

“A Method to the Madness”

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I find it easiest to express myself through poetry or song, which is quite difficult to carry into a class with a focus in scientific studies. Nevertheless, scientific research can begin with a poetic start and be molded into something more evidence-based and straightforward. This process is slightly problematic, for if the science and style aren't combined properly, a piece will crumble like organized chaos. I've tried to discover a method to the madness of my poetic writing style, but I fear that analyzing my thought processes will only damn the dam of poetic flow and lead me to drown you with accidental alliteration arriving with metaphor and personification alongside. If that is, however, the most effective way of explaining my method, then allow me to return to my initial style. Writing is like rearing a child. Birth is often viewed as the most painful task, but the true difficulty comes with growth: shaping the child and raising it to succeed in society. I admit I struggle with initially shaping a paper, but the more Herculean load is to change what my mind has already dedicated to the page. I had to learn that a perfect first draft is hard to come by, as a first attempt at writing does not fully develop a complete command of the logic or efficacy that the writer is capable of. You must learn to walk before you can run. As a writer, you must plan before you write and fail before you ever write well.

As a writer who begins scientific research with a chorus of hypothetical situations, I am not a stranger to preliminary failure. The most beneficial tool in discovering the mistakes of preliminary writing is peer review. Another editor with a different perspective will force the writer to see the mistakes he looks over. Humans are proud creatures; acknowledging and correcting our faults takes dedication and courage. It is the same with writing. The hardest part of composition is cutting our attachments to the original seed from our mind and allowing something else to replace it. Therefore, as

most of my papers are written in poetic styling, a lot must be sacrificed and polished for clarity. If not, my paper would look more like a plan for research to come rather than an analysis of several studies, like several of my research projects this year first appeared. So I don't lose track of my purpose in writing, I must constantly remind myself that my audience would much rather read the data and conclusions I provide them than to be lead through a hypothetical questionnaire about the deeper meaning of the topic. However, I do often fall back into my own style of my writing.

To elaborate, a paragraph usually emerges from my mind as a documentary rather than a paper. The scene opens and a narrator introduces the topic at hand with a weighted and urgent tone. The voice (which normally sounds like Edward Norton) uncovers the research while interrogating the watcher about their knowledge of the case with deep, thought provoking extremes. A montage of serious men and women in lab coats discuss their current findings and then the audience is left to decide who is in the wrong or if their science is relevant at all to the world. The scene works wonderfully, but only as a vision of what I want the readers to see. My job after that is to explore the scene and fill in the blanks with evidence-based reading. It is my hope that this practice will create a dialogue between my paper and the audience to enhance understanding. My intention in writing is not just to get the reader to understand my research, but to see the importance of timely work and the pertinence of the issue in society by feeling like they've delved into the research themselves.

The task of combining poetry with science is not an easy one. At times it seems as if they are complete opposites. The success of my writing will only come with balancing these two loves, so I have dedicated my portfolio to a man who was able to master opposing elements, William Shakespeare. Each piece is titled with one of Shakespeare's many oxymora that play on the theme or content of the work. My two essays are pieces about a helpful hormone, oxytocin, and a possibly harmful herbicide, atrazine. They both deal with research who's outcome will greatly affect the lives of many. Oxytocin is a hormone many doctors use in labor, but may also prove to be an aid for the mentally ill. Titled from a line from *Twelfth Night*, "The Fortunate Unhappy: A Remedy for Schizophrenia," the article explains a

possibility for improving the lives of socially handicapped schizophrenics. On the other hand, “Fiend Angelical: The Debate of the Honorable Villain, Atrazine,” named for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Oxymora), explains a commonly found herbicide that is putting the nation at risk. In both pieces, I struggled greatly to capture the significance of the research and the possible impact it could have on the world. The importance would not have been conveyed without meticulous editing.

To demonstrate the detailed process of revision, I have included an excerpt from “The Fortunate Unhappy,” where I initially denied my poetic style and wrote a horribly mediocre introduction. With excessive nit-picking, I molded the paragraph to a form which is far more appealing to read and introduces the issue by grabbing your attention instead of causing you to grab your pillow. The only line that truly describes my frustration at ignoring my original method is a line from *Macbeth*, where the king states, “My dull brain was wrought with things forgotten” (Shakespeare's Oxymora). The excerpt precedes the final draft of the essay to assure an easy comparison of the two. Another essential component to writing is peer revision. After editing your own essay, it is greatly beneficial if a peer looks it over to find problems with flow or explanation. My peer review of a classmate's work named “Oh! Happy Dagger! Cut Thy Page!” is another allusion to *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Oxymora). In this peer annotation, I point out conflicts that will allow the writer to deftly condense his work and better his clarity. Peer critiques have allowed my papers to reach a dialogue between writer and reader that I never thought capable of my own hand. If any paper proves successful, it will be because failures were recognized in the primary drafts and corrected.

Finally, my last piece, “Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow,” is a dedication in remembrance of a woman who acted as my adoptive mother when my mother became gravely ill in my childhood. I originally wrote it as a limerick to alleviate the stress at her passing, but rewrote it as a sonnet because she deserves something more beautiful. It is the method to my madness in the simplest way I know how to describe: a poem.

My portfolio itself is a dedication to the select few who adore the eclectic blend of science and

poetry.

Works Cited:

"Shakespeare's Oxymora." *Squidoo*. Web. 27 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.squidoo.com/shakespeare-oxymorons>>.