

Week 3 Notes  
4 Oct 2017

HW for Week 4:

### Writing

1. In class this week we started using Lanham's Paramedic Method on a sample I gave you (posted in IS as "Samples to do Paramedic Method on." For HW, write your own revision of the *first* sentence of the forensics paragraph. Then compare your revision to mine (on the back). What are the differences/similarities? Keep in mind that my revision is by no means the best or only way to revise the sentence. We can discuss this further next week.
2. Find an example (in English) of what Richard Lanham calls the "Official Style" (recommendations for sources: government, school, or company websites; emails from bosses (or from ex-lovers); lists of rules/regulations; textbooks; political speeches). Take a short sample (about 1 paragraph) from this source, PRINT it out, and apply Lanham's Paramedic Method to it (take a pen/pencil and circle the prepositions, etc.). Then, revise the paragraph according to Lanham's suggestions. Type this up and print it, and bring it to class.

### Reading

3. I'd like you to read the essay "Bewilderment" by Fanny Howe, because it's one of my favorite essays about writing. BEFORE you read it, I'd like you to get to know Fanny Howe and learn a little bit about her work. Please read this introduction to Howe: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/fanny-howe>  
At the bottom of this page are links to poetry and prose by Howe. Spend some time looking through her work. You don't have to read all of it, of course, but read a few poems, at least. I recommend the prose poem "Everything's a Fake" to start with: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46762/everythings-a-fake>  
If you have a bit more time, I recommend the essay "Outremer": <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/69725/outremer>  
(and instead of reading it, you could watch/listen to this video reading Howe made with an artist: <https://vimeo.com/16145484>)
4. Read "Bewilderment." The essay is online, here: [https://www.asu.edu/pipercenter/how2journal/archive/online\\_archive/v1\\_1\\_1999/fh\\_bewild.html](https://www.asu.edu/pipercenter/how2journal/archive/online_archive/v1_1_1999/fh_bewild.html)  
This essay is an *ars poetica*—that is, it's a statement from an artist or writer about how she or he makes art, and what she or he believes are the guiding principles for their art. As you read, again, please think about WHAT Howe wants to say (content), and how that relates to HOW Howe says it (form). How does she define "bewilderment" in the essay, and how does she show what that means through the form of the essay itself?

By the way: you could consider writing an *ars poetica* as your class essay...

### **The first paragraph of an academic paper on forensics:**

The assessment of skeletal injuries and determination of their relevance to medicolegal death investigations is one of the main tasks a forensic anthropologist is asked to conduct in the course of a routine examination of human skeletal remains. In bodies that undergo traditional postmortem autopsy examination of injuries, their classification, mechanism, and sequence of events that led to the occurrence is mostly extracted from soft tissue damage. In skeletonized remains and remains in advanced stages of decomposition, however, trauma interpretation is almost exclusively discerned from interferences to the integrity of a bone. Despite its seeming persistence, bone tissue is a perishable organic material susceptible to exterior and interior disturbances. Dismemberment, burial, burning and/or exposure to a variety of climatic factors (e.g., weathering, fluctuation of humidity, temperature and acidity, etc.) are influential factors in decomposition of bone elements. If an expert is presented with a case exhibiting significant taphonomic modifications, either environmental or as a result of the perpetrator's behavior, skeletal injuries can be less abundant, less straightforward, and more ambiguous. Taphonomic alterations may mimic characteristics of skeletal trauma (e.g., scratches, postmortem fractures, fragmentation and spatial dispersion), obscure the presence of such prior damage (e.g., surface abrasion and exfoliation), or modify the unambiguity of the original state (e.g., sharpness, coloring and pressure distortion).

**(212 words)**

### **Joe's revision:**

Forensic anthropologists are often asked by death investigators to examine human remains and determine whether skeletal injuries are relevant to the case. In a traditional postmortem autopsy, damage to the soft tissue is the main source of information about what has happened to the body. But with skeletonized remains, or with bodies in advanced stages of decomposition, forensic experts must rely on the bones to provide clues. Unfortunately, bones are not always reliable evidence. Despite its seeming durability, bone tissue is perishable, and susceptible to exterior and interior disturbances such as dismemberment, burial, burning, weathering, or changes in humidity, temperature and acidity. All of these can effect bone decomposition and make an investigator's job harder. If there have been significant taphonomic modifications to the bones, either because of the environment or because of a perpetrator's behavior, evidence of skeletal injuries can be more difficult to find and to analyze. Taphonomic alterations may mimic characteristics of skeletal trauma (e.g. scratches, postmortem fractures, fragmentation and/or spatial dispersion), obscure the presence of such damage (e.g. surface abrasion and exfoliation), or make the original state of the bones unrecognizable (e.g. sharpness, coloring and pressure distortion).

**(190 words)**

