reports of experience that have

been recorded by highly skilled writers of the past and present—reports of experience

that *must* be shared" (xxx). In addition to providing good examples of writing, the *LC*

also provides extensive material for writing about literature in order "to help students

read and respond—in writing—to literature" (xxxi). In short, then, this text fosters

critical reading, thinking, and writing skills for its students.

Both the *NIL* and the *LC* pledge to integrate writing and literature, but the *MAL*

goes even further by explicitly stating its rhetorical intent. The editors say the *MAL*

"Offers not only a compact and flexible anthology of literature, but also a complete (if

brief) text on argument, with argumentation presented as civil, reasoned inquiry through

which writers persuade their audience that their interpretations are sound" (vii). For the

MAL, rhetoric is defined as argument and has the following components: "claim, issue,

audience, evidence, and warrants" (vii). Understanding rhetoric as argument is one way

to bring literature and rhetoric together, but as my dissertation suggests, it is not the only

way.

Each of the nine rhetorical strategies I present in chapters two through four

provide alternatives to thinking about rhetoric as argument. My purpose is not to reduce

rhetoric only to argument, but to expand it to include how the text creates reality, how

individual readers identify with characters and events, or how visual elements persuade

readers. To be fair, the *MAL* does the best job of the three textbooks of making rhetoric a

concept students can understand. But, my project not only gives rhetoric meaning in

regard to the texts studied in class, but also gives meaning to the texts students encounter

elsewhere.

While the purposes of these three case studies may seem fairly easy to discern, their audiences are not so easy to determine. This is true because of the nature of textbooks themselves. There are two primary audiences for textbooks. From a practical point of view, publishers have to sell their textbooks, not to students, but to the teachers who will adopt those books for their courses. To a lesser extent, writing program administrators are also a part of this audience since they are the ones chiefly responsible for crafting the program and determining which texts to use for defining their program.

Another primary audience for textbooks is the students who will actually use the text in the class. Students are, after all, the ones who will buy the textbooks. Textbook writers ultimately have to provide a range of reading and thinking material for students in a typical composition class. Such a task must mediate the potential differences in reading, thinking, and writing ability that are sometimes found in typical composition classes. Ideally, students should feel as though the money they spent on the text was worth it, and with so many textbooks competing for their dollars, this is no simple task.

Only one of the three case studies I use here speak to this duality of audience. The *NIL* contains a foreword and the *MAL* contains only a "Preface for Instructors." The *LC*, however, prints both a "Preface to Instructors" and a "Letter to Students," and both of these pieces are worth examination. The instructor's preface includes sections on nine key features, the organization, elements new to the sixth edition, and resources for both instructors and students. The editors take a decidedly arhetorical approach to one of their primary audiences—the students—when they say, "Throughout the process of writing

and rewriting *Literature for Composition*, we saw ourselves as teachers, bringing to you the kinds of suggestions and strategies that over many years, have benefited the students we have taught" (xxxvii). At first glance, not much may appear amiss with this direct statement. But what we have here is a teacher-centered curriculum whereby the teacher is the curator of knowledge that has been developed over time. In this sense knowledge about literature and writing is something to be dispensed rather than created within a rhetorical situation.

Further, the editors do not recognize a key rhetorical concept that is essential to my dissertation: students (one of the very audiences of textbooks) change over time. Teachers do not teach the same students every term. The strategies teachers devised thirty years ago may not be effective with today's student population. As much as possible, the texts I use in this dissertation respond to the needs of students because they consider texts from popular culture to be relevant and meaningful representations of what students are interested in and connected to.

When considering textbooks, in addition to purpose and audience instructors should also account for the book's content if they want to present a rhetorically-natured course. In analyzing the content of the three case study textbooks, I draw three conclusions that might aid instructors in understanding how difficult it is to implement a rhetorical approach to literature in composition classes with current literature-for composition textbooks.

The first conclusion that can be discerned from the three case studies is that they replicate a consistent and restrictive definition of literature. We need not look much

further than the tables of contents for each anthology to discover what each means by literature. The *NIL* has the following sections: fiction, poetry, and drama; *LC* has these genres: essays, fiction, poetry, and drama—although they do have brief sections on pictures and film; finally, *MAL* has sections on stories, poems, plays, and essays. The editors of *MAL* argue that when "[a]sked to define *literature*, most people would say that it encompasses poetry, fiction (short stories as well as novel), and plays. But limiting the term's scope to these genres can be misleading" (3). It is misleading because students will learn that literature is regarded as only these three genres. Paperbound textbooks are genuinely limited in what they can offer students.

Expanding literature to include adolescent fantasy fiction, televisual literature, and graphic novels extends the scope of literature to texts that may already be a part of students' everyday lives. But, none of these three genres of literature can be reproduced easily in a typical anthology. By presenting students with new forms of literature, I hope to stimulate their interest in literature.

By restricting literature to traditional print anthologies, pedagogy becomes a familiar, repetitive, even comfortable process. While some instructors may be able to find new and creative ways to teach, more often than not, the lesson plan becomes centered around the reading material for the day. And if that reading material is from the same place (the textbook) all the time, a routine can become evident, resulting in a pattern that grows stale in short order. With my curriculum, however, watching clips from television episodes gets the teacher doing different activities in class; just turning on the television set and darkening the room varies the routine and makes the learning

situation different than what most students expect in a classroom. Moving away from lectures about the elements of fiction or reading passages from the same textbook may stimulate the learning process for students. Like the outré literature our students read, our pedagogy should capture their imaginations. Rethinking using standard literature-for-composition textbooks can help us achieve a more rhetorical pedagogy and first-year composition experience.

A second conclusion that can be drawn from these three case studies is the idea that literary analysis is the standard way to examine literature. For example, in *LC*, the editors suggest that reading and writing about fiction involves the following elements: plot and character, foreshadowing, setting and atmosphere, symbolism, narrative point of view, style and point of view, and theme. With only minor substitutions, these elements of fiction dominate how literary analysis is taught in the other literature-for-composition anthologies. Thus, by adhering to these core elements of literary analysis, textbooks imply that this is the standard way—or the only way—to interpret literature. But however codified the analysis of literature has become in literature-for-composition textbooks, there is a critical need to realize that a rhetorical analysis of literature is a beneficial method of reading, thinking, and writing about literature in the first-year writing sequence. As I have shown, a rhetorical approach to literature adds an additional way of reading, thinking, and writing to an already rich repertoire.

A third conclusion to draw from my case studies is that when literature-for-composition textbooks include material on theory, they only include literary theory, not rhetorical theory. *LC* includes a chapter titled "Writing about Literature: An Overview of

Critical Strategies." The editors write that critics "read all texts through the lens of a particular theory, and their focus enables them to see things that otherwise might go unnoticed" (581). They identify and summarize formalist, deconstruction, reader-response, archetypal, historical, psychological or psychoanalytic, and gender criticism. Absent from this list of theories is an explicitly rhetoric approach.

MAL also devotes a section to literary criticism, but it does so in an appendix, suggesting that theoretical approaches are something ancillary to the actual analysis. But these editors are more rhetorical than most other textbook editors because they recognize a fundamental belief about criticism and state it explicitly: "Indeed, a good deal of what a text means depends on the perspective that readers bring with them. Passages can be read effectively from numerous points of view" (919). Rosenblatt's idea that meaning in literature is a transaction between text and reader is reflected in *MAL*, but it is mostly absent when *MAL*, too, presents summaries of the top schools of criticism in the twentieth century (920-24). These summaries are only one or two paragraphs and do not engage rhetoric specifically. For example, *MAL* includes a section on postcolonialism that could be approached from the point of view of a rhetorical situation by asking these questions: who is the author of the text and how does the author identify him/herself racially, ethnically? What messages are in the text? What goals does the text promote or suppress? What situation does the text represent fictionally, historically, currently? Even with these few questions, readers will begin to recognize the persuasive elements of the rhetorical situation. Follow up questions can be asked of motivation by using Kenneth Burke's pentad, of social rhetoric by asking how contemporary political issues are

reflected in racial and ethnic minorities, or of how racial or ethnic characters are introduced and portrayed in the text. By relying on standard summaries and traditional histories of the major schools of contemporary literary criticism, textbooks such as these remain rhetorically misaligned and ultimately prove to be a difficult fit within a rhetorically minded first-year composition course that uses outré literature as its teaching material.

While many mass-produced literature-for-composition textbooks identify their purpose, negotiate their audience, and include content, they cannot satisfactorily account for context, the fourth rhetorical element. Part of the problem hinges on the idea that context includes a variety of elements such as teacher, students, program officials, university officials, institution demographics, and location, among others. For instance, no mass-produced textbook can accommodate a racially-diverse class of twenty-five students. It can only hope to approximate student backgrounds by providing a selection of possible literary works.

One solution is to forgo such textbooks in favor of having departments custom publish a textbook, or to have faculty within the department author a textbook that meets the specific needs of the rhetorical site where first-year composition and pedagogy connect. Only the people involved in the inner workings of first-year composition at their school can begin to imagine what sort of textbook will best meet their needs. Taking control of this important piece can help create a much more rhetorically dynamic environment.

Another solution is to adopt the approaches I have outlined in chapters two, three,

and four. That is, I push for a collection of texts (novels, DVDs, and comic books). With the genres I use in the dissertation available at retail stores nationwide, I see no reason why instructors cannot create their own collection of texts to be the course "textbook." As technology continues to evolve, so, too, should our understanding of what a textbook is.

Conclusion: What Is at Stake?

In a way, this dissertation is more about why we teach first-year composition rather than what to teach in first-year composition. In what I have presented, the rationale for why we teach first-year composition is this: we teach students to think rhetorically not only about what we have them read, but about how to handle novel situations that arise in their daily lives. And I advocate that we do this by using literary texts that students are likely to encounter outside of the academy.

The use of literature in composition is a debate that is unlikely to be settled in the near future. John Schilb echoes Lindemann when he says "[b]ut students need to practice writing about a range of subjects, not just literature, if they are to handle the variety of assignments they will get throughout their college careers. Besides, most students have already written about literature a lot in high school; at this stage, they ought to branch out" (171). I use this remark from Schilb in the final paragraphs of the dissertation hoping my readers will be able to see that what I have done throughout refutes his claim. For instance, with the curriculum I present in chapters two, three, and four, students are writing about a range of issues: everything from race and gender to cloning and war.

Students use the literary texts as a springboard for something more. This springboard they use is loaded with rhetorical strategies that propel their critical thinking.

I concede that many students will come to college having written a lot about literature in high school. However, what Schilb and others often fail to note is that college is a place to push students' definitions of ideas like literature, thus challenging what they think they know about literature. Once instructors introduce TV-on-DVD and comic books as literary texts worthy of study, students' understanding of what literature is will be forever changed.

As I have tried to make clear, the rhetorical strategies I work with are applicable not only to a student's college career, as Schilb notes, but also to texts students will encounter outside of college. What good are we doing if we are only teaching them to read, think, and write only for their college careers? The answer is not very much good. Teaching students to think about why they identify with characters in a Harry Potter book transfers to their own everyday lives by making them think about how they identify with the people they meet at work, or on the street. Once students are taught to look for the elements they have in common with others, then the lines of communication can function more freely.

Just now, I used a term that has become popular in composition studies: transfer. The term itself previously had meaning in our field in relation to transferring coursework from other colleges and universities. Now, *transfer* has also come to mean how skills learned in one course can be applied (or transferred) to other courses as well as to nonacademic life. The question of how writing skills learned in first-year composition

can transfer to other areas has no concrete answers. Richard Jewell offers this assessment about the transfer of writing skills:

> I intend "discovery" and induction simply to mean that Art Young's "metacognitive framework," along with its writing elements and writing lessons, should come primarily from the concrete, experiential, moments that Spellmeyer calls "ordinary sensuous life," and that such moments lead to what Young calls a "metacognitive framework." This "life" and this "framework" must be, in learning and teaching writing, simple, concrete, existential conditions of immediacy. That is, they must be writing moments that come from real writing in real situations, whether academic or work related and whether real or modeled in role playing. (Jewell)

One of the challenges facing composition instructors right now is how to involve what Jewell calls "real writing in real situations." I believe that my dissertation's suggestion of outré literature from popular culture brings us closer to realizing what Jewell thinks is needed. Helping students understand how the rhetorical strategies they learn in class can be useful in their everyday life moves us closer to realizing how such skills can transfer. First-year composition instructors cannot replicate real world settings easily in an academic classroom, but they can present reading, thinking, and writing strategies that will help students beyond what they do for us in the course.

I hope that my dissertation helps students see how first-year composition matters to them. Teachers and administrators can have the best, highest, and noblest goals in mind when designing the course, but if students feel disconnected to the course's goals

and content, then they will be unmotivated to engage the course on its varied levels. And if we consider first-year composition to be a foundation for reading, thinking, and writing, then students will miss the chance to build on their reading, thinking, and writing skills beyond the course. I have argued that the best way to stimulate this motivation is to use outré literature not as an end but as a means to inspire students to think about other texts they encounter everywhere they go.

Using outré literature from popular culture helps teachers stay up to date with the pulse of the country's youth. This is important because if teachers do not understand and connect with their students, then they risk creating barriers that become difficult to remove when it matters most: helping students understand how the goals of the course can transfer elsewhere. Teachers who are masters of traditional genres of literature but do not relate to what students know (Harry Potter, television, comic books, for example) risk missing valuable connections to what students do with texts in their lives. Activating this pulse in the classroom will create a vibrancy of learning that hopefully will inspire students in their other courses and in their lives. If courses required in the first year of study alienate their population, then a student's continued presence in the college can be compromised.

I have defined first-year composition as an important place where students learn rhetorical strategies that will help them read, think, and write about texts they are likely to encounter in college and in life. I do this through the use of adolescent novels, TV-on-DVD, and comic books. The goal is not to replace traditional literary readings, but to offer an alternative that speaks more directly to what teachers and administrators want

students to take from the required course. Ideally, students should leave the course

knowing how to interact with a variety of texts so that they can transfer that knowledge to

novel textual situations that they are likely to encounter in life. The array of rhetorical

strategies I offer in this dissertation provides students with choices about how to reflect

on what they encounter. Whenever we can equip students with more than one or two

ways of approaching a new experience, then I believe we have done our job well. I

remain optimistic that the first-year composition course I envision here can make a

difference in our students' lives as well as in ours.

NOTES

---

[1] Lindemann is perhaps best known for her accessible *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, a handy book of advice for writing teachers. In her book, she offers a rhetorical heuristic for analyzing literature, so she clearly has found ways to integrate literature into a writing course.

[2] For other voices and perspectives on the debate (both historical and contemporary), see William Baker's "Literature and Composition" in *CCC* (Oct. 1964); James A. Berlin's "Rhetorics and Poetics in the English Department" in *College English* (Sep. 1985); George R. Bramer's "Comp. vs. Lit.: What's the Score" in *CCC* (Feb. 1977); B. Bernard Cohen's "Writing Assignments in a Course with Readings in Imaginative Literature" in *CCC* (Oct. 1968); Ted Hipple's "Writing and Literature" in *The English Journal* (Feb. 1984); Richard L. Larson's "Learning about Rhetoric from Writing about Literature" in *College English* (Mar. 1971); Francis Lide and Barbara Lide's "Literature in the Composition Class: The Case Against" in *Rhetoric Review* (Jan. 1984); Edward Rocklin's "Converging Transformation in Teaching Composition, Literature, and Drama" in *College English* (Feb. 1991); and Patrick G. Scott's "'Flowers in the Path of Science': Teaching Composition through Traditional High Literature" in *College English* (Sep. 1980).

[3] Yancey also discusses a third possibility—the experienced curriculum—which she defines as the "curriculum that *students construct* in the context of both the lived curriculum they bring with them and the delivered curriculum we seek to share" (58 emphasis in text). I focus on the lived curriculum because my project pulls its reading materials from those experiences.

[4] See chapter two for an extended analysis of defamiliarization.

[5] As much as Rosenblatt's text is ahead of its time, it is trapped with the hallways of a historical moment. When comparing historical London to a reservation, she denies the possibility that the reservation has a highly complex culture. Such attitudes seem unbecoming of a scholar interested in making literature accessible for everyone, and in a postcolonial era of critical studies, her apparent naivety simply should not be tolerated. My only recourse is to acknowledge that Rosenblatt wrote at a specific time in history and that her transactional theory is still useful. There is no doubt in my mind that if she had the opportunity to write this book in 2005, she would be much more aware of cultural politics.

[6] I must be careful here that I do not come across as someone who takes an easy way out. Writing teachers have but sixteen weeks in a semester to achieve their goals. If we can eliminate half the battle of getting students merely to understand what is going on in the text, then we can devote more time to thinking and writing critically about it. And by no means is this latter part easy.

[7] Ironically, one of the chief reasons why the model ultimately failed was its lack of individuality, something the designers never intended. With confining boxes and a flowchart atmosphere, instructors eventually began to see the model as too scientific and too rubber-stamp like; that is, the model did not successfully account for diversity in individual students.

[8] There are exceptions when older students return to school. I am only thinking here of the age of the majority of first-year composition students.

[9] Individual writing assignments for the course I design will be discussed in the coming chapters.

[10] See chapter five for a longer discussion of what makes pedagogy rhetorical.

[11] These opening lines are from *Clifford's Tricks*, an entry in Norman Bridwell's popular children's series about Clifford, the big red dog, and from *The Wizard of Earthsea*, book one of Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea trilogy.

[12] In the rest of this section, the various authors I cite use the term *children's* literature to refer to texts that I might consider adolescent literature. To honor their work, I use children's literature when they do.

[13] Obviously, many instructors hope that their students will enjoy the reading they have been asked to do, and many times some students genuinely do find the material enjoyable. But, far too often, the reading is an arduous task that has to be finished by a deadline. Perhaps with literature that is closer to their own literacies, more students will find pleasure in the reading experience.

[14] Book six, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, is scheduled for release at the stroke of midnight, July 16, 2005.

[15] Booth's terminology is more complicated than I am making it. Booth credits writers with creating implied authors, the sense of the writer that appears in the novel. Implied authors often speak through narrators who tell readers important information or shape how they respond to situations based on what they choose to reveal to readers. My goal is to streamline the ordering of intensities so that it can be presented in a first-year composition course. Notions of implied authors and reliable narrators are complicated issues not suited to the general rhetorical overview of outré literature I intend for first-year composition.

[16] *BTVS* aired on the WB from 1997 until 2001 when it switched to the UPN network for its final two seasons.

[17] Buying back DVDs raises an interesting question. At retail, once the DVD package is opened, stores will not issue refunds. They will only exchange the DVD for an identical one only if it is damaged. But what happens when we think of DVDs as textbooks or simply books? Will a campus bookstore buy back a season of episodes if the instructor was going to use the same DVDs again the next semester? Instructors who adopted a televisual curriculum will have to find out answers before the first day of class.

[18] This approach, remember, is doubly important. I start with a teleliteracy narrative because I want to privilege student knowledge. I also use outré literature in the first-semester course because I begin with popular literary genres that have greater familiarity with as opposed to academic discourse which usually comes in the next semester.

[19] Because I imagine this course as the first of a two-semester sequence in writing, the teleliteracy narrative may very well be the first major writing assignment students do in college. I think that of all the assignments offered in the course, this one will provoke the least amount of trepidation. Obviously, there will be some students who feel uncomfortable with the personal nature of a literacy narrative. Those students should know that writing occurs under many circumstances, and expression of personal history is not just fulfilling the assignment, but also honing critical thinking skills.

[20] Obviously some students will have had some rhetorical background in high school. But for the majority of students, this unit on rhetorical thinking will be brand new.

[21] See chapter one.

[22] Inevitably, there will be one or two students in the course who are fans of the show and who have watched all seven seasons. As the instructor, I would encourage them to include in their analysis any relevant material from the other seasons, but also request that they focus their analysis on season one. That is, a writer may begin with an investigation of character introduction in season one, then extend it outward to other seasons to see if their initial insights hold true over the course of the series.

[23] Teachers may also consider implementing some standards here. For example, only the ten best essays will be published. Exactly how these standards are determined can be discussed with the class. Perhaps the instructor can ask his or her colleagues to form a three-person blind review panel to determine which essays should be published. Such a process mirrors the "real-world" atmosphere of getting published. This works because it teaches students that not everything they write will be published. It also has the potential to divide the class in horrendous ways, especially if a student does not take well to rejection. But, if enough time is spent in the first week of the second unit about academic discourse, rhetorical analysis, and publication, then perhaps any low-esteem about rejection can be better handled. Still, the possibilities to fold in "real-world" process like getting published can be quite meaningful to a class of college freshmen. An opportunity such as this should not be easily dismissed.

[24] Teachers will decide how much they want their students to read and learn about each concept. That is, will students be asked to read articles about these concepts on their own, or get the basics from class lectures? If teachers want, they can assign short readings about each of the rhetorical methods. For example, with dramatism, I might assign chapters eight and nine of *On Symbols and Society* an anthology of essays by Kenneth Burke edited by Joseph R. Gusfield. Chapter eight is titled "Dramatistic Method" and is reprinted from the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. It defines the theory and its five key terms. Chapter nine, "Ways of Placement" comes from sections of *A Grammar of Motives* and includes more lengthy explanations of the five elements of the pentad and the corresponding philosophies.

[25] As with the other points reviewers make, these will need to have supporting research as well.

[26] My point is not meant to be microscopic here. The rhetorical strategies students have learned do not apply solely to televisual literature. They can be applied to most textual forms that an exam requires. However, students have been working with the same medium all term, and the final exam should not be a place where surprise has the potential to affect performance.

[27] Correct usage of English, like any outcome of first-year composition must be negotiated with other goals like reading, thinking, and writing. I only suggest here that students may have had bad experiences with English (writing, in particular) courses that emphasize correct usage every day. One place to emphasize correct usage would be in the students' drafts.

[28] *Extended universe* is an expression used by the *Star Wars* community to refer to anything in print or film that takes place outside of the six official films.

[29] I return to the rhetorical situation of graphic novels in unit four, the final exam. As a result, I would spend just enough time to orient students to how rhetoric can work with graphic novels.

[30] Additionally, students will be asked to read essays and articles about graphic novels/comic books as part of the course and other material as part of their research. Having these requirements will assuage those critics who say students will pass through the first-semester writing course without having made any gains in their struggle with reading words.

[31] See chapter two.

[32] Students should be encouraged to search for places online to publish their findings. There are plenty of sites that focus on graphic novels or on popular culture artifacts.

[33] They are so named because Grand Admiral Thrawn is the central villain of the novels. These novels are also known as the Zahn trilogy, honoring the man who wrote them.

[34] Most graphic novels do not have page numbers, especially when they are collected into trade paperback volumes such as the ones I work with here. Thus, it is not always possible to cite the page number. I will do my best to instruct readers how to find the places I quote or point to for analysis. For example, the Anderson quotation that spawned this footnote is in an introduction to *Dark Empire* and is listed under Anderson in Works Cited.

[35] This is not the same thing as a novel with illustrations on a dozen pages. The printed words are still dominant in this example and still easily fit the medium of traditional literature.

[36] Although generic criticism can be used to examine both form and content (see Johns), I focus primarily here on how it can be used for formal text feature, or conventions. The second unit is devoted to issues of content (visual rhetoric).

[37] The odd word out here is *construct*, a word not ordinarily associated with traditional accounts of rhetorical situations. It is a word I use here to mean how the text was put together or created. The idea of construct seems important to consider with genre and graphic novels.

[38] Foss uses *genre* where I might use *medium*.

[39] Comic books and graphic novels complicate this easy distinction because words are represented in speech balloons, a highly visual feature of the medium. We then wonder whether words are to be thought of as nonvisual or visual.

[40] See chapter five for a detailed discussion of rhetorical pedagogy.

[41] These *Clone Wars* trade paperbacks collect several issues of the single comics that were previously published. The single issues have different writers and artists, so no single writer can be attributed to one book. To make matters simple, I have listed the five volumes under *Star Wars* in the Works Cited.

[42] See chapter three.

[43] Speech balloons are also called word balloons. I treat these two terms as synonyms.

[44] I am using the 1998 shorter seventh edition because this was the text I used when I taught English 101 (Literature and Composition) in the Fall of 2000.

WORKS CITED

Anatol, Giselle Liza, ed. *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*. Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture 78. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.

Anderson, Kevin J. Introduction. "Is the Universe Big Enough for All of Us?" *Dark Empire: The Collection*. Tom Veitch and Cam Kennedy. 2nd ed. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 1995. n. pag.

Anson, Chris M., and Robert A. Schwegler. *The HarperCollins Handbook for Writers and Readers*. Preliminary ed./Class test version. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Trans. George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford UP, 1991.

Arnell, Carla. Letter. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 10 Sept. 2004: A55.

Axelrod, Rise B., and Charles R. Cooper. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

Baggett, David, and Shawn E. Klein, eds. *Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*. Popular Culture and Philosophy 9. Chicago: Open Court, 2004.

Barker, Martin. *Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics*. Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 1989.

Barnet, Sylvan, and Hugo Bedau. *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.

Barnet, Sylvan, William Burto, William E. Cain, and Marcia Stubbs, eds. *Literature for Composition: Essays, Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2003.

Baron, Mike, Edvin Biukovic, and Eric Shanower. *Star Wars: The Last Command*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 1999.

Baron, Mike, Terry Dodson, and Kevin Nowlan. *Star Wars: Dark Force Rising*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 1998.

Baron, Mike, Olivier Vatine, and Fred Blanchard. *Star Wars: Heir to the Empire*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 1996.

Bawarshi, Anis. "The Genre Function." *College English* 62 (2000): 335-60.

Beaty, Jerome, and J. Paul Hunter, eds. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. Shorter

7th ed. New York: Norton, 1998.

Benton, Mike. *Science Fiction Comics: The Illustrated History*. Dallas: Taylor, 1992.

Berger, John. "Ways of Seeing." *Seeing and Writing 2*. Ed. Donald McQuade and Christine McQuade. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003. 622-35.

Berlin, James A. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." *College English* 50 (1988): 477-94.

---. "Poststructuralism, Cultural Studies, and the Composition Classroom: Postmodern Theory in Practice." *Rhetoric Review* 11 (1992): 16-33.

---. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1987.

Bernhardt, Stephen A. "Seeing the Text." *College Composition and Communication* 37 (1986): 66-78.

Berthoff, Ann E. "A Curious Triangle and the Double-Entry Notebook; or, How Theory Can Help Us Teach Reading and Writing." Wiley, Gleason, and Phelps 45-49.

Bianculli, David. *Teleliteracy: Taking Television Seriously*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 2000.

Bishop, Wendy. "The Literary Text in the Writing Classroom." *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory* 15 (1995): 435-54.

Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14.

Bizzell, Patricia. "Arguing about Literacy." *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1992. 238-55.

Bloom, Harold. "Can 35 Million Book Buyers Be Wrong? Yes." *Wall Street Journal* 11 July 2000: A26.

Bongco, Mila. *Reading Comics: Language, Culture, and the Concept of the Superhero in Comic Books*. Garland Studies in American Popular History and Culture. New York: Garland, 2000.

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Kafka and His Precursors." *Selected Non-Fictions*. Ed. Eliot Weinberger. Trans. Esther Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine, and Eliot Weinberger. New York: Viking, 1999. 363-65.

Brandt, Deborah. "Accumulating Literacy: Writing and Learning to Write in the Twentieth Century." *College English* 57 (1995): 649-68.

---. "Literacy." Enos, ed. 392-94.

Bridwell, Norman. *Clifford's Tricks*. New York: Scholastic, 1969.

Browne, M. Neil, and Stuart M. Keeley. *Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking*. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1945.

---. "Literature as Equipment for Living." *Philosophy* 293-304.

---. *On Symbols and Society*. Ed. Joseph R. Gusfield. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.

---. *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. 3rd ed. 1941. Berkeley: U of California P, 1973.

---. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1950.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 1949. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1973.

Carey, Brycchan. "Hermione and the House-Elves: The Literary and Historical Contexts of J. K. Rowling's Antislavery Campaign." Anatol 103-15.

Carpenter, Scott. *Reading Lessons: An Introduction to Theory*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Carrier, David. *The Aesthetics of Comics*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2000.

Carton, Evan, and Alan W. Friedman, eds. *Situating College English: Lessons from an American University*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1996.

Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976.

Chaffee, John, Christine McMahon, and Barbara Stout. *Critical Thinking, Thoughtful Writing: A Rhetoric with Readings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Cockrell, Amanda. "Harry Potter and the Secret Password." Whited 15-26.

"Comics in Vogue as Educational Tool." *Arizona Daily Star* 26 Dec 2004: A9.

Connors, Robert J. *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1997.

Consigny, Scott. "Rhetoric and Its Situations." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 7 (1974): 175-

86.

Corbett, Edward P. J. "Literature and Composition: Allies or Rivals in the Classroom?"
        Horner 168-84.

Corbett, Edward P. J., and Robert J. Connors. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*.
        4th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Covino, William. "Rhetorical Pedagogy." Tate, Rupiper, and Shick 36-53.

Crowley, Sharon. *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*.
        Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1998.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP,
        1997.

D'Angelo, Frank. *Process and Thought in Composition*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA:
        Winthrop, 1980.

DeGenaro, William. "Challenging Ideas, Stories, and Rhetorics: Film and Politics in a
        Working-Class Basic Writing Classroom." *In Our Own Voice: Graduate
        Students Teach Writing*. Ed. Tina Lavonne Good and Leanne B. Warshauer.
        Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. 38-45.

Dickinson, Emily. *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems*. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson.
        Boston: Little Brown, 1961.

Diggins, John Patrick. *The Proud Decades: America in War and Peace, 1941-1960*.
        New York: Norton, 1988.

Dombek, Kristin, and Scott Herndon. *Critical Passages: Teaching the Transition to
        College Composition*. New York: Teachers College P, 2004.

Dresand, Eliza T. "Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender." Whited 211-42.

Duffy, Edward. "Sentences in Harry Potter, Students in Future Writing Classes."
        Rhetoric Review 21.2 (2002): 170-87.

Dunlop, M. H. "Practicing Textual Theory and Teaching Formula Fiction." *Practicing
        Theory in Introductory College Literature Courses*. Ed. James M. Cahalan and
        David B. Downing. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1991. 251-60.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P,
        1983.

Edgerton, Gary R. Introduction. "Television as Historian: A Different Kind of History

Altogether." Edgerton, ed. 1-16.

Edgerton, Gary R., ed. *Shaping the Collective Memory in the Media Age*. Lexington: The UP of Kentucky, 2001.

Egoff, Sheila, Gordon Stubbs, Ralph Ashley, and Wendy Sutton, eds. *Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1996.

Elbow, Peter. "The Cultures of Literature and Composition: What Could Each Learn from the Other?" *College English* 64 (2002): 533-46. Rpt. in Glenn, Goldthwaite, and Connors, eds. 488-500.

Ennis, Robert H. "Definition of Critical Thinking." *CriticalThinking.NET*. Illinois Critical Thinking Project. 15 Apr. 2005 <http://www.criticalthinking.net/>.

---. "Teaching Critical Thinking: A Few Suggestions." *CriticalThinking.NET*. Oct. 2000. Illinois Critical Thinking Project. 15 Apr. 2005 <http://www. criticalthinking.net/>.

Enos, Theresa. Preface. Enos, ed. vii-viii.

Enos, Theresa, ed. *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age*. New York: Garland, 1996.

Esslin, Martin. *The Age of Television*. 1982. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2002.

Faigley, Lester, Roger D. Cherry, David A. Jolliffe, and Anna M. Skinner. *Assessing Writers' Knowledge and Processes of Composing*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1985.

Ferrell, Wilfred A. "Analyzing and Writing about Literature in Composition Courses." *College Composition and Communication* 20 (1969): 244-45.

Fish, Stanley. "Interpreting the Variorum." Richter 977-90.

Fister, Barbara. Letter. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 10 Sept. 2004: A55.

Flower, Linda, and John R. Hayes. "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 32 (1981): 365-87.

Forester, E. M. *Aspects of the Novel*. Orlando: HBJ, 1927.

Foss, Sonja K. *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*. 2nd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1996.

Foss, Sonja K., Karen A. Foss, and Robert Trapp. *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*. 3rd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 2002.

France, Alan W. "Assigning Places: The Function of Introductory Composition as a Cultural Discourse." *College English* 55 (1993): 593-609.

Gardner, Janet E. *Writing about Literature: A Portable Guide*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

George, Diana, and John Trimbur, eds. *Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing*. 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Gladstein, Mimi R. "Feminism and Equal Opportunity: Hermione and the Women of Hogwarts." Baggett and Klein 49-59.

Glenn, Cheryl, Robert Keith Miller, Suzanne Strobek Webb, and Loretta Gray. *The Writer's Harbrace Handbook*. 2nd ed. Boston: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2004.

Glenn, Cheryl, Melissa A. Goldthwaite, and Robert Connors, eds. *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

Hajdu, David. "*In the Shadow of Towers*: Homeland Insecurity." *The New York Times*. Book Review. 12 Sept. 2004. 9 May 2005. <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Hanley, Richard. "Send in the Clones: The Ethics of Future Wars." *Star Wars and Philosophy: More Powerful Than You Can Possibly Imagine*. Ed. Kevin S. Decker and Jason T. Eberl. Chicago: Open Court, 2005. 93-103.

Hayes, John R. "A New Framework for Understanding Cognition and Affect in Writing." *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Ellen Cushman, Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry M. Kroll, and Mike Rose. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001. 172-98.

Hill, Charles A. "Reading the Visual in College Writing Classes." *Intertexts: Reading Pedagogy in College Writing Classrooms*. Ed. Marguerite Helmers. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2003. 123-50.

Hillocks, George. "Some Basics for Thinking about Teaching Writing." *Teaching Composition: Background Readings*. Ed. T. R. Johnson and Shirley Morahan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002. 2-17.

Hirsch, E. D. "Reading, Writing, and Cultural Literacy." Horner 141-47.

Holland, Isabelle. "What Is Adolescent Literature?" *Young Adult Literature: Background and Criticism*. Comp. Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood. Chicago: American Library Association, 1980. 33-40.

Holman, C. Hugh, and William Harmon. *A Handbook to Literature*. 6th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1992.

Horner, Winifred Bryan, ed. *Composition and Literature: Bridging the Gap*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983.

Huot, Brian, and Beth Stroble. Introduction. *Multiple Literacies for the 21st Century*. Ed. Brian Huot, Beth Stroble, and Charles Bazerman. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2004. 1-12.

Hunt, Peter. "Defining Children's Literature." Egoff et al. 2-17.

Hunt, Peter, ed. *Understanding Children's Literature*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Irwin, W. R. *The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1976.

Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." Richter 955-68.

Isidore, Chris. "New Harry Potter Title Revealed: *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* Will Be Sixth of Popular Series, Agent Confirms." 29 June 2004. Cable News Network. 11 Aug. 2004 <http://money.cnn.com>.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972.

Jarratt, Susan C. "Feminist Pedagogy." Tate, Rupiper, and Shick 113-31.

Jewell, Richard. "Theory and Pedagogy for Instructors: Adaptation and Transfer of Writing Skills." 28 Apr. 2004. CollegeWriting.info. 28 May 2005 <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~jewel001/CollegeWriting/>.

Johns, Ann M. *Text, Role, and Context: Developing Academic Literacies*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Kernan, Alvin B. "The Idea of Literature." *New Literary History* 5 (1973): 31-40.

Killinger, John. *God, the Devil, and Harry Potter: A Christian Minister's Defense of the Beloved Novels*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2002.

Kirszner, Laurie G., and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Wadsworth Handbook*. 7th ed. Boston: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2005.

Kist, William. *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media*. New York: Teachers College P, 2005.

Klein, Shawn E. "The Mirror of Erised: Why We Should Heed Dumbledore's Warning." Baggett and Klein 92-104.

Knoblauch, C. H. "Literacy and the Politics of Education." *The Right to Literacy*. Ed. Andrea A. Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin. New York: MLA, 1990. 74-80.

Lavery, David, and Rhonda Wilcox, eds. "Site History." *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*. 1 Dec. 2004 <http://www.slayage.tv>.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *A Wizard of Earthsea*. 1968. New York: Bantam, 1984.

Leonard, Harris K. "The Classics—Alive and Well with Superman." *College English* 37 (1975): 405-07.

Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Essentials: What Is Children's Literature? What Is Childhood?" Hunt, ed. 15-29.

Lindemann, Erika. "Freshman Composition: No Place for Literature." *College English* 55 (1993): 311-16.

---. *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.

---. "Three Views of English 101." *College English* 57 (1995): 287-302.

Loewenstein, Andrea Freud. "Confronting Stereotypes: *Maus* in Crown Heights." *College English* 60 (1998): 396-420.

Lunsford, Andrea A., and Cheryl Glenn. "Rhetorical Theory and the Teaching of Writing." *On Literacy and Its Teaching*. Ed. Gail Hawisher and Anna Sorter. Albany: State U of New York P, 1990. 174-89. Rpt. in Glenn, Goldthwaite, and Connors, eds. 474-87.

Lunsford, Andrea A., and John J. Ruszkiewicz. *Everything's an Argument*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999.

Lyga, Allyson A. W., and Barry Lyga. *Graphic Novels in Your Media Center*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

Marlowe, C. N. *The Impulse of Fantasy Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1983.

McCue, Greg S., and Clive Bloom. *Dark Knights: The New Comics in Context*. London: Pluto, 1993.

McNeil, Alex. *Total Television: The Comprehensive Guide to Programming from 1948 to the Present*. 4th ed. New York: Penguin, 1996.

Murphy, James J. "Rhetorical History as a Guide to the Salvation of American Reading and Writing: A Plea for Curricular Change." *The Rhetorical Tradition and*

> *Modern Writing*. Ed. James J. Murphy. New York: MLA, 1982. 3-12.

National Endowment for the Arts. *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*. Research Division Report #46. June 2004. 27 Sept. 2004 <http://arts.endow.gov/pub/ReadingAtRisk.pdf>.

Newcomb, Horace, ed. *Television: The Critical View*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

---. *TV: The Most Popular Art*. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1974.

Oakes, Margaret. "Flying Cars, Floo Powder, and Flaming Torches: The Hi-Tech, Low-Tech World of Wizardry." Anatol 117-28.

Ong, Walter J. "Literacy and Orality in Our Times." *ADE Bulletin* 58 (Sept. 1978): 1-7.

---. "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction." *PMLA* 90.1 (1975): 9-21.

Park, Douglas B. "The Meanings of 'Audience.'" *College English* 44 (1982): 247-57.

Paxman, David B. "Reinventing the Composition/Literature Course." *Rhetoric Review* 2.2 (Jan. 1984): 124-32.

Pharr, Mary. "In Medias Res: Harry Potter as Hero-in-Progress." Whited 53-66.

Phelps, Louise Wetherbee. "Composition Studies." Enos, ed. 123-34.

Pierce, Tamora. "Fantasy: Why Kids Read It, Why Kids Need It." Egoff et al. 179-83.

Poovey, Mary. "Cultural Criticism: Past and Present." *College English* 52 (1990): 615-25.

Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." George and Trimbur 494-508.

Richardson, Mark. "Who Killed Annabel Lee?: Writing about Literature in the Composition Classroom." *College English* 66 (2004): 278-93.

Richie, June Rose. "The Funnies Aren't Just Funny….: Using Cartoons and Comics to Teach." *Cartoons and Comics in the Classroom: A Reference for Teachers and Librarians*. Ed. James L. Thomas. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1983. 34-39.

Richter, David H. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. *Literature as Exploration*. 5th ed. 1938. New York: MLA,

1995.

---. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1978.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. New York: Scholastic, 1999.

---. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. New York: Scholastic, 2000.

---. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. New York: Scholastic, 2003.

---. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Scholastic, 1999.

---. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic, 1997.

Sabin, Roger. *Adult Comics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Sarland, Charles. "The Impossibility of Innocence: Ideology, Politics, and Children's Literature." Hunt, ed. 39-55.

Schafer, Elizabeth D. *Exploring Harry Potter*. Beacham's Sourcebooks for Teaching Young Adult Fiction 1. Osprey, FL: Beacham, 2000.

Schilb, John. "The WPA and the Politics of LitComp." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Ed. Stuart C. Brown and Theresa Enos. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 165-79.

Schlib, John, and John Clifford, eds. *Making Arguments about Literature: A Compact Guide and Anthology*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.

Sharp, Leta McGaffey, Amanda Brobbel, and Estela Ene, eds. *A Student's Guide to First-Year Composition*. 24th ed. Rev. ed. Boston: Pearson Custom, 2003.

Shklovsky, Victor. "Art as Technique." Richter 716-26.

Soliday, Mary. "Translating Self and Difference through Literacy Narratives." *College English* 56 (1994): 511-26.

South, James B. Introduction. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*. Popular Culture and Philosophy 4. Chicago: Open Court, 2003. 1-3.

Speigelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. New York: Pantheon, 1997.

Star Wars: Clone Wars Volume 1—The Defense of Kamino and Other Tales. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 2003.

Star Wars: Clone Wars Volume 2—Victories and Sacrifices. Milwaukie, OR: Dark
　　　　Horse, 2003.

Star Wars: Clone Wars Volume 3—Last Stand on Jabiim. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse,
　　　　2004.

Star Wars: Clone Wars Volume 4—Light and Dark. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 2004.

Star Wars: Clone Wars Volume 5—The Best Blades. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse, 2004.

Steege, David K. "Harry Potter, Tom Brown, and the British School Story." Whited
　　　　140-56.

Steering Committee of the Outcomes Group. "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year
　　　　Composition." *College English* 63 (2001): 321-25.

Steffen, Wayne. Letter. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 10 Sept. 2004: A55.

Steinberg, Erwin R. "Imaginative Literature in Composition Classrooms?" *College
　　　　English* 57 (1995): 266-80.

Stenberg, Shari, and Amy Lee. "Developing Pedagogies: Learning the Teaching of
　　　　English." *College English* 64 (2002): 326-47.

Swope, John W., and Edgar H. Thompson. "Three *R*'s for Critical Thinking about
　　　　Literature: Reading, 'Riting, and Responding." *Activities to Promote Critical
　　　　Thinking*. Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1986. Ed. Jeff Golub.
　　　　Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1986. 75-79.

Tate, Gary. "A Place for Literature in Freshman Composition." *College English* 55
　　　　(1993): 317-21.

Tate, Gary, Amy Rupiper, and Kurt Schick, eds. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*.
　　　　New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Taylor, Susan. "Your Homework for Tonight: Read TV!" *The Subject Is Reading:
　　　　Essays by Teachers and Students*. Ed. Wendy Bishop. Portsmouth, NH:
　　　　Boynton/Cook, 2000. 105-14.

Versaci, Rocco. "How Comic Books Can Change the Way Our Students See Literature:
　　　　One Teacher's Perspective." *The English Journal* 91.2 (Nov. 2001): 61-67.

"Welcome to the Hellmouth." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. By Joss Whedon. Dir. Charles
　　　　Martin Smith. DVD. WB. 3 Mar 1997.

White, Edward M. "The Origins of the Outcomes Statement." *The Outcomes Book:*

Debate and Consensus after the WPA Outcomes Statement. Ed. Susanmarie Harrington, Keith Rhodes, Ruth Overman Fischer, and Rita Malenczyk. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2005.

---. *Teaching and Assessing Writing: Recent Advances in Understanding, Evaluating, and Improving Student Performance*. 2nd ed. Portland, ME: Calendar Islands, 1994.

Whited, Lana A., ed. *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2002.

Wiley, Mark, Barbara Gleason, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps. "Introduction: Mapping Composition and Rhetoric." Wiley, Gleason, and Phelps 1-13.

Wiley, Mark, Barbara Gleason, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps, eds. *Composition in Four Keys: Inquiring into the Field*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1996.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 7th ed. New York: Longman, 2003.

Wilson, Tony. *Watching Television: Hermeneutics, Reception and Popular Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Polity, 1993.

Winterowd, W. Ross. *The Culture and Politics of Literacy*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.

Woods, William F. "Composition Textbooks and Pedagogical Theory 1960-80." *College English* 43 (1981): 393-409.

Writing Study Group of the NCTE Executive Committee. "NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing." Nov. 2004. NCTE. 14 Feb. 2005 <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/write/118876.htm>.

Yagelski, Robert P. "The (Ir)relevance of English at the Turn of the Millennium." Introduction. Yagelski and Leonard 1-19.

Yagelski, Robert P., and Scott A. Leonard, eds. *The Relevance of English: Teaching That Matters in Students' Lives*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2002.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. *Teaching Literature as Reflective Practice*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2004.