

Performing Prose: The Study and Practice of Style in Composition

By Chris Holcomb, M. Jimmie Killingsworth





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In *Performing Prose*, authors Chris Holcomb and M. Jimmie Killingsworth breathe new life into traditional concepts of style. Drawing on numerous examples from a wide range of authors and genres, Holcomb and Killingsworth demonstrate the use of style as a vehicle for performance, a way for writers to project themselves onto the page while managing their engagement with the reader. By addressing style and rhetoric not as an editorial afterthought, but as a means of social interaction, they equip students with the vocabulary and tools to analyze the styles of others in fresh ways, as well as create their own.

Whereas most writing texts focus exclusively on analysis or techniques to improve writing, Holcomb and Killingsworth blend these two schools of thought to provide a singular process of thinking about writing. They discuss not only the benefits of conventional methods, but also the use of deviation from tradition; the strategies authors use to vary their style; and the use of such vehicles as images, tropes, and schemes. The goal of the authors is to provide writers with stylistic “footing”: an understanding of the ways writers use style to orchestrate their relationships with readers, subject matter, and rhetorical situations.

Packed with useful tips and insights, this comprehensive volume investigates every aspect of style and its use to present an indispensable resource for both students and scholars. *Performing Prose* moves beyond customary studies to provide a refreshing and informative approach to the concepts and strategies of writing.

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Editorial Review

Review

“In this innovative text, Holcomb and Killingsworth recapture style’s rightful place in the generation of prose rather than just a step in editing already-written text. In the process, they manage to incorporate everything the Western rhetorical and literary tradition ever knew about style and have it all make sense together.”—Barbara Johnstone, author of *Discourse Analysis*

“Not only is this book smart and inspirational in terms of explanations, examples, and exercises, but it's also fun! What a pleasure it will be to teach from this twenty-first century *Ludus Literarius*.”

—Cheryl Glenn, author of *Rhetoric Retold and Unspoken*

About the Author

Chris Holcomb is an associate professor of English at the University of South Carolina, where he teaches rhetoric and composition. His previous publications include *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jesting in Early Modern England* and several articles on style and performance.

M. Jimmie Killingsworth is a professor and head of the English department at Texas A&M University, where he teaches American literature and rhetoric. His recent publications include *Appeals in Modern Rhetoric: An Ordinary-Language Approach* and *The Cambridge Introduction to Walt Whitman*.

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