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# ARCHETYPAL STUDY OF GENDER DYSPHORIA IN GARVIN'S SYMPTOMS OF BEING HUMAN AND WILLIAMSON'S ART OF BEING NORMAL

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**Abstract** 

Advancements in technology and increased industrialization provided children with more independence to think and freedom to express their opinions, allowing them to navigate their determinations in a new way. This study is based on Carl Gustav Jung's theorization of archetypes, which argues that children exhibit themselves in society in various ways that reinforce their perceptions of males and females. Jung states that gender is an elusive identity that is established through the constant repetition of acts. Conventions, roles, and connections are just a few examples of socially created traits that make up gender. This study examines young adult fiction in Lisa Williamson's The Art of Being Normal (2015) and Garvin's Symptoms of Being Human (2016) to shed light on how children suffering from gender anxiety recognize their sexist orientations.

**Keywords:** dysphoria, gender, archetypes, psychoanalysis, young adult fiction

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## 1. Introduction

Young adult fiction is frequently thought of as lighter than adult fiction or as being "simplified ... overly didactics" (Proukou, 2005, p. 62). While it is realistic, both its form and content are purportedly abridged representations of actual literature and reality. LGBTQ characters who are content and outspoken about their identities are seen as not being consistent with our standard reality narrative. This concept echoes the trend in young adult fiction up to 1955, in which the message is clear: LGBT characters are most valuable if they are dead or gone. LGBT characters are frequently killed off during a plot (Banks, 35). Banks claims that this is something we witness less regularly today; its traces may still be seen in the belief that happy endings are unrealistic and in the still prevalent 'bury your queer' cliche. Giving the genderqueer persona a happy ending and portraying it as a triumph is unorthodox given the current pattern of expectations and the narrative of reality. Because of this, the true storyline of the novels first portrays a binary society as a whole that is bound to dominate contemporary America. However, it reassembles an alternate reality narration in which plurality of genders occupies the central stage. By including not just an individual but also a plot that considers the societal context in which they find themselves enmeshed and confront it until they reach adulthood, Garvin's work, an authentic young adult novel, emphasizes the idea of rebuilding a fresh (social) world.

Lisa Williamson's The Art of Being Normal (2015) and Garvin's Symptoms of Being Human (2016) are realistic young adult novels that examine the role of genderqueer adolescents in modern society. Their protagonists do not need to consult a dictionary to understand themselves because they live in the Internet age. The Internet is a place where anyone can post anything, unlike a dictionary where the concept of authority is presented more formally. While the dictionary provides a more formal definition of authority, the Internet is a place where anybody can post anything. Symptoms of Being Human (2016) by Garvin has attracted global readership. This fiction includes the story of Riley Cavanaugh, who suffers from both mental and physical assaults. Garvin scrutinizes how people treat genderqueers by making their lives a living hell. Riley's conversation with the therapist discloses her past: the reason she left her old school, the abrupt exposition of gender fluidity in front of her parents, her furious departure from home, and the sexual violence in the abandoned building. Garvin challenges the so-called gender bigotry that she encounters throughout the novel. Lisa Williamson's The Art of Being Normal (2015)

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relates the tale of a young man named David Piper, whose schoolmates abuse him and refer to him as "Freak Show." He genuinely desires and aspires to be a woman. Williamson explains that he is a girl trapped in a male physique who ultimately desires to alter his genetic makeup. Furthermore, he illustrates how families react when their child's gender identity is problematic. David wants to reveal to his family his deepest secret, that is, his burning desire, but his fear of rejection prevents him from doing so.

## 2. Literature Review

According to Cordell (2012), influence compels people to become familiar with their social roles; however, this influence does not always reside in one place where a male rules a female. He argued that the emphasis on sexuality as a function has recently been extended to include the cultural and social variables that influence how men behave in terms of gender. One may conduct gender research on the machismo of men in positions of authority to investigate how they pleasure themselves in acting in ways that conform to gender codes. Therefore, theorists tend to focus more on male-gendered behavior in oppressed groups, the negative impacts of masculine performance in dominant groups, or how male gender roles can harm men and women. Connell (2005) expresses that the rise of the feminist movement further proves that there is a problem with how men perform in terms of gender. Women have claimed to be the primary victims of gender inequality, suffering disadvantages relative to men; therefore, they have placed this on the political agenda. They served as important gatekeepers for equality in other respects, such as in economic resources, political influence, and cultural authority. A crucial strategic concern is whether governments can implement significant reforms. Male masculinity, or the "hegemony of masculinity," is a domain of power that males unconsciously construct to establish norms and standards for gender roles.

In 1989, MacKinnon, a feminist theorist, asserted that men should establish standards for every aspect of culture. Masculinity, the discriminatory benchmark for men, enforces patriarchal regulations and restricts women to private, domestic, moral, esteemed, and capricious realms. Meanwhile, men claim the principles of the public, moral, factual, and objective spheres for themselves. Gardiner (2005) argues that culture positively rewards every trait that separates men from women. Men are defined by their masculinity, not the other way around, she noted. This masculine authority and control must be maintained by men at all times, and in this

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narrative, the position of subordinate men—including gay men—is left unclear. As a result, men may act violently toward ethnic minorities \$2, breaking the rules of masculinity. Crawford (2004) argued that this is likely to occur because people tend to downplay differences within groups while highlighting differences between them. The magnitude of ethnic minority \$2 is inversely correlated with the exaggeration of within-group features. Minority subgroup characteristics are seen as stereotypical of their social categorization when certain members are present. When a guy is contrasted to a person who is seen as having the least strength, in this case, a woman, he is viewed as being less manly and is thus assumed to be gay, placing pressure on men to live up to the concept of maleness. According to Cordell (2012), media representations of masculinity continually assert that what is appropriate, which typically involves being a violent, hypersexual thug who never submits but always rules. Indirectly, the superiority of the male standard created a significant hegemony. This has the power to affect society, leading people to unintentionally engage with it over time, thereby shaping the culture.

Messerschmidt, (2005) argued that early education studies have used the idea of hegemonic masculinity to analyze the complexities of classroom interactions, such as boy bullying and resistance patterns. Although only a small percentage of men may exhibit it, hegemonic masculinity is considered normative, even though it is not statistically typical. The above description represents the current idealized male identity, which requires all other men to orient themselves around it and serves as an ideological basis for the global oppression of women by men. Men who have benefited from patriarchy without displaying robust forms of masculine authority may be seen as exhibiting complicit masculinity. These ideas were defined using the rationale of a sexist gender hierarchy and were theoretical rather than descriptive. They believed that because gender relations are historical, gender hierarchies are flexible. Hegemonic masculinity thus emerged under certain conditions and was susceptible to historical change. More specifically, a battle for hegemony may be imminent, and newer types of masculinity may replace more traditional ones. This provided a hint of optimism in the overall pessimistic theory. According to Messerschmidt (2005), as part of the process leading to the removal of gender hierarchies, it is possible that a more humane and less repressive way of being a man may emerge.

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Erikson's (2019) arguments are vast in that he asserts that adolescence is slightly frigid for confidential young people. Erikson contends that the absence of status or a sense of separateness may lead adolescents to search for their own identity to value philosophy and individuality and motivate them to pursue self-awareness in a manner that those with greater opportunity cannot. According to Broughton (1978), less privileged adolescents begin to search for settings where they can exhibit their true personalities. He expresses that the exterior self is merely a part to be performed, an act put on for other individuals, but what lies within is considered genuine. As stated by Appleyard (1991), some aspects of the typical struggles of adolescence, such as increased sexual orientation, extravagant and naive optimism, a sense of self-moodiness, insurrection, etc., all represent signs of coming to terms with the notion that each person has distinctive personal self-worth and encounters. Although Erikson's concept resonates with teenagers' overall attitude toward adolescence, it also translates to the adolescent reader's experience of seeking out books that could moderate manifestations regarding one's identity that a teenager in a period of extreme stress and storms can identify quite neatly. Appleyard suggests that common challenges during adolescence, such as heightened sexuality, idealistic and naive romanticism, self-conscious irritability, and rebellion, prompt individuals to explore their unique identities and personal experiences. Erikson's treatment of the troubled teen is comparable to the novel, which follows a genderqueer adolescent as they navigate the difficulties of contemporary adolescence.

# 3. Research Methodology

Analytical psychology was developed by Swiss physician and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. His scholarship has influenced various fields, including psych-anthropological research, archaeological research, literary works, philosophical thought, and religious disciplines. Prominent psychological terms developed by Jung include synchronicity, the collective unconscious, the psychological complex, extraversion, and introversion. His key contribution to psychology is the concept of the collective unconscious. Daniels (2004) refers to it as the unconscious, manifesting innate, universal motifs in all facets of human existence. The recurrence of specific images, stories, and characters, often known as archetypes, provides evidence of the collective unconscious.

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For example, a baby initially cries when hungry but doesn't know what he wants. He has an endless thirst for anything valuable. According to Boeree (2009), the child then begins to desire specific items when hungry, such as a bottle or a cookie, based on his experiences.

Jung's archetype consists of four main ideas. The first is the persona, representing how people present themselves to the external world, which can occasionally leave a positive impact. The second is the shadow, which refers to aspects of personality that we do not intentionally show to others. It represents darkness and suppression, embodying traits we attempt to conceal from ourselves and others. The third entity is the self, the ultimate goal of existence, symbolizing the integration of all polarities to articulate all facets of one's nature. The final components are the anima and animus: the masculine animus in women and the feminine anima in men.

Archetypes are ancient depictions of fundamental motifs and trends in the human psyche that are shared by all. Jung (1969) referred to archetypes as dominant, imago, mythological, or primal images. An archetype is an innate tendency to perceive the world in a particular way. In Freud's theory, it functions similarly to emotions. Philo of Alexandria relates archetypes to 'God's image in man.' Jung (1969) describes archetypes as elements of the collective unconscious that deal with archaic or primordial forms with timeless images. The Jungian archetype is an abstract model that is unrepresentable, similar to the biological "pattern of behavior" (pp. 4-5). The concept of an archetype suggests the presence of specific psychological formations that seem to exist at any time and place.

Initially, Jung aligned himself with Freud's ideas, but he eventually developed his own perspective. To begin with, Jung differed from Freud regarding the importance of libido. According to Jung, the desire for sex is akin to various needs such as the need for food, spirituality, and religion. Jung rejects Freud's deterministic worldview. He believes that people's views on the future and their understanding of the past influence their behavior. His purposive-mechanistic theory expresses that both past events and anticipated future scenarios can shape human behavior. Jung views life as a process of innovative evolution, whereas Freud sees it as an endeavor to subdue an insatiable urge. Jung suggests a phylogenic and racial account of personality traits, including archaic, primitive, innate, unconscious, and universal.

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# 4.Text Analysis

Most people consider masculinity and femininity as traits that naturally belong to each gender. In reality, people modify their behaviors based on their identity or self-image, how they present themselves to others, their beliefs about societal expectations, and the broader societal context and gender ideology (Crawford, 2004). Patterns or cues learned in childhood are perceived as natural. Children observe adults acting in gender-appropriate ways and, to fit within that society, feel compelled to adopt these behaviors as the ideal and most suitable for themselves and others. This study of gender examines human behavior, which permeates many fields of knowledge.

By adopting and enacting a 'gender role,' a person can create a 'gender identity' that represents who they are (Cordell, 2012). The term primarily refers to how people define and view themselves in terms of gender. Differentiating particular features through contemporary models of gender differences involves several intrinsic power interactions, a key component of critical judgment (Runge, 1997). Cordell and Pennington (2012) argue that gender knowledge is crucial when studying oppression. They explore how sexual orientation is situated between constructionism—the idea that gender is neither fundamentalist nor based on biological nature—and essentialism—the belief that women are inherently and fundamentally different from men based on their biological sexuality. Additionally, they discuss how non-heterosexual personal identities are viewed as deviant from the biological sexual orientation distinction between males and females (Cordell & Pennington, 2012).

This interpretive phenomenological study characterizes and comprehend the experience of gender dysphoria in non-binary individuals. Gender dysphoria is a problem that is frequently restricted to transgender individuals who identify as either male or female in the gender binary. Consequently, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding gender dysphoria in non-binary people. Moreover, recent studies on minority stress suggest that gender dysphoria itself might be a type of proximal stress (Galupo et al., 2020). If this claim is true, experiencing more distal stressors—such as misgendering, hate crimes, and government stigmatization—would influence how gender dysphoria is experienced. Furthermore, the prevalence of mental health problems among transgender and non-binary individuals underscores the need for appropriate and non-stigmatizing treatment and conceptualization (Price-Feeney, Green & Dorison, 2020). Mental health practitioners are now only partially equipped to address gender dysphoria in non-binary

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people; how can we create a treatment plan if we do not fully comprehend the experience? It is becoming increasingly clear that this research is not only significant but also essential given the rise in mental health problems among the non-binary population and the ignorance of mental health practitioners regarding their circumstances. Although they are in different circumstances, David and Leo struggle with their sense of gender. Both children were raised in distinct family environments. David resides with his peaceful family, which consists of two parents and a younger sister, whereas Leo resides with his diligent mother, who works, and two sisters. David is not under any particular pressure to initially identify as a girl.

Symptoms of Being Human (2016) won considerable prizes and became a part of many libraries, and people took tremendous curiosity in this matter, which is moderately familiar in many regions of the world. One can contemplate Garvin's magnum opus as a wonderful work for further genderqueer studies by depicting the life of Riley Cavanaugh, and it is much harder to discuss such topics openly, which can be termed taboo in many parts of the world. Many people have criticized this narrative because of its religious values and societal norms. Garvin uses simple language to address a serious and common issue. He uses the name of his character "Riley" which can be used for both male and female genders. Second, Garvin uses pronouns to hide their true identity of Riley by using "them" and "their". Frequent use of metaphors and similes in the novel overcomes the issues and seriousness of the events, especially Doctor Anne's treatment sessions with Riley, such as "it's not a switch it's a dial" (Garvin, 2016, p. 28) "you're the bottle" (Garvin, 2016, p. 237), or similes like it's like "I have a compass in my chest" (Garvin, 2016, p. 29) or "like I'm in a costume" (Garvin, 2016. p. 30). These techniques are all Garvin's techniques to allow the reader to comprehend future events in the story rather than confusing them with what will happen and what is happening. We can also experience short sentences with longer descriptions inside. Many questions about gender identity are answered in this tale. The two genders that society tells us to characterize are girls and boys. From the very beginning, the concept of gender distinction is ingrained in our minds. However, in the novel, we encounter challenges and learn about a new term, "gender fluid," which helps Riley understand and cope with anxiety. Phrases like "You" and "coping" are crucial as Riley navigates these experiences, stands up for themselves, and interacts with friends. The process includes writing an essay about these issues and dealing with conflict, such as yelling at their parents. "And that's typical? For an adolescent in your circumstances? In my opinion, yes" (Garvin, 2016, p. 110).

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Several emotions are built into the novel, and different levels of catharsis are shaped by the linear plots of the story, the very first point is where Riley starts writing an anonymous blog, which awakens the audience to discuss many ambiguous remarks about what would happen next. The reader's curiosity is piqued as they immerse themselves in the story, particularly when Riley is confronted and threatened by an unidentified individual, prompting Riley to leave the school in distress (Garvin, 2016). Increased sensitivity builds anticipation for future developments. Subsequently, the sudden revelation of gender fluidity in Riley's parents, followed by Riley's angry departure from home, sets the stage for the theme of sexual violence in an abandoned building. The shocking truth about Riley's hacked laptop, revealed by Bec, has a powerful impact, especially considering that it was hacked by Bec's brother during Riley's first visit. Finally, Riley's open-ended speech at the conference left readers contemplating and developing their perspectives (Garvin, 2016).

In the novel Symptoms of Being Human (2016), Riley experiences gender anxiety because she fears, the open expression of her true identity and the acceptance of the world. This anxiety leads to depression as Riley wrestles with the desire to reveal his true self to his parents and those around him. Riley's inner anxiety is expressed throughout the book with phrases like, "I want to let it go" and "I need to let go of it." Riley says, "I am prepared to come out, and I need my parents to be aware of who I am" (Garvin, 2016, p. 244), which ignites their passion for embracing their true self. According to Appleyard's concept, young readers typically fit into the classification of thinkers because they are drawn to narratives that deal with deeper depictions of morality, sexuality, mortality, wickedness, and discrimination. However, the young adventurous reader prefers tales that clearly distinguish between good and evil and between a protagonist and an antagonist. This view is partially understandable in light of everything that is currently known about adolescence as a whole, which is viewed as a period of turmoil and upheaval that includes startling physiological opportunities, the onset of sexuality and wants, self-awareness of passion and operation, revolt, and chaos. Adolescent readers naturally demand a corresponding tumult representation of reality and narratives in the books they select to consume.

Riley describes himself as gender-fluid although neither identity nor gender queerness as a whole is provided with a generic description. The only aspect directly limited to Riley's experiences is what we read about how he sees himself. Riley does not limit or have no impact on other

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people's conceptions of themselves, genderfluidity, or queerness. By doing this, the story avoids adopting a totalizing new restricted category of identity while still eschewing the oppressive boundaries of binary. Riley's use of the Internet as a medium does embody this idea; their blog is both a social and personal space that allows them to broadcast their narrative. It is a place where people can read their own accounts without altering or censoring them; instead, they can comment and share their experiences. The statement "describes how it is for me" also suggests an effort to incorporate something complex into words rather than a definition or straightforward depiction of identity. It enables greater openness, not only to the outside world but also to oneself. Riley's description of them does not define them; rather, a description is subject to change as one's interior identity is understood. Gender is often seen as a fixed identity that can be specified and defined. However, a person's understanding of what is considered "feminine" can shift and evolve. The portrayal of gender is characterized by plurality, where one becomes rather than simply is, and possesses "a consistency all of its own"; it does not reduce to or lead back to "appearing," "being," "equaling," or "creating" (Deleuze, qtd. in Linstead and Pullen, 1289). It is not necessary to limit this becoming and the multiplicity it includes to a static object because it is a complicated system. Instead, the process of becoming itself occupies the center, and it is around this that we create gender identities, in which terms and categories designating masculine and feminine can accommodate a variety of interactions and combinations while still moving and developing continuously. Riley is not 'Middlesex' or inserted into any other kind of solid, set identity; rather, the fluidity of their identity demonstrates that we are not required to position ourselves toward gender in a categorical manner and that we are still able to experience, express, and identify with genders when they are not defined by restrictions.

Lisa Williamson (2015) chooses not to immediately address David's emotional transformation, but she believes that he is stuck in an unsuitable body. As this is a psychological issue, the investigator should disregard it and assume that the sensation is simply irritability (self-inflicted psychological violence). David has always thought differently. For this reason, he feels compelled in some way to advise his parents not to interfere with his future endeavors. "Coming out" is a queer word for the stage of revealing a new identity, and David intends to accomplish so during his summer vacation (Williamson, 2015). David fears that his parents would be dismayed if this secret were discovered and that he would also be disregarded. Meanwhile, David's parents are understanding. They must have been aware of their son's struggles with grief to understand

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how he felt overwhelmed by psychological strain. This is supported by testimony from David's mother, who allows him to talk to her about anything. Being queer and different from others makes one a minority, leading to insecurity in both social and personal life (Williamson, 2015). Because they do not think and feel like others, they must work to find solutions to their difficulties based on their own interpretations.

In Lisa Williamson's The Art of Being Normal (2015), David Piper's character is evident in his actions, emotions, and way of thinking. David's biological parents believe he is homosexual.David Piper's persona was examined from the perspective of Jung's archetypal theory by the investigator. The anima, persona, and shadow archetype models were used to analyze his demeanor. Considering David Piper's personality traits of being touchy, irritable, moody, jealous, conceited, and out of sorts, the facts in this analysis are examined. This information is also derived from feminine characteristics that point to the anima described in Fordham's works. David Piper's ego is so delicate that he exhibits hypersensitive behavior under certain circumstances.Leo begins teaching David Mathematics (Williamson, 2015). In this instance, Leo patiently teaches David even though he is insane; sadly, David leaves Leo, showing his insanity. Leo has done nothing wrong, yet David is still furious with him. David loses concentration and cannot pay attention as Leo lectures because he becomes irate. He is angry just because Leo and Alicia are interacting while watching fireworks in Eden Park. It worsens as he is already feeling depressed due to Livy's menstruation before this event. In this situation, his mood deteriorates further, intensifying his anger (Williamson, 2015). This state reveals David's anima and leaves him feeling restless.

The human race frequently resorts to violence because of power imbalances and aggressive behaviors. It is prevalent in institutions such as schools and community systems. Bullying is a real-life phenomenon where violence occurs in schools. Any individual, even a teacher, can be an offender. Wiyani (2012) reaffirms the claims made by some that bullying and/or school violence are common occurrences or phases of human development. However, the truth is that bullying is a "learned behavior" because people are not born to hurt other people. People unintentionally give it legitimacy. As a result, some may view this type of violence as part of their culture. The only way to avoid aggression is to maintain authenticity in society by acknowledging its presence. David hopes that while traveling with Leo, they will achieve the

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same goal. He is constantly seen as a strange male because whenever an opportunity arises, he is eager to be authentic and accepted as a girl among strangers (Williamson, 2015). In addition to alterations to obligatory educational guidelines and other modifications to Western cultural customs.

# **5.** Conclusion

This study revealed that dysphoria is experienced by some people, primarily non-binary ones, who do not fit within the binary gender category. The aforementioned pieces demonstrate that individuals in primaries identify as transgender and experience gender dysphoria regarding their bodies. Furthermore, these findings allow for additional investigation into the potential variations in the presentation of gender dysphoria in non-binary individuals. David Piper's narrative offers insight into the internal struggles of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms. Through David's poignant journey of self-discovery and expression, we witness the conflict between societal expectations and personal identity. His yearning to embrace femininity in a world that rejects it underscores the profound impact of societal constructs on individual wellbeing. David's experiences shed light on the intricate interplay between gender dysphoria and psychological dynamics, such as Carl Jung's concept of the anima. David's suppression of his feminine traits and subsequent internal turmoil illustrates the psychological toll of denying one's authentic self, echoing the broader theme of identity reconciliation present in narratives of gender dysphoria. In the synthesis of these narratives, gender dysphoria becomes evident as it transcends simplistic categorizations, encompassing a spectrum of experiences that defy binary classifications. The stories of Riley, David, and countless others challenge societal norms and advocate for greater empathy, understanding, and acceptance of diverse gender identities. This nuanced understanding of gender dysphoria not only deepens our appreciation of individual journeys but also underscores the importance of fostering inclusive environments that honor the complexity of gender identity. Moving forward, further research into the experiences of nonbinary individuals' promises is required to enrich our understanding and inform more comprehensive approaches to LGBTQ+ support and advocacy. The narratives explored offer profound insights into the lived experiences of individuals navigating gender dysphoria, highlighting the resilience, courage, and humanity inherent in the quest for self-authenticity and acceptance.

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Enhancement	0
Fragment	0
Idioms	0
Number Style	0
Plain Language	0
Prepositions	9
Pronouns& Determiners	0
Punctuation	13
Redundancy & Conciseness	0
Run-on Sentence	0
Sensitive Language	0
Singular-Plural nouns	0
Spelling & Typos	0
Style	0
Subject-Verb Agreement	1
Symbols/Notations	0
Syntax	5
Tense	0
Verbs	0
Word Form	1
Word Order	0

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Word/Phrase Choice	10
Writing Advisor	0
Other	88
Style Guide - APA (7th ed)	0
Total	142