Poetry for Identity:
A Phenomenological Pedagogy of Poetry to Support Secondary Students' Self-Concept Clarity

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Research has tied adolescents' performance in a variety of areas, including post-secondary plans, healthy relationships, mental health, and academic success, to the identity-related construct of self-concept clarity (Van der Aar, et al. 341-2, 359; Merdin-Uyger, et al. 443-4). While different researchers define "self-concept" slightly differently (Marsh, et al. 333), their definitions reliably fit within the comprehensive definition developed by Shavelson, et al.: "self concept is a person's perception of himself" (411). Self-concept clarity's definition also varies slightly, but it generally aligns with what Campbell, et al. offer: "the extent to which the contents of an individual's self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable" (141). Essentially, then, when students have a clear, confident, consistent, and stable understanding of who they are, they see benefits in many important areas of their lives.

To reach this understanding, students need to be skilled at identifying and examining their self-concept. The study of lyric poetry is well-suited to help students develop the necessary skills. Through their compact nature and tendency to densely overlap literary techniques, lyric poems draw attention to, and ask readers to spend time with, the seeming contradictions within the experiences they describe. A single contradictory detail is often emphasized by visual, auditory, and conceptual techniques simultaneously, giving students many chances to notice the contradiction. In Elizabeth Bishop's lyric poem "The Fish," for example, the speaker says that a fish's internal organ is flower-like, despite the contrasting stereotypical reactions to fish guts and flowers. This description is emphasized by line arrangement, alliteration, and a simile—all packed into the space of eight words.

By giving students the chance to sit with and consider lyric poems, instructors can offer them a practice space. In this space, the students can contemplate contradictions like this one and

decide whether the contradictions are indications of complex consistency or of inconsistency in the speaker's self-concept. Familiarity with both kinds of complexity makes both less intimidating, paving the way for students' willingness and ability to engage in analysis of their own complex and inconsistent self-concepts. This space to contemplate lyric poems also prepares students to analyze their own self concepts because of lyrics' use of first-person pronouns.[1] The way these pronouns conflate reader and poetic speaker—subject and object—offers students practice with another skill: inhabiting the blended space of being both enmeshed with the experience they are analyzing and detached enough to view the experience as an object of study.

Guiding secondary students to see poetry's potential is only the first step, though. Teachers also need to offer an analysis framework that delivers on this promise of relevance. Phenomenology, as the philosophical field that studies first-person experiences (D. Smith), offers the thought processes necessary for this framework. In the pages that follow, I will explain the relevance of certain phenomenological concepts, show how a phenomenological approach to poetry offers insight into the self-concept clarity of poems' speakers, and then describe a process by which this type of analysis can be offered to high school students, helping them both increase their facility with poetry and develop a higher level of self-concept clarity.

Phenomenology

To accomplish these goals, all material in the phenomenological framework must meet two key criteria. It must be accessible for teenagers and positioned to offer insight into the experiencer's self-concept. Four key phenomenological ideas lie at this intersection: 1) Husserl's

[1] While other genres also make use of first-person pronouns, the compressed nature of poetry and the high frequency with which the genre is read aloud intensify the impact of the conflation mentioned next.

conception of intentionality, 2) Husserl's conception of the ego[2] as seen in his *Cartesian Meditations*, 3) Heidegger's conception of object experience, and 4) Merleau-Ponty's conception of embodiment.

Intentionality is, as Moran states, both "central to the phenomenological tradition" ("Intentionality" 579) and "interpreted in radically different ways" (580). Husserl's foundational concept is that intentionality is the "aboutness" of a conscious experience, the fact that most experiences are *of* some aspect of the world (regardless of whether that something truly exists) (Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* 16). The one having the experience is the subject that is engaging in *noesis*: the mental process of intention (Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* 156). Whatever the intention is directed towards is the object or *noema* (Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* 155). What Husserl and his followers generally disagree with each other about is how that "aboutness" works; how exactly do conception, perception, bodies, and external objects fit together to create an experience (Moran, "Intentionality" 580)? In the pages that follow, I will briefly explain the aforementioned components of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty's theories about the way intentionality works and how their application to poetic analysis aids in examining the speaker's self-concept.

Husserl, in his later years, offered an intriguing argument for how one's interpretation of intentionality *is* the self, which he calls "the ego." A. Smith explains that Husserl's "evidence for such an ego was *attention*. We can shift our attention" to control which parts of an experience to

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[2] Turning to Husserl for a conception of an abstract self or ego may seem strange. After all, scholars are able to credibly and in passing write of how Husserl's idea of "intentionality is a claim about …embodied consciousness" (Moran, "Intentionality" 579) and "pupils['] and collaborators[']... discussions of human bodies remained indebted to the original account outlined by Husserl" (Heinämaa 533). He even went so far as to say, in his *Logical Investigations*, that he was "quite unable to find this ego, this primitive necessary center of relations," a claim that suggests the self is inherently simply the subject of experiences (A. Smith 109). However, he later revised this statement, footnoting that statement with the assertion that "I have since managed to find it!" (109).

emphasize for ourselves, and the entity doing this shifting is the ego (109). When one experiences a room, for instance, the whole room is the *noema*. However, one may focus more attention on a chair than the table; there is control over details of the *noesis.* Understanding this focus as the key function of the self ensures the speaker's attention is emphasized in the reading of the poem. Since the speaker's attention reveals what they value, emphasizing their attention positions the reader to focus on details that are essential to understanding the speaker.

Heidegger offers a helpful tool for moving from identifying values to interpreting values in his conception of Being. According to Heidegger's model, people experience objects—their *noema*—based on the objects' "readiness to hand" or, put another way, the way(s) in which the person in question is likely to use them (Mulhall 47). How a person perceives and thus describes a given object, then, tells us what they think is important in the world—what they value—and how they exist in the world—their identity. This, again, is a useful way to approach poems' literary techniques to gain an understanding of their speaker. Poems make use of the fact there is a wide range of ways to talk about any given object; techniques like similes, personification, allusions, puns, and alliteration reveal and draw attention to underlying assumptions and associations with objects. We can look at these devices through the lens of what they reveal about how the speaker functions in the world and thus reach a better understanding of the speaker.

Merleau-Ponty's understanding of phenomenology strongly emphasized the extent to which people are embodied beings. He saw the body as having a dual nature; for every person, their body is simultaneously a fundamental part of their experience and an object which they can experience (Baldwin 177). The former is especially evident in his discussion of emotions and conception of motor intentionality. He argues that emotions are not simply internal things that a

person feels, but also and simultaneously things one does with one's body (Krueger 199). One's facial expressions and movements are a component, not a secondary expression, of one's emotions (199). The idea that one's body is integral to oneself is also key to motor intentionality. Pacherie explains that Merleau-Ponty understands motor intentionality in two different but coexisting ways. The first is intentionality that has not been pre-thought or consciously directed; the second is the body as an intermediary that decides how to express conscious intentionality through physical movement (272).

This thought framework offers several additional avenues for poetic analysis. If bodily motions are components of emotion, a description of a movement function as synecdoche, prompting the question of why the speaker directs their attention to this aspect of their emotion. Conversely, the poem may make it clear that the speaker is focusing on their body as an object, rather than a component of their experience; being aware of the difference opens the door to considering whether a moving body part is being personified instead of acting as a shorthand. Again, once the reader has noticed the wording choice, they are ready to consider the implications—in this case, why the speaker is alienating themself from their body.

In all of these cases, phenomenological thought process lay the groundwork for gaining insight into the speaker—what and how they value, think, and feel about a variety of aspects of the world. Looking for and identifying these details helps the reader identify both what the speaker believes about themself as well as aspects of the speaker they may overlook or misperceive about themself. Identifying these beliefs trains the reader in thought processes that will help them identify their own self-perception and develop an awareness of and clarify their self-concept.

Phenomenological Analysis of Poetry

With these thought processes established, the next step is to show what they look like in action. Thus, in this second section of my thesis, I will demonstrate the use of these phenomenological thought processes as frameworks for analyzing poetry. My purpose is twofold: showing how phenomenological analysis 1) is well-positioned to support students' development of close reading, and 2) facilitate examining poems' speakers' self-concept clarity, paving the way for the development of transferable skills.

While a wide variety of literary frameworks can guide students to notice details and techniques in the literature they are reading, phenomenology is especially helpful to secondary students who are developing facility with poetic analysis because it emphasizes the connection between literary devices and the details of a speaker's inner life. For example, using Heidegger's conception of object experience, one can analyze David Woo's poem "Eden" and learn that his understanding of the Arizona climate is so negative that he imagines the local plants hate it as well. While ecocriticism could also draw attention to this negative understanding of climate and the way the speaker relates to the plants, ecocriticism would push towards a reading of the poem that emphasizes social critique, not the speaker's perception of himself.

The latter reading is more useful in the effort to support students' growth as close readers of poetry. First, the self-perception-based reading associates the literary device with a more unique impact. By the time they reach high school, most students are aware of humanity's negative treatment of the environment; moving towards this familiar conclusion may not garner buy-in from students who are already uninterested in the reading and rereading necessary for close reading. Second, emphasizing the speaker's perception of himself prioritizes a more direct and less abstract interpretation. For students who gravitate towards large social issues like

protecting the planet, ecocriticism might be a more enticing framework, but passion for large issues can lend itself to sweeping generalizations and assumptions of foregone conclusions rather than a focus on the tight logical progressions of thought that close reading requires. Keeping the context within the poem pushes students to focus on the details that are so important to the genre of lyric poetry.

This emphasis on close reading might seem to be better, and more easily, accomplished by the self-contained, text-focused approach of New Criticism. However, phenomenological readings also offer what New Criticism does not: support for the development of self-concept clarity skills. Phenomenology asks secondary students to look critically at what a poem reveals about its speaker's perception of their experiences—what the speaker is coming into contact with, where their attention is, how they view the objects and people that surround them, and their physical actions. Examining these perceptions in detail prepares students to see alignments and disconnects between a speaker's perception of themself and how the speaker actually functions in their experiences. Having developed the thought processes to recognize these consistencies and inconsistencies, secondary students are prepared to analyze their own experiences. For instance, studying a speaker's direction of attention and descriptions of objects can equip students to handle the complexity of seeming or actual misalignment between their own stated beliefs and the values they express with their attention and object experience.

In the pages that follow, I will be using three poems to demonstrate how the identified phenomenological concepts can direct analysis towards assessing the self-concept clarity of the poems' speakers. First, in Shakespeare's Sonnet 27, I will show how Husserl's intentionality and ego-based direction of attention point towards inconsistency and fragmentation in the speaker's self-perception. Then, in David Woo's poem "Eden," I will work with Heidegger's approach to

object experience along with direction of attention to describe the accuracy of the speaker's directly stated belief about himself. Finally, in Gabeba Baderoon's "Postscript," I will focus on how the concepts of motor intentionality and object experience can reveal the speaker's implicit self-perceptions when the speaker herself is unsure about them.

Though this section will demonstrate the value of phenomenological frameworks, it will not be focused on classroom use. It is not about offering an example of the level of work teachers should hope to help their students achieve, and I will not be explaining how the frameworks should be taught. Instead, I will address logistical concerns in the third section of this thesis.

Shakespeare's "Sonnet 27"

On a first modern reading, this sonnet appears to be both highly relatable and somewhat melodramatic. The focus on lying awake at night, unable to wrangle uncooperative thoughts, appeals to a common experience; the choice to make thoughts into pilgrims that prompt a vision of the beloved elevate him to the status of a saintly messenger of God. However, a phenomenological reading of the poem reveals that neither of these aspects of the poem is actually the dominant source of insight about the speaker. The poem, rather, portrays an inept speaker who delusionally conceptualizes himself as a helplessly but impressively devoted lover.

The first hint of the disconnect between the speaker's self-concept and his true nature comes early, in the second half of the first line. The phrase "I haste me to my bed," while reflecting a logical desire to achieve rest, describes a situation that is both difficult and ineffective. When one is "weary with toil," as described in the first half of the line, one usually moves sluggishly, not with haste. Attempts to move quickly reliably lead to sloppiness and thus ineffective results. This disparity is underscored by the very words used to convey the idea: the combination of sounds the words "I haste me to my bed" demands the reader slow down for

pronunciation purposes rather than speeding up to convey haste. The specific word combination amplifies this impact. Most of the words end with vowel sounds, and most of the vowels are long, further drawing out the experience.

This failed haste feels more obvious when contrasted with the third line, where the thoughts' journey begins. Just as in the opening line, movement across space is the goal, but this time, the line trips along nicely, mimicking a quick walk. Shakespeare accomplishes this by including two two-syllable words ("begins" and "journey") and combining consonance (the "n" most clearly) with a rhythm of assonance (mostly short vowels; similar sounds generally alternate). From the opening of the poem, then, the reader is alerted to the likelihood of the speaker's inaccurate perception of his own experience.

This possibility becomes a certainty as soon as one starts looking at the depiction of intentionality in the poem. The speaker believes that he is expressing his obsession with his beloved, as evidenced by the ways he describes his approach and experience of this object of his affections. He speaks of the "zealous pilgrimage" (line 6) his thoughts take to reach the beloved, and of how the beloved's "jewel"-like appearance "[m]akes black Night beauteous" (lines 11-12). However, apart from a quick aside in the final line, these are the only lines that mention his beloved. For the vast majority of the poem, the experience the speaker describes is of himself: his weariness (line 1), his mind (line 4), his eyelids (line 7), his limbs and mind and weariness again (lines 13-14). Structure and syntax reinforce this focus. The final quatrain is the one most focused on the beloved—which means the topic of the beloved is positioned in opposition to the volta into the couplet. The couplet itself does not redeem the speaker, given that the beloved is mentioned only in passing in a sentence whose subjects are the speaker's mind and limbs (line 13).

Even when the speaker implicitly acknowledges his ineptitude, a phenomenological lens reveals his self-beliefs are not in line with reality. Given that the bulk of the poem (lines 4-12) describes the way in which his thoughts are related to the beloved, it is reasonable to assume that he sees his identity as that of a lover. However, after the first line of the poem, he is never the subject of a verb. Instead, grammatical details underscore his separation from those verbs.

Again, these details are apparent from the very beginning. The initial sentence is a compound one, cleanly split at the middle of the quatrain it makes up. Inverting the verb and the subject in the second half creates a gap that draws the reader's attention as they anticipate the second subject. This draws attention to the discrepancy between the subjects. While the subject of the first half of the sentence is "I" (line 1), the second subject is "a journey in my head" (line 3). It would have been a simple matter to adjust "a journey" to "my journey," thereby making the Husserlian ego actively engaged in the direction of the mental focus. The choice to use an indefinite article rather than a pronoun creates a sense of separation, and the fact that the subjects are contrasted via use in two halves of the same sentence—linked by the contrasting conjunction "but"—reinforces this divide. The rhyme scheme, which groups lines one and three, further emphasizes the contrast.

By the time the reader reaches the second quatrain, then, they are well equipped to notice that the ego is not the one directing the speaker's attention. Instead, his thoughts are doing the action of directing attention towards his beloved. Fittingly—and presciently—the speaker even speaks of them "intending" this attention. Meanwhile, the speaker himself is passively "abid[ing]" "far" away from the locus of the thought's attention (line 5). Two lines later, the choice to continue using "my thoughts" as the subject after "and" strategically and counterintuitively continues the effect of this contrast. It paradoxically draws more attention to

"my thoughts" by pushing the reader to remember that phrase. If they have to refer back to line five to find the subject, all the better; they will experience the line's impact all over again. Additionally, by placing a verb directly after "and," the poem links the action in this line with the action conveyed by the verb that opens the next one. Thus, "[l]ooking" (line 8), as a verb that speaks to physically directed attention and is strategically associated with the thoughts, continues to emphasize that the ego is not the one directing attention.

By the final couplet, the fact that the ego is not the one taking charge of attention has been hammered home, but nevertheless, the couplet emphasizes this fact one more time. The lack of quiet that closes the poem (line 14) reiterates the fact that attention has been actively assigned. Two straightforward strategies ensure the reader cannot forget that the ego is not the one doing the assigning. Not only are the limbs, mind, and self listed separately, but the choice to keep "myself" out of the subject position continues. The latter strategy is further reinforced by the use of the preposition "for." That preposition manages to separate the speaker's self from their "mind" and "limbs," as the "mind" and "limbs" are acting on the self's behalf, rather than as the self, as Merleau-Ponty would argue is natural. Thus, by the end of the poem, phenomenological analysis makes clear that there is a problem with the speaker's identity; it is fractured at best.

Even if his identity were not in pieces, the way he experiences objects in the poem reveals that he does not adore his supposed beloved as truly as he thinks he does. The aforementioned word choice of "pilgrimage" (line 6) and "jewel" (line 11) suggest that he thinks he is venerating the object of his affections. Examining his diction and simile, however, shows that his experiential perception of his beloved is anything but holy or precious. For example, on the other side of the jewel simile is the beloved's "shadow" (line 10). The most plausible

interpretation the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers for this term is a "spectral form, phantom," ("shadow, n." 7). The term carries with it many other negative connotations; one, fittingly, is a delusive semblance or image; a vain and unsubstantial object of pursuit" ("shadow, n" 6a), and others have to do with the obvious meaning of obstructing light ("shadow, n." 1a; II). The use of "ghastly" in the following line ensures that the negative spectral meaning of "shadow" will be brought to mind, since the term can refer to a dead body ("spectral, n." 2a). One might argue that the negative meaning for night is the point; it by contrast makes the jewel all the more beautiful. This seems to be the speaker's intended reasoning, but given that the jewel is itself associated with a spectral form, it is tainted before the contrast is ever introduced. The speaker's self-belief that he reveres his beloved is as misguided as all his other self-perceptions.

By looking at his intentionality, attention, and object experience, then, we can recognize key inconsistencies in his self-concept. His underlying beliefs about his own importance supersede his explicit belief that his world revolves around his devotion to his beloved. Moreover, his perception of himself as a lover is undermined by the fact that he speaks as though he had no agency at all. Sonnet 27 reveals a speaker who is caught in the state of competing and contradictory beliefs about who he is and what he values.

Woo's "Eden"

This state of dissonance is exactly what the speaker in David Woo's "Eden" argues that he has left behind. In the final lines of the poem, he says that he has learned a key lesson that he "could not before[:] / to prefer real hell to any imaginary paradise" (lines 38-39). He implies that his failure to learn this lesson previously led him to spend years in discontentment because he believed that what he wanted was to live "anywhere / without palms and cactus trees" (lines 32-33). Now that he has learned that what he truly wants is reality, he feels he has achieved clarity.

The previous stanza, however, suggests that he may have misperceived this achievement. He believes that he has learned to "prefer" (line 39) what is real, but stanza twelve's description of his parents' real life suggests that he is still not seeing it in a positive light. His attention is directed towards negative aspects of that life: reliance on sprinklers (line 34), the way his parents' lives are slipping away (line 36), even the "artificial[ly]" "pumped up" appearance of the plants that should be "scrawny" in reality. If his ego is choosing to focus on negative and hypocritical details, it would seem he has not actually learned to see reality as a thing of beauty after all.

In fact, looking at how his descriptions of his parents' home reveal his areas of focus, it would seem his belief in his change is completely misplaced. When identifying his parents' home, his attention is on just two signifiers. The first is climate—sprinklers are necessary (line 34)—and the second is "scrawny desert plants" (line 35). These are the same loci of attention that define his experience of the location at the poem's outset. True, he presents the location much more expansively, using three and a half stanzas instead of one and a half lines, but the focus is the same. His way of offering his audience a sense of place is opening with "yellow-oatmeal flowers of the windmill palms" (line 1) and how they connect to the climate by "think[ing] of cool paradise" (line 3). The fauna and climate are more important even than the names of the location, both of which are presented only in passing and not until the second stanza ("Arizona" in line five, "Phoenix" in line six).

These similarities, however, start to take on a different significance when we look at what meanings for these details are ready-to-hand for the speaker. At the opening of the poem, the speaker uses the flowers on the palm trees to stand in for himself. His choice to personify them, but only in that they think thoughts that appear to be his own, underscores that he is using them

as objects he can identify with in his longing for a milder climate. Here, the landscape's most accessible use is to serve as an extension of his discontent. Moreover, the grammar places the palm trees in the subject position, further emphasizing this feeling. Then, when the speaker becomes the grammatical subject at the end of the second stanza, anaphoric use of "taller" in lines eight and nine draws attention to the progress the trees make in growing. This is immediately contrasted with the fact that the speaker "stopped growing years ago and commenced instead / [his] slow, almost imperceptible slouch" of aging (lines 12-13). The underscored disparity creates a feeling of powerlessness in the face of dissatisfaction.

This feeling is pervasive in the speaker's original perception of his parents' home. The opening lines, packed full of dissonance in both their vowels and their consonants, are hard to articulate. They force the reader to move slowly, evoking the impression they are stuck. This impression is apparent from the very beginning in the repeated long "o"s in the opening word's "yell*ow*-*oa*tmeal." Numerous other pronunciation challenges follow, including in the meter, which refuses to settle into anything predictable. This state of verbal difficulty is a form of embodied emotion: the speaker is feeling trapped, and that emotion's physical component is apparent in his (implied) physical act of speaking.

The speaker's final stanza indicates that he believes his orientation towards his parent's home, the value he places on it as a "real hell" (line 39), has changed. Though—as explained above—the literal focus is the same, if the speaker's perception of this self-belief is correct, then his description of this focus will be different. It is. Though his object experience still includes distaste, he presents this distaste differently. Instead of identifying with elements of the landscape, he uses them to contrast with human experience; the overly energetic and green outdoors are juxtaposed with his parents' naturally unfolding "lives [that are] sighing away,

exhaling slowly" (line 36). The emotions apparent in his penultimate stanza's words have also changed; they are positive, demonstrating that he has learned how to embrace the location as a "prefer[red] real hell" (line 39). The second to last stanza is full of assonance and consonance. Repeated "th" in its first line partners with short "i"s and long "e"s to create an easy pronunciation experience, one that flows quickly and smoothly. The next line's repeated "p"s do slow the reader some, but are still soft plosives and therefore do not disrupt the peaceful reading experience. These differences demonstrate that the speaker's stated self-belief aligns with the beliefs he has in practice; what he believes will improve his experience actually does.

His confidence in his understanding of his preference, then, is well-placed. However, there is still another aspect of his self-belief that remains unexamined: his assertion that he has learned this lesson from his parents. Given that the lesson is about positive quality of life, his description of his parents' lives calls this attribution into question. If he has learned about finding fulfillment in life by looking at his parents' lives, then when he sees their lives, shouldn't the ready-to-hand way of experiencing them be about how they find something good even in misery?

In contrast to this expectation, his description is rather overwhelmingly negative, even before he starts including details. He introduces the description by framing it as proof of their "old age" (line 14)—a trait that the speaker sees as something inherently negative, the end product of decades of "slouch[ing]" (line 13). The placement of "slouch" at the end of an enjambed line emphasizes the word and its negative associations, and with "old age" ending the following line, the concepts are formally as well as syntactically linked. The colon after "old age" forces a pause that allows the connection to settle in the reader's mind. It also grammatically positions the following description of his parents as elaboration or proof of old age.

The actual contents of that elaboration continue to focus on negative aspects of his parents' lives, unmitigated by any mention of their finding joy or fulfillment via their perception or acceptance of the situation. In the two lines allotted to his father, the speaker focuses on his father's physical "slouch," which is here termed a "bend" (line 15). Line fifteen uses the word "bend" twice—one at the end of the line—with an additional "bending" included for good measure. The lines about his mother similarly display his default move of associating her with her physical limitations. The first of these lines continues the trend of strategic line endings, this time with a hospital name. The choice to immediately interject her recent release from the hospital after introducing her shows that associating her with her physical frailty is automatic for the speaker.

More significant than this emphasis on physical limitations, though, is how the speaker views his mother's agency. Given that the lesson he has learned is about exercising the power to control how he responds to a situation, he cannot have learned it from parents who he sees as powerless. However, this is how he is describing his mother. She is not attributed any verbs between her introduction and the period four lines later; "released" (line 17) and "curled" (line 18) are both acting as participles and describing her. She is "curled sideways on a sofa" (line 18)—a phrase that suggests she is in the fetal position. The one movement in these lines is that of "an unwanted tear" (line 19), whose descriptor emphasizes that the speaker sees his mother as someone who is not in control of her reactions.

Seeing his parents' existence in terms of its limitations might line up with acknowledging it as a "real hell," but as this description does not include a positive angle or their power to create one, it seems implausible that he sees them as models of how to prefer that hell. Implausible, that is, until one reads stanzas five through seven in light of stanzas eight through ten. In stanza eight,

the speaker's mother turns off the television, "flick[ing] it off in triumph" (line 24) and turns to look at the speaker. Suddenly, the speaker describes her having not only power, but also a positive relationship with her situation: "Her smile of affection melts into the back of my head, / a throb that presses me forward…" (lines 26-27). Why the difference? In stanzas six and seven, the mother is absorbed in the imaginary world of her soaps, but in stanzas eight and nine, she has abandoned the imaginary and directed her attention to the real person in front of her.

The details of stanzas eight and nine show that the speaker's perception of her when she has made this change is drastically more positive. Now, she gets two verbs in two lines ("aims" and "flicks," lines 23 and 24) as well as a present participle (line 24's "turning") that also emphasizes her action. While the speaker does not exclude mention of her aging body, he leverages it to reinforce that she is taking action. Syntactically, the comment about her "arthritis-mangled hand" (line 22) is an aside, which minimizes its importance. By locating this aside between "now"—a short, forceful adverb—and "she aims"—a phrase that could easily describe the handling of a weapon—he juxtaposes her supposed weakness with words that carry implications of power. The choice to use "triumph" in the next line reinforces the connotations of power, and "flicks" conveys that she is now slowing the liveliness that was missing in her earlier listless fetal position. The speaker's description of his mother when she focuses on reality shows that he does indeed see in her life a reason to prefer reality to the imaginary.

Stanzas nine and ten confirm his perceived link between this perception of his mother and his change in perspective. Her action at the end of stanza eight, "turning to [him]" (line 24), is linked through word choice with his "turn to the trees" (line 25) at the beginning of his realization sequence. Her turn also positions her to smile at him with a smile that "melts into the

back of [his] head" (line 26); her feelings and perspective are entering into him. That smile and all it carries are then what "presses [him] forward" to his realization (line 27).

The overall structure of the poem reinforces this link. Looking at where the speaker directs his attention shows that the poem is broken into three major sections: the initial description of and identification with the plants, the description of his parents' experience, and his thoughts and realization. As explained above, a change is evident between the first and third sections. Given that people narrate their experiences to make sense of them (Branje 3), we can interpret this narration as an attempt to make sense of the change that occurred. This means that the middle section serves as a bridge between the two perspectives, and the speaker is utilizing his experience of his parents as the turning point in reaching the realization. Therefore, he can have confidence in his belief that he learned the lesson from his parents.

Woo's speaker, then, actually does live up to his grand pronouncement. Despite initial appearances of mismatches within his beliefs and between those beliefs and reality, we know from the way he experiences objects and people in his life that his self-belief is both consistent and worthy of confidence.

Baderoon's "Postscript"

The self-beliefs of Shakespeare's and Woo's speakers were rather obvious; Woo's, of course, directly stated his at the close of the poem, and the self-perception of the speaker as a lover is both ingrained in the Renaissance sonnet genre and confirmed by the speaker's address and diction. In Gabeba Baderoon's poem "Postscript," however, the speaker's beliefs about herself are less direct. She even goes to far as to wonder whether her behavior is a moral transgression ("stealing a gift," line 18), or a positive action ("completing a small, necessary ritual," line 19). With "Postscript," then, phenomenological analysis provides the opportunity to

find patterns in the speaker's behaviors and thoughts in order to identify a self-belief that underlies her experience.

Given that the behaviors are prereflexive, we do not have a goal of comparing the self-beliefs that they reveal with the speaker's espoused self-beliefs. Instead, we can focus on analyzing them using Merleau-Ponty's theories of motor intentionality as explicated by Pacherie. What the speaker is physically and unreflexively doing offers insight into what she is directed towards. The sole action that she attributes to her body rather than the first-person pronoun "I," then, is a good place to start; this behavior, as the most instinctive, offers an access point that has not been distorted by overthinking. Line seven's "My hand pauses on an envelope" therefore serves to tell us that even before the speaker has opened it, something about the envelope is significant and connected to what the speaker believes is important. She does not yet know the contents—a fact emphasized by the use of the word "envelope" in contrast to the later terms "card" (lines 11 and 21) and "letter" (line 17). Nevertheless, after moving quickly and lightly—"flick[ing]"—past many other items (lines 4-6), her hand halted on this one.

What, then, is significant about this item, and what can that tell us about the speaker's beliefs? Here, we can look at how she experiences the object—what about it is ready-to-hand for her? Despite the fact that she had just described letters based on their physical condition ("tearing and flaking," line 6), this envelope is experienced only in terms of its connection to people. First, it is described as "sealed but unsent" (line 7). In the context of an envelope old enough to be among papers from childhood, both sealing and sending an envelope would be human actions. The association is reinforced by the emphasis inherent in the placement of the phrase at the end of a line.

The next two lines continue to demonstrate that the envelope is most useful as a source of connection to others. The first of these lines is about the front of the envelope, the second is about the back, and both present just one detail about their side: names. In line eight, this detail, "the names of our neighbours," takes up most of the visual space of the line and is accentuated by the alliteration. The syntax also draws attention to the phrase. When a sentence opens with a prepositional phrase and then a noun phase, usually a verb is next. In this sentence, though, the names' noun phrase is followed by a comma, and this unusual choice is spotlighted by the comma's position at the end of the line. All of these reinforce the importance of the names and the neighbours they belong to. In the next line, the speaker's use of parallelism offers importance to "the name of my family" by association (line 9).

The speaker's emphasis on personal connection is also apparent in the last two lines of the stanza, and in a similar way. While the description of the card inside of the envelope is more detailed than that of the envelope, the people involved are still featured prominently. Two of the three lines devoted to the description are about people. Here, their functional importance to the speaker is evident in their location in prepositional phrases ("greeting to the tailor," line 12, and "writing of my father," line 13). The speaker could have excluded them—prepositional phrases are not essential to sentence structure—and the fact that they are included anyhow means they are essential to the speaker's experience of the card. The phrases also introduce a new emphasis: the desire to connect with people is featured more prominently than the people themselves. The "**greeting** to the tailor" (emphasis mine) is a way of interacting with him, and "writing" is the way of communicating in cards. The ends of the lines, "who has since died" (lines 12 and 13), also draw attention to a desire to connect, though this time by negation; they evoke an echo of

grief and the feeling that something is missing. The epistrophe and end-of-line placement show that these feelings are important to the speaker.

This same value of people and connecting with them is evident in the use of the verbs in the poem. Again, a combination of motor intentionality—in both the senses Pacherie identifies—and object experience frameworks is useful. The speaker's choice of verbs in the third stanza affirms a positive association with the experience and values she is presenting. Using the verb "find" (line 11), rather than one like "see," is an example of prereflexively enacting an intention. Because "find" needs an object, both grammatically and in practice, the speaker's use of the term demonstrates her focus on and directedness towards the direct objects "greeting" (line 12) and "writing" (line 13) despite the interjection of the long prepositional phrase. "Slide" (line 9) also demonstrates intermediary motor intentionality; the word carries associations of a positive experience long enough to enjoy, whether it be a playground activity or an informal and slightly risky way to pass something. Its long "i" reinforces these associations by creating a miniature version of such an experience. The other first-person verb in the third stanza, "tear" (line 10), is positive because of the way it is framed. Often, the term carries a negative connotation. Tears in clothing, tearing up paperwork, and torn nails are all associated with problems. However, by building "tear" into the metaphorical phrase "tear open the years," the speaker reveals that the experience is ready to hand for her in an almost magical way.

That feeling of wonder and directed interest is also present at the beginning of the poem. Magic seems to be present in the action described at the turn of the first and second stanzas. The "dust" stirred up in the room (line 2) dances "in the afternoon light" (line 3), evoking an image of ethereal beauty. The speaker uses this beauty to access a memory of community repurposing dust as a source of joy rather than drudgery: children drawing names on dusty floors (lines 3 and

4). Here is an action in which people contemporary and past, individual and relational, are all encompassed. She spent time sharing an activity with the people who were with her. They wrote their own names in dust, a substance that is symbolic of the past and the dead. The speaker's values of people and connection with them are both present, and present both implicitly and explicitly.

Most of the components of that experience are also present at the close of the poem: "In the **dusty** room **I** say **their names** out loud" (line 20, emphasis mine). Though there are two missing components—her name and the presence of other living people—her actions here echo those remembered at the poem's outset, driving home the importance of her values a final time. They also reveal a self-concept that is consistent not just at the moment, but across time; it is temporally stable. What she valued as a child, she still values today. The missing components, which might initially be seen as inconsistencies, are actually proof that her values are solid; now that she is an adult, she is able to invoke connections and value others without asserting herself directly (by writing or saying her own name) and without the necessity of their live physical presence.

The fact that this consistency coincides with a lack of clarity and confidence in self-perception offers two important reminders. First, self-concept clarity does not consist only of a set of beliefs or values that is consistent in the present and across time; a confident knowledge of oneself and one's expression of those values is also necessary. Second, the presence of components of self-concept clarity is not a panacea, and it should not be offered to students as such. Shakespeare's speaker had commitment to his self-concept, but was unable to reach his goal of rest; Woo's speaker was not immune to the reality of his years spent in discontentment; Baderoon's speaker feels pain over both her uncertainty and her lost friends and family.

Pedagogy

These limits, however, do not discount the value of offering students the resources to increase their self-concept clarity. As previously mentioned, self-concept clarity is tied to post-secondary plans, healthy relationships, mental health, and academic success (Van der Aar, et al. 341-2, 359; Merdin-Uyger, et al. 443-4). Secondary students are capable of recognizing the value of a tool that will help them work towards these goals, even if that tool is not a magical cure-all. As the above analyses have demonstrated, mental frameworks from phenomenology are useful tools for helping students develop the ability to analyze experiences to understand the extent to which components of self-concept clarity are present. They guide close reading of poetic techniques to prompt insight about the self-concept clarity of poems' speakers. By offering secondary students these tools, teachers can motivate them with a practical personal reason to close read poetry. They can also offer them a concrete plan for close reading: start at points like places where the topic of the poem changes, unexpected details or omissions, descriptions of objects, and mentions of physical movement, then use the corresponding phenomenological concept to analyze these points.

A phenomenological pedagogy of poetry supports the secondary students' academic success several ways. By giving students several starting points from which to work, complete with familiarity with common ways in which to analyze the literary devices that are used, this approach makes poetry more accessible. Facility with literary strategies commonly analyzed in a phenomenological approach, like similes, metaphors, structure, diction, and unreliable narrators, is required by both Common Core standards and the required skills for Advanced Placement Literature ("English Language Arts Standards"; College Board 19). Both the Common Core

Standards and the AP Literature exam also require students to be able to analyze complex characters (“English Language Arts Standards”; “AP Literature and Composition”).

Practice gaining insight into a speaker based upon their description of an experience is the other primary benefit of phenomenological analysis. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) emphasizes the value of “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities” (“Fundamentals of SEL”). One of their core competencies is self-awareness, defined as “understand[ing] one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior” (“What is the CASEL Framework?”). To understand one’s emotions, thoughts, and values, one must be able to identify and analyze them. Practicing this ability with an experience already set down on paper is a chance to develop thought patterns that will be useful long after students leave the English classroom.

To help students develop these thought patterns, teachers should teach phenomenology as a mindset or lens with which to approach literature. As mentioned previously, the goal is to teach patterns of thinking that will help students to engage with the poetry more deeply, not to focus on phenomenology’s ideas for their own sake. For that reason, much of the discipline’s terminology is not essential, and given that many terms, like “intention” and “experience” have different or less precise meanings in common conversation, an emphasis on terminology may be more harmful than helpful.

The foundational thought processes can be maintained without this terminology. The goal when covering the concept of intentionality should be to help students develop an awareness that whatever a character is feeling, perceiving, thinking, etc. is *about* something and not simply an internal, individual process. Recognizing that characters are undergoing contact with their world

will help students pay attention to the connections and patterns between these characters and what they are in contact with, preparing them to notice what literature has to say about the impact and experience of the world. Seeing these trends in literature will create patterns of thought that can help students achieve the CASEL self-awareness goal; by noticing patterns of external objects' impact, students can begin to develop the cognitive skills necessary to reach the CASEL goal of understanding their emotions and thoughts.

Husserl's reasoning for the existence of the ego, likewise, can be taught without trying to untangle the term from the idea of overblown self-confidence that teenagers are likely to associate with the word. Framing the idea as the question, "Where does the speaker put their attention and what does that reveal about what they think is important?" conveys the important thought process. This thought process can serve as a framework to assist in approaching any character in any piece of literature. Again, practicing and developing facility with the thought pattern with people they are reading about will lay groundwork for analyzing themselves. CASEL's self-awareness includes being able to link values to thoughts and emotions ("What is the CASEL Framework?"), an ability for which identifying one's own values is a prerequisite.

Heidegger's approach to objects can also be used to help students discover both what a speaker believes they value and what they actually value. Students can ask themselves the question, "How does the speaker describe the objects they pay attention to?" Noticing the speaker's descriptions, including consistencies or inconsistencies therein, will help students to identify the speaker's self-beliefs as well as their actual values. Learning to identify these details is, after all, essential to self-concept clarity and self-awareness, as is the confidence in self-concept that comes from knowing that self-beliefs and expressed values align.

Similar approaches and goals apply to Merleau-Ponty's ideas about embodiment. Here, the relevant CASEL goal is the second half of the self-awareness competency: understanding how one's thoughts, emotions, and values impact one's behavior ("What is the CASEL Framework?"). Students can be taught that because one's bodily actions—one's behavior—are an aspect of their intentionality and emotions, observing a person's behaviors can reveal intentionality and emotions. They will learn to understand the body both as an object that can be observed and an intrinsic component of a person's experience.

The presentation of phenomenological concepts described above will aid in making phenomenological analysis of poetry accessible to high school students, but scaffolding for the actual process is also advisable. Thus, I will briefly outline a series of steps to offer students this scaffolding. Then I will demonstrate what using those steps could look like in practice with two contrasting poems often taught to high schoolers: Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish" and John Donne's "The Sun Rising" (College Board 46, 73, 102).

Aiding students in applying phenomenological thought processes starts by guiding them to think of the poem as a description of an experience. To simultaneously accomplish this and support students' comprehension, their first step should be to summarize the experience taking place in the poem. Once they have done this, they can apply the mindset behind Husserl's evidence for a stand-alone ego by answering the question "What does the speaker focus on in describing this experience?" Next, they should look to answer "How is this attention presented?" This step will require them to identify literary devices used in identifying and describing the objects and ideas foregrounded in the poem. Below, I will explicitly identify what I demonstrated in my phenomenological analysis of poems: many literary devices lend themselves to phenomenological thought structures. By viewing the devices through the lens of

phenomenology, students will be able to reach the final step: uncovering (a) pattern(s) in the ways the devices characterize the person in question. This pattern can serve as their thesis when they write about the complexities of character they need to be able to identify—both to achieve academic standards and to develop their own internally consistent self-concept.

Pared down, then, the steps can be presented to students with the mnemonic SFDAVEP[3] thus:

1. **S**ummarize: What is being experienced?
2. **F**ocus: What does the speaker focus on in describing this experience?
3. **D**evices: What literary devices and strategies are used to present this focus?
4. What do those devices and strategies tell me about…
    a. **A**ssumptions of the speaker
    b. **V**alues of the speaker
    c. **E**motions of the speaker
5. **P**attern: What pattern do I see that I can turn into a claim about the speaker?

On the next two pages, in Figure A, I offer an example of what such a step-by-step analysis might look like in the form of a completed worksheet for Bishop's "The Fish." Example answers are bolded. In the pages that follow Figure A, I explain how students might reach these answers. The purpose of this example is to establish as a foundation how teachers and students might go about achieving literary analysis through phenomenological frameworks. With that foundation complete, I will work with Donne's "The Sun Rising" to show how that literary analysis can be a building block to help students reach self-concept clarity and the CASEL competency of self-awareness.

[3] This is not the catchiest mnemonic, but neither is the common "TPCASTT." The goal here is to offer a bite-sized prompt that can serve as a bridge to the longer guide I spell out above.

Figure A:
Example Completed Guide Sheet for "The Fish"

1. **S**ummarize: What is being experienced?

    The speaker is catching a fish, studying it, and then letting it go.

2. **F**ocus: What does the speaker focus on in describing this experience?

    They start by focusing on the fish. Then they focus on their thoughts about the fish, and then they see the beauty of the worn-out boat.

3. **D**evices: What literary devices and strategies are used to present this focus?

    Structure: three parts (see above)
    Syntax:
    - **Short sentences in lines 5, 7, & 76 (end)**
    - **Lots of interjections**
    - **Subject usually at the start of a sentence, but not always**

    Similes:
    - **Fish skin is "in strips like ancient wallpaper" and "its pattern…was like wallpaper" (10-13)**
    - **"Coarse white flesh packed in like feathers" (27-28)**
    - **"Five old pieces of fish-line" are "weapon-like" (50-51)**
    - **The fish line pieces are "like medals with their ribbons / frayed and wavering" (61-62)**
    - **"The pink swim-bladder like a big peony" (32-33)**

    Metaphors:
    - **Barnacles are "fine rosettes of lime" (16-17)**
    - **"Green [sea] weed" is rags (21)**
    - **Eyes have "tarnished tinfoil / seen through the lenses / of old scratched isinglass" (38-40)**

    Imagery is strongest in 9-40, 50-64, and 68-75.

(over)

4. What do those devices and strategies tell me about…
    a. the **A**ssumptions of the speaker?

        The speaker thinks the fish is interesting and impressive.
        The speaker thinks that age and victories are worth honoring.
        The speaker thinks that fishing is for recreation rather than sustenance.
        Beauty doesn't have to be in things that are conventionally pretty.

    b. the **V**alues of the speaker?

        Strength, longevity, and grit are all impressive.
        Pragmatics are not as important as honoring others' accomplishments.
        Taking time to think and to appreciate surroundings is worthwhile.

    c. the **E**motions of the speaker?

        They aren't repulsed by things that look gross.
        They might be overcome by emotions, but only after thinking.

5. **P**attern: What pattern do I see that I can turn into a claim about the speaker?

    They see beauty and worth in ways that are not based on appearance.

As indicated in Figure A, a reasonable summary would be that “it is about catching a fish, studying it, and then letting it go.” The speaker has several areas of focus throughout the poem; an appropriate list might include repulsive details of the fish, the fish’s eyes, the hooks in the fish’s jaw, and the appearance of the boat. Listing focus areas should push students to start noticing not just the topics of the poem, but also how those topics are grouped and arranged. Structural analysis is one of the devices required by standards and should be further explored as one of the devices and strategies in the next step.

In fact, it can serve as a perfect transition into the step of identifying literary devices and strategies. In “The Fish,” the largest change in focus is near the end, where line 64 is about the fish and line 65 begins a section that focuses on the speaker. Another section break is after line 26; the speaker begins to take on a more active role in line 27 with the phrase “I thought,” an emphasis that is continued by the “I looked” in line 34, “I admired” in line 45, and “I saw” in line 47. Since poems’ structural changes often depend on grammatical choices like which noun or pronoun is in the subject position, students may find it helpful to move next into focusing on syntax. They are likely to notice the short sentences in lines five and six and the final line, especially since their length and simplicity contrast rather markedly with the design of the rest of the sentences in the poem. These other sentences tend to be full of interruptions and explanations, elaborations, or modifications. Lines nine through twenty-one—which make use of plenty of commas, three instances of “and,” and a colon—exemplify this style well.

Those lines also offer a helpful entry point into similes and metaphors. In this poem, similes are often in the elaborations and interruptions; lines twelve and thirteen, for instance, use an elaboration to compare the fish’s skin to wallpaper in a simile, and line seventeen uses an appositive to offer a metaphor about the barnacles. While students of course cannot rely on

metaphors and similes being in or adjacent to these syntactical structures, they will be looking for language patterns as they analyze syntax, and this attentiveness will help them notice the words "like" and "as" in addition to the short "to be" clauses for local metaphors. Attention to syntax will also be useful for them in their efforts to notice extended metaphors via their repeated and related subjects.

Extended focus on a single subject or set of related subjects is, of course, not isolated to extended metaphors. Imagery is another device that is often marked by such syntax. In "The Fish," looking for imagery will help students notice that it is, very largely, a poem about images. Nearly all of it is spent on the skin or imagined insides or eyes or lower lip of the fish, and then the poem describes the boat. Noticing the extent of this device will help students recognize the speaker's interest in something typically thought dull or repulsive.

While there are plenty of other literary devices at work in this poem, students who have noted the devices listed above are ready to start drawing phenomenological conclusions. The extent of the imagery indicates the importance the speaker attributes to the fish. The positive associations in the similes and metaphors reveal that the speaker sees the fish as something good and valuable. The structural fact that the speaker's perception of the lip immediately precedes the explosive vision of beauty and her choice to let the fish go is also significant; it indicates the worth she sees in grit and repeated hard-won victories.

Reaching these conclusions sets the stage for the final step: identifying a pattern in the conclusions and literary devices. In this case, the positive descriptions of something ugly in appearance indicate that the speaker does not prioritize physical appearance in value assessments. The evident impact of the fish's previous victories suggests that she is still making value judgments and is simply basing those judgments upon other qualities.

The same steps can help students work towards a thesis about speakers in poems that are more abstract, like John Donne's "The Sun Rising." In this poem, the speaker spends the whole poem in apostrophe and gives minimal information about his surroundings. A phenomenological approach to poems like this one can give students practice analyzing thoughts, ensuring that they can build their self-concept using analysis of their verbal expression as well as their more physically interactive experiences. In the next few paragraphs, I will be working with Donne's poem to 1) demonstrate the transferability of the process and 2) demonstrate how the literary process shown above can be presented to students in more direct terms of self-concept clarity. With an eye to these goals, I will not walk through the entire process again with Donne's poem. The thought processes required for summarizing content, identifying sections, and noting literary devices are generally transferable. Refer to the next page, which is the first page of Figure B, for example content of those steps, which I will use as a foundation for the following paragraphs.

The process of moving from identification of literary devices to drawing conclusions from them is likely to be challenging for students at times, as it requires them to use critical thinking skills, especially synthesis. The guiding questions mentioned earlier in this chapter's discussion of phenomenology are ones teachers can use to offer scaffolding. For instance, in Donne's poem, several literary devices point to the speaker's high opinion of himself. Using the question "Where does the speaker put their attention and what does that reveal about what they think is important?", teachers can help students consider why the speaker would maintain an underlying current of attention to the sun through apostrophe. Speaking to the sun suggests that the speaker thinks he is on a level with a common source of power that dictates how life works. The Heideggerian question of the language used underscores the extent of this self-perception, given the diction choices noted in Figure B.

Figure B:
Example Completed Guide Sheet for "The Sun Rising"

1. **S**ummarize: What is being experienced?

   The speaker is waking up to the sunlight and thinking about wanting to stay in bed with his beloved.

2. **F**ocus: What does the speaker focus on in describing this experience?

   The speaker focuses on other people the sun could go bother, his desire to see his beloved, and the extent to which everything else in the world is included in the couple.

3. **D**evices: What literary devices and strategies are used to present this focus?

   Apostrophe to the sun
   Personification of the sun
   Hyperbole (line 13, most of last stanza)
   Metaphors:
   - **"Country ants" (8)**
   - **"hours, days, months, which are the rags of time" (10)**
   - **"She's all states, and all princes, I" (30)**
   - **"both th'Indias of spice and mine" are the beloved (end of stanza 2)**

   Parallelism:
   - **"chide / Late school boys… tell court huntsmen…call country ants…" (5-8)**
   - **"All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy" (34)**

   Diction:
   - **"Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide…" makes speaker seem more powerful than the sun (5)**
   - **"eclipse and cloud them" associates speaker with the moon (13)**

(over)

4. What do those devices and strategies tell me about…
   a. the **A**ssumptions of the speaker?

      The speaker thinks his beloved is special and different from other women.
      The speaker thinks that love is more important than and should be more powerful than anything else, including nature.
      The speaker thinks of his beloved as an object that he possesses.

   b. the **V**alues of the speaker?

      The speaker thinks really highly of himself and his beloved.
      The speaker values time alone with his beloved more than time spent doing anything else.

   c. the **E**motions of the speaker?

      The speaker is satisfied with his love.

5. **P**attern: What pattern do I see that I can turn into a claim about the speaker?

   He likes looking at his beloved but shows no sign of wanting to interact with her.

After students have noted that these devices show how highly the speaker values himself, the teacher can note analogous opportunities for students' self-analysis. Students may not be carrying on a monologue directed at the sun, but they can consider whom they tend to talk to and how they tend to talk to them. Just as they used these spotlights in the poem, they can use them to develop their awareness of what they value and how they think of themselves. Seeing the effectiveness of this strategy with the poem's speaker will inspire confidence in the results, helping them to achieve the confidence they need for self-concept clarity.

Similarly, looking at the trends in metaphors through the phenomenological question of "How does the speaker describe the objects (or, in this case, person) they pay attention to?" can help students consider the speaker's assumptions and serve as a springboard for examining their own. When students see that the metaphors about the beloved all identify her as objects, the teacher can prompt them to consider how these objects are typically used or perceived. Spices, mines, and nation-states are all things that people try to own and gain power from. Seeing this trend will help students realize that the speaker sees his beloved as an object to possess. It can also be a starting point for asking them, "How do you think about the people in your life? What words come to mind when you talk about them? When you praise them?" Experience connecting dots to reach the speaker's attitude again will help them connect dots in their own perceptions, showing them whether they truly value what they believe they do. Noticing alignment or mismatch will help them move towards consistency in how they express their values—again supporting their journey towards greater self-concept clarity.

Once students have identified assumptions, values, and emotions of the speaker, they are ready to synthesize again. When students look for the patterns within their findings, they gain experience finding connections among thoughts, emotions, and values as well as between those

and the speaker's behaviors. In "The Sun Rising," the patterns of self-importance, objectification, and current satisfaction offer an explanation for why he has not tried to wake his beloved up rather than talking at the sun. He gains more satisfaction from his beloved when she is not a person to interact with but rather an object to look upon. After teachers guide students to piece information together and reach this conclusion, they can ask students to identify behaviors in their own lives that they would like to understand. Students who have the skills needed to identify their assumptions, values, and emotions are prepared to piece those self-beliefs together and make sense of their behaviors, thus achieving a more robust understanding of who they are, and, in the process, growing in the CASEL self-awareness competency.

Conclusion

By using a phenomenologically-based pedagogy of poetry, then, teachers can support students' social-emotional learning while countering students' perception of poetry as "stupid and a waste of time" (O'Daniel 51). Students will gain the opportunity to think more deeply, grow in their self-awareness, and increase their self-concept clarity. In short, they will be equipped to enjoy a better quality of life.

In the glow of all these benefits, however, we must resist the urge to think of poetry in purely utilitarian terms. A truly phenomenological pedagogy of poetry must not only use phenomenological concepts but work in the phenomenological spirit of honoring the small moments that shape us and form us. We must make sure that analytical ways of paying homage to a moment's pragmatic significance do not extinguish poetry's push to appreciate that moment's significant beauty.

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