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Introduction

On August 31st, 2016, I attended a vigil for a young black high school student, Elijah Sims. Elijah lived in our suburban community of Oak Park and was killed while visiting friends in the nearby Austin neighborhood of Chicago—just two days shy of his 17th birthday. Hundreds of our students have been murdered in the streets of Chicago due to heightened gun violence and gang warfare. With Elijah, it hit home for me—he was the boy who worked at the local grocery store and was always nice to me—an innocent victim caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. I did not know him personally but now there was a face to connect with the senseless violence that we never talk about in our classrooms. The vigil was organized by Elijah's high school teacher, Anthony Clark, and drew over 100 people to a local park where people talked about who Elijah was and what his loss meant to everyone in our community.

In order to address the ongoing violence against our students, I implemented a lesson with my own graduate students in a literacy course using *found poetry* as a way to talk about social injustice and express our emotions. Found poems are a type of poetry "created by taking words, phrases, and sometimes whole passages from other sources and reframing them as poetry by making changes in spacing and lines, or by adding or deleting text, thus imparting new meaning" (Hilbun, 2015, p.1). Since my university is located outside of Chicago, headlines related to the homicide rate of black youth often make the Chicago Tribune's front page. The theme of our found poem focused on honoring the death of one particular young woman, Hadiya Pendelton, who was murdered on January 29th, 2013, and made national headlines. I made copies of the five Chicago Tribune articles on Hadiya's murder, gave the same articles to each group, and asked the groups to cut up the words and phrases that meant the most to

them. Then, we created the found text together as a class, focusing heavily on the order of the lines and the structure of the rhyming poem.

In this lesson, I decided to use the *ghazal* form for our poem because of the Arabic origin of the name "Hadiya". The ghazal was originally an Arabic verse form dealing with loss and romantic love, though medieval Persian poets embraced it and eventually made it their own. Consisting of syntactically and grammatically complete couplets, the form also has an intricate rhyme scheme. Each couplet ends on the same word or phrase (the *radif*), and is preceded by the couplet's rhyming word (the *qafia,* which appears twice in the first couplet). The last couplet includes a proper name, often the poet's, although here we used Hadiya's full name instead of our own (The Poetry Foundation, 2016). Agha Shahad Ali (1949-2001) is recognized as the cultural ambassador who translated its form and structure for the American Poetry Society. In our poem below, the italicized lines are our own writing while the standard print is from words and passages taken from the Chicago Tribune articles:

A Ghazal for Hadiya

(A found poem based on the 2016 Chicago Tribune articles written by reporters Jennifer Delgado, Bridget Doyle, Mary Schmich, Steve Schmadeke, and Erik Runge)

A beautiful young 15-year old girl with a great life ahead.
Made the national news for being murdered instead.
Let us honor her.

Taking shelter from the winter rain in a South Side park.
Six shots fired in broad daylight and not in the dark.
A city that lost its honor.

Huddled one day with friends after a day of exams.
Caught in gang warfare and becoming the sacrificial lambs.
Honor students at King College Prep.

Young men with guns hunting in the streets…watching their friends fall.
Innocent victims running out of breath…trying to make that 911 call.
Wearing orange to honor the hunted.

Just yesterday she was singing at the White House for the President.
Now the First Lady comes to speak at her would be commencement.
Honoring her with a purple stole.

On the Saturday of her funeral at the Greater Harvest Baptist Church.
We grasped for meaning in words and sought solace in this search.
To honor the dead.

The hallways and the classrooms are now plagued by a silence that stays.
Sadness and depression take over and a feeling of emptiness pervades.
To honor our grief.

Waiting for the Chicago gray and blue of winter to retreat.
Hoping that spring light will help us stand back on our feet.
Hold Nature in great honor said Zora Neale Hurston.

Yet it is the hot summer months that will haunt us the most.
When more stray bullets turn our loved ones into ghosts.
We honor you too Vonzell Banks.

Hundreds gather, holding hands and praying that the violence will soon stop.
Holding vigils, lighting candles, beating drums, even staging a balloon drop.
We honor their grieving mothers and fathers.

And you, Hadiya Pendelton, a daughter to us all.
We will honor you. We will sing your song.
Take Me to Your King.

In the end, our found poem addressed the raw emotions we were all feeling about the rising homicide rate, but it also demonstrated how to synthesize information. As the teachers were reading the articles aloud, they were stopping, taking notes about what was important on Post-Its, and then putting all the pieces of information together in poetic form and structure. The jigsaw process at the end brought each group's lines onto a shared table so we could synthesize a final piece of writing as a class. Instead of just writing a summary of what they read in each article, the challenge was to take non-fiction text that dealt with the human story and turn it into rhyming verse—offering insights into what we connected with in the readings, how our thinking changed when discussing the main points in a group, and putting our learning together in new ways (Miller, 2012). Teachers asked questions about the school community that Hadiya attended and compared it to the school community of Vonzell Banks, another student shot at the same park months later. My suburban teachers were building schema about adolescent life in urban high schools—all the while challenging their own racial biases and assumptions and questioning their positionality and cultural appropriation in writing the poem in the first place: "At first I thought this about Hadiya and her community…Then I read…Now I'm thinking…" Along the way, our background knowledge of student homicide evolved and changed in order for us to craft an original understanding from the journalistic texts.

Moreover, as we were generating our found poem, we were using craft procedures to turn prose into poetry (Roxas & Tapang, 2010): the method of changing something written in every day prose language into something beautiful and poetic; irregular

texts without rhythm change into writing that has language specifically selected and arranged to create an emotional response via the way it sounds and rhymes; the found poem foreshadows the subject matter of the prose text; a process of revision breaks the prose into smaller pieces of information and then calls us to rearrange those smaller pieces into lines of poetry; lines are added to make sure the end product is a piece of poetry that moves forward in the way it sounds; each line goes through several stages of revision and each lines gets moved around structurally until it is just right. The content and style of the finished found poem reinforces the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts: Literature and their focus on craft and structure: analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone; compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style; explain how a series of stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular poem; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone; analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact; etc.

In this article, we will look at *found poetry* as a technique to ease students into the reading and writing of poetry. We will examine how found poetry can be used in a variety of ways to enhance student learning, and how almost any text can be used to create a found poem—text from newspapers, magazines, music lyrics, speeches, letters, emails, Facebook posts, or books; items found on shelves in your library, store, pantry, or bedroom; signs and billboards as you are travelling; graffiti on walls and desks—there is no limit as to where the text for poems can be found. In the end, the writer of a found poem is creating a literary collage from found pieces of text, which may come from a variety of sources. The writer of a found poem can be classified as both a spectator of the found text as well as the participant as s/he turns prose into poetry (Britton, 1984).

What is Found Poetry?

According to the Academy of American Poets (2016), a pure found poem consists exclusively of outside texts without any of the writer's own words: the words of the poem remain as they were found, with few additions or omissions. Decisions of form, such as where to break a line, are left to the poet. *The Found Poetry Review* online journal states that "treated" poems, where poets go beyond the simple addition of line breaks to create pieces whose form and meaning differs from the originals, such as through the creative arrangement of words, are preferred submissions rather than "untreated" poems where the poet intervenes only to add line breaks or spacing. The poet can also insert her/his own words into the found text to create a hybrid form (what is also called "remixed" poetry). In this hybrid form, the poet would italicize the found text and make sure to cite its source at the bottom of the poem. Ezra Pound used found texts in his *Cantos* poetry, which included letters written by presidents and popes, as well as an array of official documents from governments and banks (Hilbun, 2015). T.S. Elliot's poem titled *The Waste Land* included found text from Wagnerian opera, Shakespearian theatre, and Greek mythology.

Found poetry is less daunting to write because the inspiration and words come from an actual text that has already been written—you simply choose which words to use in what order. You do not have to "think up" anything yourself, and while found poetry does have a rhythm, it doesn't have to rhyme—a daunting challenge for our students who often shudder at the idea of writing poetry that has to rhyme (Shugar, 2003). The poet in the end is like a researcher who is culling words, sentences, and passages to synthesize new meaning (Cahnmann, 2003). However, unlike the objective voice of a researcher, the poet uses her/his voice to unravel the synthesized meaning for the reader.

The Technique Behind Found Poetry

In found poetry, you do not necessarily need to write

melodious verse or use powerful metaphors and irony. However, the writer of found poetry must possess the power to find a theme and the power to express that theme. There is also a bit of storytelling in found poetry, as well as creative prowess. By using primary sources or textbooks, all teachers can guide students to use found poetry as a way to summarize, to analyze, to present facts, to organize information, to create new ideas, and to enhance deeper understanding of complex texts. In the end, found poetry is supported by the Reader Response Theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), which states that the meaning of the text does not always reside with the author and the writing; rather, the reader also has an active relationship with that text. To help you and your students get started with creating your own found poetry, here are some step-by-step directions adapted from Stephen Dunning and William Stafford's (1992) popular textbook, *Getting the Knack: 20 Poetry Writing Exercises* (pp. 3-6)**:**

Step 1: Find a primary source for your poems: magazines, books, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, websites, newspapers, etc. The source should be at least two pages in length. Find a well-recognized source such as *National Geographic* and *Cobblestone* magazines and ones that have won awards for their use of language. If you half-remember a good passage from a book or old magazine, track it down. Copy it. Check out mail, public ads, school walls, and billboards. If you have a digital recorder, use it to record authentic dialogue but ask permission first. Hang around where real people talk, such as a coffee shop, and turn their words into print.

Step 2: Re-read your primary source several times. Highlight 50-100 words or phrases you like.

Step 3: On scratch paper, copy the language you highlighted in the sequence you found it. Double space between the lines so you can add notes on the margins.

Step 4: Study the words you found. Cut out everything that is repetitive or unnecessary. Try to cut your original list in half so you only have twenty-five to fifty words with which to work.

Step 5: You may make little changes—tenses, possessives, plurals, punctuation, and capitalization. To create a true found poem, you may add a word or two, if absolutely necessary, to help your found words make sense, make a point, or sound smoother.

Step 6: Read your draft poem again. Arrange the words so they look and sound like a poem. You may want key words at the beginning or end of lines. You may want to break words you found together to emphasize the key words, to get a good sound at the end of lines, or to heighten the reader's interest. You can emphasize key words by PRINTING THEM LARGE, printing them in colors, underlining them, or using different font types and even italics.

Step 7: Re-read your poem aloud to yourself to hear its rhythm, pausing for possible line breaks, until you get lines that flow in a rhythm: sometimes, for interest or surprise, you may want to break up words that often "go together" [like "white clouds," by ending one line with "white" and starting the next line with "clouds."). Break lines so you emphasize key words, get good sounds at the ends of lines, or heighten the reader's interest.

Step 8: Copy your poem onto interesting paper and/or backdrop. At the bottom of the poem, tell the readers from where the words came with a proper citation, including: name of authors who wrote the original text, title, page number(s), date of original publication, etc. You may also want to use a structured form for the whole poem so it's fat, or skinny, or shaped like a polar bear.

Dunning and Stafford (1992) provide many student examples in their chapter on found poetry—some poems are made from cut newspaper headlines and others hand written poems in different shapes. You can download their chapter on found poetry for free on the NCTE website to read these examples and learn more about found poetry as you prepare to try it out in your own writing or with your students.[1]

To further illuminate how the above steps can be used in the classroom, I provide another example from my

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[1] https://secure.ncte.org/store/getting-the-knack

own teaching. During the past academic year, in the same literacy course for graduate students, I introduced Dunning and Stafford's (1992) bulleted list of steps after our lesson in which we wrote a found poem about Hadiya Pendelton. I began with the shared reading method in which we all read aloud a National Geographic article titled "This Face Changes the Human Story. But How?" by Jamie Shreeve (September, 2015). While reading the article aloud, I asked students to write down words or phrases from the article that were important to them on their Found Poem Planning Page, and then we composed a poem using these words and phrases. After we finished reading the article, we then discussed the meaning of the article using reading comprehension questions, and in the end, we developed a central theme for our found poem: the newly discovered genus *Homo Nadeli* has a curious mix of both extremely primitive and extremely modern features, and its discovery therefore, is changing the bigger picture of human evolution.

My graduate students were challenged at first as to what the structure should look like in the end and how a natural rhythm can be created by moving the words and phrases around in the poem: Which scientific facts are relevant to capture in the poem? What images from the article can be used for the poem? How do we get the reader to connect to this dense text? How should the poem conclude (Sprow, 2006)? The found poetry exercise was intentionally used in my literacy class to encourage new insights into what can constitute poetry, greater understanding of how to create found poems, and to build a shared sense of community through a constructivist exercise that includes professional dialogue, reflection, analysis and synthesis (Tisdell, 2003). Here is our second collective found poem based on the National Geographic article by Jamie Shreeve:

Our Genus Homo
A trove of fossils found deep in a cave
Locked in the hoof of Africa
Another branch added to the human tree
A hidden chamber with slits of light
Hundreds of fractured bones
Disposing of the dead below

Deep in the cave we crawl
Like underground astronauts
Our arms tightly bound to our bodies
Dark shark-mouth chutes and jagged walls
Leading to a carpet of stalagmites
Fissures in the floor—we jump

The air damp, the silence strong
Harpoons and cables come undone
Light, torches and fire
Shifting through tiny cracks
Carrying stones into a rubble mound
Dragging the corpses behind us

Fossils poking out of chunks of rock
Fiddling with calipers in the pitch dark
Broken jaws, human like teeth
Fingers and tongues
Probing patches of dirt
One inch at a time

A nearly complete foot, hand, as in life
Tiny bones of the inner ear
Thimble size vertebrae
The flaring shape of the pelvis
Found below layers of ash
Was and was not human

On the cusp of transition from ape to man
 Sine qua non human

But the story goes dark
More bones need to be found
A skeletal history, the ink still wet
Yet what was once primitive is now *genus homo*

In our found poem, the use of the "we" pronoun allowed us to insert ourselves into the role of the scientists and therefore use a first-person narrative voice. The order of the poem's lines follows the narrative order of the article itself, which moves chronologically and spatially into the South African caves where the bones of the new genus *Homo Nadeli* were found. Here is a portion of a paragraph from the original article that shows how we excised central language from the academic text:

Deep in the cave, Tucker and Hunter worked their way through a constriction called Superman's Crawl—because most people can fit through only by holding one arm tightly against the body and extending the other above the head, like the Man of Steel in flight. Crossing a large chamber, they climbed a jagged wall of rock called the Dragon's Back. At the top they found themselves in a pretty little cavity decorated with stalactites. Hunter got out his video camera, and to remove himself from the frame, Tucker eased himself into a fissure in the cave floor. His foot found a finger of rock, then another below it, then—empty space. Dropping down, he found himself in a narrow, vertical chute, in some places less than eight inches wide. (Shreeve, 2015, para. 5)

In some ways, the search for what constitutes a poem harks back to Stanley Fish's (1980) experiment at Harvard University in which he takes a list of names written vertically on the blackboard — the reading assignment from a previous seminar — draws a frame around them, writes "page 43" at the top, and tells the students that the text on the board is a poem to be interpreted— the text was also typographically arranged in a manner we associate with poetic convention. Soon the students begin interpreting the text in creative ways; however, Fish argues that the students made the interpretations, not because his students know poetry when they see it, but rather because they see poetry when they know it. The text as poem does not exist *a priori*; their shared dialogue generates it—much like the process of socially constructing a found poem together as a class.

The role of the teacher is to frame the conventions of interpretation and to set the stage. Similar to Fish's text on the board, a teacher frames a found poem by dividing the text vertically into lines, therefore making a conceptual shift from just a list of references to an "aesthetic" context, that is, a context in which we are likely to put into play certain interpretive procedures like formal analysis (Jones, 1990). The act of writing the found poem makes the writer a poet as s/he uses aesthetic and poetic devices to frame the text by formal elements.

Bridging Fiction and Non-fiction

The example above of writing a found poem using a non-fiction text like a National Geographic article highlights the importance of academic literacy in a Common Core driven era. Shugar (2003) shows us another example for grades 8-12 in which students use primary and secondary sources related to the Holocaust to create found poetry. The lesson was team taught with a language arts teacher and the library media specialist. In order to build background knowledge, the team of teachers discussed Jewish culture, defined Yiddish terms, and taught the history behind the Holocaust with a focus on German concentration camps. The Library of Congress website offered several resources for students to distinguish a primary source from a secondary source.

Once the distinction had been made between a primary and secondary source, the teachers taught the difference between "first person narrative writing", such as the diary format, and "third person expository writing", such as the newspapers documenting the Holocaust. Next, the teachers handed the students a sheet with directions for writing a found poem and a highlighter. Modeling an example was essential: the teacher read aloud a specific Holocaust survivor story off the Internet; she completed a graphic organizer titled "Concept of a Definition" and chose a theme for the found poem; the class together then generated words and phrases that were examples of vivid images and strong language; the teacher then co-created a found poem and pointed out how the order and tense of words may have been changed or a phrase repeated for emphasis. Lastly, the teacher asked if the found poem looked and sounded like a poem and how a poem should actually look and sound. She emphasized that once a found poem is ready for sharing, it is imperative that the writer cite the original source of the poem at the bottom, giving credit to the original writer and text so the readers know how it was "found."

After the teacher modeled this example, the students chose a Holocaust survivor story of their own off the Internet, which allowed them to select a story at

their reading level. On day two, students found their selections, developed a theme, highlighted their words, and made the first word/phrase list. At this stage of the process, students often had difficulty eliminating half of the words chosen and arranging them to make the actual found poem. You may also find that some student poems need minor editing from the teacher to make them more poem-like, and, if this is the case, one-on-one editing with the language arts teacher can help students see the need for the poetic form and rhythm.

Returning to our example of composing found poetry about the Holocaust, in the last stage of the work, completed poems were retyped in a variety of fonts and shared with the class. Students were surprised at how moving their completed poems were, especially when they didn't "write" the poems themselves—they just "found" them. At this stage, a rubric can be used to evaluate both the final product and the process of creating the found poem. Here is a student example of a found poem based on the Shugar (2003) article:

I was a hidden child.

Hidden in this woman's home.

I'll never be able to thank her.

My father found a place for my brother.

He found a place for my sister.

He found this place for me.

Father took me on a streetcar.

He knocked on a door.

A woman answered.

I went inside.

It was the last time I saw my father.

I lived inside this house for two years.

I had no toys.

I made up imaginary friends.

I do not remember being hugged and kissed.

I was never mistreated, but

I was never loved.

I was petrified.

I lost a great part of my childhood

Because I was a Jew.

People ask me,

Can I forgive?

I can't

I cannot forgive.

The poem was based on the Holocaust Survivors website: Jeannie Burk's Story. Poem found by Ashley S. (Shugar, 2003, p. 14)

Found Poetry
Cut Up from Headlines

Newspapers, magazines, and radio/Internet news sources make great reading texts and are wonderful to incorporate into found poems, especially transcripts from the National Public Radio website (Foster, 2012). The language in news media uses concrete ordinary prose, which can be plain as well as powerful. By using contemporary news media, the lesson can also allow classroom dialogue to occur on controversial topics in our national and international landscape: terrorism, the refugee crisis, police brutality, immigration, etc. Students who may be reluctant to share thoughts on these topics in front of their peers are more likely to express their views in a found poem.

In this technique, the teacher asks students to literally tear off words and phrases from newsprint, with a greater focus on bolded headlines. Oftentimes, the students do not use scissors to cut the words and phrases in order to include the jagged lines of torn text into their final collages. The torn text is then arranged and rearranged, which can be both intentional and haphazard, and finally glued in a poetic fashion onto any type

of surface: paper, envelopes, cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, glass, wooden doors, etc. In the end, the composition has a unique aesthetic quality since the torn words and phrases have different fonts, sizes, shades, and colors. Here is a student example from the Dunning and Stafford (1992) textbook:

Unlikely Faces

Fading

In Pursuit of Promises

Precarious

Currents in a

Bitter River

Carol Ja'go (p. 20)

Aylmey (2012) shares his insights into creating found poetry using torn text from any type of print. In his example, he has students create found poems from outdated and discarded textbooks often found in school closets. Students are both horrified and delighted when they get the chance to rip pages from a book. Yet, the students still read and select specific torn pages; they highlight/write down words or phrases that appeal to them; and then re-arrange them on a page only using conjunctions and prepositions to create a poem—that is the editorial rule that Aylmey (2012) used for his lesson, as an editing exercise for his senior creative writers to get the idea of finding the essence of a piece and editing the shape of a piece.

Combining Texts to Create a Blended Found Poem

Found poetry can also be created by combining words and phrases from multiple texts. Oftentimes, if the two or more texts are quite different in content, structure and style, then the students can have a "fun" time playing with words and coming up with creative examples of this pastiche form. Adrian Henri's pivotal poem titled *New Fast Automatic Daffodils* (Henri, 1975) became an icon of blended poetry: he blended the classic Wordsworth poem "The Daffodils" with a car sales brochure for a yellow Dutch car also called a Daffodil, "The New Fast Daffodil, Fully Automatic." He cut up words from both the Wordsworth poem and the car brochure to create a blended form that still maintained the cheery, idyllic tone found in both texts:

I wandered lonely as

THE NEW, FAST DAFFODIL

INDENT-FULLY AUTOMATIC

that floats on high o'er vales and hills

The Daffodil Is generously dimensioned to accommodate four adult passengers

10,000 saw I at a glance

Nodding their new anatomically shaped heads in sprightly dance

Beside the lake beneath the trees

INDENT-in three bright modern colours

red, blue and pigskin

The Daffodil de luxe is equipped with a host of useful accessories

including windscreen wiper and washer with joint control

A Daffodil doubles the enjoyment of touring at home or abroad

For a blended found poem lesson, students can bring in their own texts to share with the class in a potluck

fashion, and therefore, allow them to choose disparate texts but to then make comparisons across the disparate texts. For example, a student can choose words and phrases from a magazine that focuses on Hollywood stars (such as *People* magazine) and then combine this text with a scientific journal that focuses on astronomical stars (such as *Science News)*. The blending of these two different texts that are both focused on the theme of "stars" can lead to creative juxtapositions.

This process of blending texts is also demonstrated in Foster's (2012) article in *Geography Teacher*. In her lesson outline, the students blend a dry textbook titled "A Student's Guide to Finding Geography" with a primary source from world history. Everyone in the class read the required textbook and made notes about the main ideas. Then each student selected an individual history article of her choice, also making notations about the main idea and characteristics of the people and place(s). Using their two sets of notes, students identified three to five key phrases from both texts which they felt were the most important to understanding the people or place described. Then each student arranged key phrases from both texts onto construction paper and shared her/his final blended poem aloud with the class. The rubric Foster used evaluated these criteria:

- MECHANICS: Has a unique title, strips neatly fixed to paper, and all strips are used.

- KEY PHRASES/QUOTES: Are unique and possess a strong literary element. Clear understanding of geographic systems.

- USE OF LITERARY DEVICES: Uses at least 3 literary devices to create a poem that flows well.

- CLEAR GEOGRAPHIC THEME: Theme is clear. Poem establishes a firm "sense of place.

- POEM SUMMARIZES THE MAIN GEOGRA-PHY POINTS: Poem clearly draws from the texts presented and builds on the main idea.

Here is a student example based on the blending of the students' geography textbook and "Baikal: Russia's Sacred Sea" by Don Belt (1992)

Suddenly, his memory turned a corner and he wondered aloud

Barely a year had passed since Stalin's death, and

the dictators hand still lay heavy on the land

Ordinary citizen banded together to fight it

Baikal *was* special

Been living on a ship that brought Cold Warriors

and industrial handiwork to these shores

He was astonished to find himself talking freely with an American

Man does not have enough feelings to respond to this wonder

Baikal is a living museum of aquatic plants and animals, incredibly rich in life at all depths

A breathtaking region rarely seen by foreigners

A natural laboratory for the study of evolution

Call it the Pearl of Siberia and the Sacred Sea

Baikal *is* special (p.28)

Erasing Texts to Create a Found Poem

Found poems can also be created from erasing words, phrases, lines and punctuation from a known text. A poet takes can existing source (often one or two pages) and erases a majority of the text, leaving behind select words and phrases for a newly synthesized meaning. Artist Tom Phillips bought a second-hand book for three pennies in 1966 and then altered every page by using painting, collage and cut-up techniques to create an entirely new book by 1973. The book he found was an obscure 1892 Victorian title, *A Human Document* by W.H. Mallock. Phillips; he then meticulously transformed the original text through erasure and created a

found book with a new title—*A Humument*—a wonderful piece of art.

In the language arts classroom, a teacher can have students choose any type of text (book, magazine article, historical document, etc.) and then have them consciously think about which words need to be erased to change meaning, why they need to be erased, and how they should be erased (with a pencil eraser, scratched with a penny, bolded over with a sharpie pen). One example of an erasure lesson could entail students taking a well-known poem (such as Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and Emily Dickinson's "Hope is the thing with feathers") and then have them erase the words, phrases, lines, or punctuation that they may feel is essential or non-essential, full of meaning and non-meaning, etc. The use of Freud's theories related to "omission, gaps and ellipses" can add a psychoanalytic lens in which students analyze why they chose certain words/phrases/lines to erase and what effect erasure has on a poem.

Conclusion

The ideas in this article highlight the many different ways in which found poetry can be introduced into the middle school and high school classroom. Currently, there is a resurgence of slam poetry in our schools in which students write and perform their own personal poems in front of their peers, often in a hip-hop style, with live audiences and in judged competitions. Popular musicals like "Hamilton" by Lin-Manuel Miranda highlight what happens when a found text about Alexander Hamilton transforms itself from prose to poetry. Therefore, it seems quite apropos for teachers to tap into this poetic resurgence and introduce found poetry into the curricular fold so students can see how its content and structure allow them to make meaning without having to rhyme.

There is also a democratizing force to found poetry that allows students to address social justice topics and themes and state openly that poetry does matter to young lives. The need and possibility of found poetry to address real issues our students are and will continue to face—from identity politics to changing societal norms—makes it even more immediate and relevant. Through a variety of mediums, across fiction and non-fiction texts, whether using newspaper headlines or the erasure of lines, found poetry is truly a hybrid text form that bends and changes structures and styles, allowing students to cross traditional boundaries of genre, media, and modality in order to express their lives.

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