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English 114B

### A Different Language

Imagine walking into your English classroom and your teacher says “Take out a piece of paper and pen. You have forty minutes to write an essay.” You automatically begin to panic because you don’t know what you’re going to say. Your heart begins to pound rapidly because you’re afraid that how you say it won’t be accepted because you failed to meet your teacher’s expectations. Expectations your teacher was given by a higher power. Expectations even they have no control over. Expectations they themselves have manipulated to fit their own teaching style and skill. Some of you may even wonder “Why do I have to follow *this* set of rules, *these* expectations, *these* standards? Why can’t I write in a way that is easy for me?” The answer to your questions is simple: writing is a form of panopticism. Meaning, what we write and how we write are constantly on surveillance by the “legislators of language” (Aurora Levins Morales, 6), our teachers, peers, and most importantly ourselves. We moderate our words, hinting to what we truly believe, omitting our profound thoughts, and hiding our inner feelings. Standard academic English, or as I refer to as Panoptic English, has become the norm as well as our oppressor as opposed to creative writing that can be liberating to some. Creative writing should be implemented within English classrooms because although standard academic English is very helpful and useful, not everyone is able to express their opinions well in this form of writing.

Writing in different forms not only allows students to express their thoughts without many restrictions, it gives others a different perspective and a different view point for “within these deep places, each one of us holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of

unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling.” (Audre Lorde, 1) that just begs to be heard.

Although each and every writer wants to have the freedom of voicing their opinions, not everyone knows how to transfer their ideas onto paper well. Due to this, some require the limitations set by standard academic English because we are simply not given the opportunity to explore the inner workings of our minds. Thus, when it comes to the audience, not everyone will understand the author’s purpose and will require a more detailed explanation. If students were to be taught how to think and write creatively, then it wouldn't be as difficult to lose the attention of the audience as the audience embarks on a wonderful journey to understand what the writer is advocating for. Even when it comes to the audience, some people need to be presented with a picture, whether it’s figuratively or literally, as opposed to just reading it as if it were bullets points; the whole shebang.

<p>Creative writing “gives the freedom and fulfillment in (Herbert Marcuse, 31). It from the chains and academic writing has and minds. Writing mind for both the author they must be able to</p>	<p>individual a modicum of the realm of unfreedom” empowers and liberates us shackles that standard slapped across our wrists creatively challenges the and the reader because understand what the piece</p>
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of work is trying to convey. The author must to life and create an while the reader must the author as well as make the work and discover Whether they can apply it experience and/or others

portray; what it's trying to be able to bring the words unforgettable masterpiece interpret the purpose of a personal connection with what it means to them. to their own personal or not.

*It is a form of expression, an art, in which the truth lies within and constricting it to a certain discipline takes away its aesthetic appeal. "Art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society—it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity." (Marcuse, 31). Sometimes it's not what is being written but how it's being written that gives meaning to the subject. If we continue to conform to panoptic English, then we are not learning anything at all. It just looks like facts that have no real significance to our persons and must be read in a boring monotone voice on paper. Take my thesis for example: "Creative writing should be implemented within English classrooms because although standard academic English is very helpful and useful, not everyone is able to express their opinions well in this form of writing." You may not notice how very monotone and bland it is. But. I. Do. Is it because the "legislators of language" have ingrained it into our minds that this is what is expected*

from standard academic writing? Yes. Yes they have. Now, if I were to change the wording to "I think professors should teach us how to write creatively so we can learn how to better our writing skills.", then I am challenging the norms set up by panoptic English. Why you may ask? Simple. I am breaking the mold to show my individualism. That I have thoughts and opinions of my own. That I refuse to conform to something that does not and will not define me. That I refuse to be mediocre when expressing myself. Writing is an escape, a way to lose yourself and find yourself amongst the chaos at the same time and confining it takes its beauty away, shriveling it up to nothing. Therefore, I am unlearning what I have been taught to learn. How? 1. I am using what my high school senior year teacher referred to as dead words such as "I, we, and us". 2. I'm directly stating my opinion as opposed to being indirect or showing no opinion whatsoever as expected in standard academic. 3. The tone of voice isn't professional or formal. It's more relaxed and informal.

Other times it's not how it's being written but what is being written that is significant. Academic writing should be more than standardized English because not everyone goes into a profession in which requires this form of disciplinary. "We can train ourselves to respect our feelings, and to discipline (transpose) them into a language that matches those feelings so they can be shared." (Lorde, 1). Professors should teach students how to be creative while still achieving the goals of standard academic English. There are ways to write academically while being creative about it. Take this essay for example, you will notice that I am still conforming yet I am trying to expand my way of writing by playing around with the format. The way I see it, the first thing a teacher/professor notices is the formatting and many believe it's how the message is being presented (format), then what the message is, but I think it's the total opposite. The message should come first and the limitations panoptic academic presents barricades it, unlike creative writing, which only serves to emphasize it. Students just need the right guidance to achieve such a form.

Not everyone processes new information the same way and must then use a different approach from others. If professors took the time to implement and guide their students,

*then the paper could be so much more. There would be meaning behind our words, giving purpose to the topic as opposed to what its function is for. All in all what and how are both needed to complement each other and to insure the message is received.*

“Those who make up

the rules of Good

English try earnestly or

contemptuously to edit

us into conformity,

convinced that when we

talk a different talk it’s

because we are

educationally or

genetically impaired.”

(Morales, 8).

English is constantly

evolving with us and we

must take this into

consideration when we

are writing. We express

ourselves in the form

that we speak and if we

cannot write as we

speak then our meaning

is lost within the

translation

of the language we ourselves, then how can to even comprehend?  
 hardly know. If we do we expect our audience The answer: we can't.  
 not understand it

As Aurora Levins Morales said, "Human speech is filled with delicious regional cuisines, spicy as Cajun peppers, delicate as almond curd." (Morales, 8). So why are we so desperately trying to contain its heavenly rich flavors? Regardless of everything else, writing, no matter the form, can be oppressive for those who are being restricted and confined to a set of rules and when it comes to standard academic writing; it excludes the more creative minds. However, the same can be said for those who are more comfortable with standard academic English. All in all if the writer does not write in the way they are most comfortable with, the meaning behind the writer's work can be lost along the lines.

We as a society conform in all aspects of our lives, writing is no different. We have become so accustomed to writing five paragraphs, proper grammar and spelling, MLA or another format, tone of voice, page limit, and so forth that we can no longer distinguish what is up and what is down or what is right and what is left. We are not individuals who think with our own minds and form our own opinions, NO, we have become automatons. We follow what the "legislators of language" tell us in order to receive a good grade instead of how. We

follow the guidelines of what is expected from us and accept the topics that have been chosen for us as well. We operate as a mechanical machine that just goes through the motions instead of the emotions.

"We are  
 neither in the  
 amphitheater,  
 nor on the  
 stage, but in  
 the panoptic  
 machine,  
 invested by  
 its effects of  
 power, which  
 we bring to  
 ourselves  
 since we are  
 part of its  
 mechanism.

(Michel

Foucault, 18).

*Standard academic writing is a form of panopticism because although our individuals are not being watched, our writing is. We have learned that if we do not fit into any category, we are not human yet it's the total opposite because if in fact we were human, then how can it be that people have successfully controlled*

*us as if we are wild animals that need to be caged in? We have learned to be our own jailers and punish ourselves mentally for writing something that is considered to be wrong when really if you think about it how can a person's opinion be wrong when opinion means a personal view, attitude, or appraisal and isn't that the point in writing on any topic, to give our opinion someway, somehow? Yes. Yes it is. If we had no opinion, then there wouldn't be a reason to write. Then and only then have we truly become automatons, a mechanical machine giving the illusion of being human, of being an individual, of being unique. For this reason, writing is the perfect example of panopticism because if we do not follow the guidelines that have been set for us, then we face the repercussions and consequences and must then take into careful consideration what we will say and how we will say it in order to avoid such an ordeal. Because of this we hold back what we truly want to express when it comes to writing in panoptic English. We are afraid to offend those who do not share our world views but most importantly we are afraid to speak up because we no longer think as individuals but as society as a whole.*

*within the*

*recesses of secrets*

*hidden afraid to*

*learn the*



*hearts. We  
are afraid*

*Meaning  
we are*

*potential*  
*we all*  
*how to  
use the*

*know we  
have*

*our minds,  
souls, and*

*to explore  
and learn*

*no longer  
having a*

*place in  
the world.*

*because we      to fall      the  
are afraid      short off      spectrum,*

Creative writing should be implemented within standard academic English and the concept of panoptic writing being the “norm”, should become nonexistent. Meaning, no “norm” whatsoever. It would eliminate the pressure and obligation factor, allowing us to express ourselves freely. Regardless of what is expected, things are constantly changing and not in a slow pace either. We can either decide to ride the current or go against it before it's too late. Sooner or later standard academic English will be overruled, so why wait until it becomes a

requirement to change? Why not now? Are we waiting to implode? Are we waiting to explode? Is that the reason why we've waited so long to break these chains that hold us prisoners? What do we have to lose? "In the meantime, remember that little red pencil may get you convicted of war crimes against the creativity of our children. Remember that if you refuse our speech, you'll be left out of the conversation. Our numbers are growing, our languages multiplying and opening up the pavement like tough-rooted mint, like fists of crabgrass, like wildflowers in bloom." (Morales, 9).

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