

Keywords in Composition Studies

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Introduction

I don't know a subject in which study of the resourcefulness of its key terms doesn't amount to the subject, properly studied, itself.

—I. A. Richards, *Speculative Instruments*

This book represents the first systematic inquiry into composition studies' critical terms. In brief yet heavily researched essays, its contributors explore the development of and interconnections among more than fifty of the most consequential words in the field. In this sense, *Keywords in Composition Studies* is an introduction to the principal ideas and ideals of compositionists—a useful resource, a supplement to the field's books, essay collections, and journals.

Yet this book is not a dictionary or an encyclopedia; it does not attempt to capture the established knowledge of a unified discipline through its vocabulary, but explores the multiple layers of meaning inhabiting the words writing teachers and theorists have and continue to depend upon most. Each essay begins with the presumption that its central term is important precisely *because* its meaning is open, overdetermined. In this sense, *Keywords in Composition Studies* is something of an anti-resource; not a trustworthy expedient to conventional study, but a practical model for reading disciplinary discourse by attending to its dominant trope, definition.

* * *

In the Phaedrus, Socrates elevates to the divine the matter of definition—what he calls "perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars": "[I]f I think any other man is able to see things that can naturally be collected into one[,] . . . him I follow after and walk in his footsteps as if he were a god" (135). According to Plato, the virtues of "clearness and consistency" are achieved by any discourse that begins with definition, the dialectician's first order of business.

At least since Nietzsche, however, what we call the "Modern Rhetorical Tradition" has been marked by a series of reminders that "clearness and consistency" are secured not by a sacred illumination, but through a process of forgetting, neglecting, denying. "[A] word becomes a concept," Nietzsche suggests,

insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases[.] . . . cases which are never equal and [are] thus altogether unequal. . . . Just as it is certain that one leaf is never totally the same as another, so it is certain that the concept "leaf" is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects. (891)

Chaim Perelman suggests, moreover, that definitions are "mostly abbreviations," tropes that "aim, not at clarifying the meaning of an idea, but at stressing aspects that will produce [a] persuasive effect" (1090). And Derrida's deconstruction of the "metaphysics of presence," among other things, makes a casualty of definition. We might achieve confidence in "clarity and consistency" by blinding ourselves, by deferring the chain of differences or traces marked by every term. "[E]ach word," Julia Kristeva claims, "is an intersection of words where at least one other word can be read" (66). Or as Mikhail Bakhtin puts it, each "word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. . . [and by] the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (279-280).

By the time I. A. Richards wrote *How to Read a Page* in 1942, more than twenty years of studying interpretation had brought him to the conclusion that "the more important a word is, and the more central and necessary its meanings are in our pictures of ourselves and the world, the more ambiguous and possibly deceiving the word will be" (23). Richards proposed that our most important words are always characterized by a "systematic ambiguity," the capability to "say very different, sometimes even contradictory, things to different readers" (22). Such words, Richards declared, "are the servants of too many interests to keep to single, clearly defined jobs" (23). To de-fine, then, is to con-fine, to prevent a word from reverberating.

In the academy, according to Foucault, disciplines act to restrict and constrain the context for meaning: "[t]he discipline is a principle of control over the production of discourse" (1161). Knowledge is produced within a discipline through determinate relationships among "a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions" (1160). The reverberation of meaning is not halted by these principles, but adherents are "disciplined" not to attend to it. A primary receiver for rhetorical theory, composition studies maintains some of the "hard structures" of disciplinarity—editors, reviewers, and conference planners certainly function as principles of constraint—though it hardly requires the "complex and heavy requirements" for propositions that Foucault describes (1160). With relatively few disciplinary limitations in place to hinder its reach, a continuous acquisition of methods, theories, and agendas over the past

twenty years has made composition studies the university's most dynamic, prolific, and fragmented post-disciplinary project.

While there is consensus about little else, there is a good deal of recognition that compositionists are identified by a "voraciously eclectic" borrowing (Schilb 1992, 34). Composition studies may not be a discipline in Foucault's sense of that term, but it is something of a "magnetic field," an institutional site delimited by its pull on and alteration of what originates elsewhere. Following Edward Said, John Schilb has used the phrase "traveling theory" to describe this process of acquisition and alteration. Yet as Schilb implies, theories are nothing if not rhetorical; theories don't "travel" so much as they are articulated and interpreted differently by folks standing in different contexts with different needs and desires. And as Schilb makes clear, theories cannot be independent from the words that constitute them. The composition and recomposition of "imported" theory is in large measure what goes on "in" composition studies as the field endlessly redefines itself, a process Patricia Harkin and Schilb have called *contending with words*.

It may well be that the field's most important accomplishment has been to determine that no single orientation, no single epistemology or methodology, is capable of answering all the questions that must be asked about writing and how it might be taught. Yet while many have valorized the post-disciplinary nature of composition studies, one recognizable result of fewer constraints has been a decreasing confidence in our ability to understand each other. A sampling of those who frequently publish in composition studies' professional journals revealed that 33 respondents claimed use of 48 different research methodologies and thirteen discrete pedagogical approaches (Fontaine). Our vocabulary lacks (a) discipline.

As the essays throughout this book demonstrate, our professional debates often turn on the use of specialized terms in conversations about writing that were developed in other contexts for other purposes. Yet what is perhaps more problematic is the vocabulary that we *do* have in common, a vocabulary largely made up of "imported" claims that have lost their accents yet are heavily infused with divergent significations. The terms we *do* share mark the contested intersections, the points of conflict among competing epistemological and methodological orientations "within" composition studies. These words are being hotly debated; they are claimed in differing ways and are thus charged with a variety of subtle (yet powerful), idiosyncratic, and often contradictory meanings. The struggle to establish control over which issues we will address and the manner(s) in which we will carry out our research is embodied in the rich, dense, unsettled meanings of the most important terms in the field.

Like Janice Lauer, who advocates "multimodality, a dialogic interaction among modes of inquiry" (421), we are hardly interested in constraining composition studies or its heavily contested vocabularies. What has been called the "shopping cart approach to scholarship," the practice of picking

and choosing ingredients from every aisle of the academic supermarket, has resulted in a very rich and rewarding lexical stew. Like Richards, who considered his rhetorical cup half full, we too prefer to see the contested and unsettled nature of composition's terminology positively: "'ambiguity' is a sinister-looking word and it is better to say 'resourcefulness'" (22).

In compiling his list of 103 overdetermined words, Richards decided that the most "resourceful" terms are those that "cover the ideas we can least avoid using" and those "we are forced to use in explaining other words" (22-23). While we reject the implication that ideas can be comfortably separated from the words that constitute them, the terms in this book certainly do become foregrounded when composition scholars debate what is most important to the field. And quite frequently these terms are used to define each other, sometimes masking and sometimes accentuating their shifting dispositions.

It is in this second sense that Richards anticipates Raymond Williams's widely influential *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Society and Culture*. In the introduction to that book, Williams writes that each term he includes "forced itself on my attention because the problems of its meanings seemed to me inextricably bound up with the problems it was being used to discuss" (15). Williams came to the realization that in order to analyze the issues and problems of culture and society he would have to analyze the problems and issues *inside the vocabulary*:

new ways of seeing existing relationships appear in language in a variety of ways: in the invention of new terms[,] . . . in the adaptation and alteration (indeed at times reversal) of older terms[,] . . . in extension . . . or transfer. . . [S]uch changes are not always simple or final. Earlier and later senses coexist, or become actual alternatives in which problems of contemporary belief and affiliation are contested. (22)

Unlike Richards's terms, all of which could be found in a single Sunday newspaper, or Williams's, which he proposes can be explained for a "general availability," the terms herein—and our approach to them—are consistently more specialized. While words like *reading*, *revision*, *authority*, and *error* all appear in general usage, the instability of their meanings in the professional discourse about writing instruction is far greater than in general discussion. And although the published research of composition scholars is decidedly eclectic in its borrowing, we have narrowed the scope of our inquiry to journals, books, monographs, dissertations, and conference papers that make rhetoric, composition, and writing pedagogy their foci.

While our goal is not to provide fixed, unitary meanings, but rather to elucidate the layers of contesting voices that co-inhabit the field's central terms, we and our contributors share the concern that our means and our ends in this endeavor may be inherently, irrevocably contradictory. The non-agonistic rhetorical stance we have tried to maintain in our efforts to "accurately" and "fairly" compose these essays can be seen as a self-deluding fiction. In the very process of rendering the fluid, actively contested meanings of these terms we risk reifying

them. We hazard valorizing the meanings we include and devaluing those we did not discover (yet which exist "out there" nonetheless).

Moreover, we find ourselves bound up in composition studies' post-disciplinary dilemma: While we intend to represent the discourse of composition studies as ragged and unfinished, the book as a whole risks mapping the field as a flat and domesticated landscape. In declaring "composition studies" our domain of inquiry and the locus of our readership, we inevitably reinforce disciplinary boundaries in the process of showing how they are perforated. By attending to "important" books and articles, we contribute to their possible canonization, while those we do not cite may be further marginalized. In short, by exploring the tangles of our disciplinary discourse, we untangle them to some degree; by attempting to demonstrate the impossibility of containing the meanings of our keywords, we may contain them.

In this book we have nonetheless attempted to model—to embody and enact—a way of reading our professional discourse. Each essay is a contextualized exploration, an inquiry into ways its keyword has been deployed in the institutional arrangement of composition studies. The contributors to this volume have not presumed to define these terms to deaden debate, much less to diminish their complexity. Each essay attempts to demonstrate the shifting and conflicted relationship between meaning and cultural/disciplinary values, to trace the assimilation and omission of different strands of meaning in the historical evolution of a term (however discontinuous and jarring that evolution may be) through an examination of the texts that constitute our field.

The roster of keywords included here is, of course, highly selective, but not capriciously so. As we did, readers will think of countless other terms that might have been included given more space. Yet each essay considers a term that is both in common use in composition studies—a part of the field's general parlance—yet highly contested—a focal point or nexus of several significant debates. We have attempted here to select terms which are both "fundamental" to the field's vocabulary (like *essay*, *invention*, and *students*) and of current interest (like *academic discourse*, *epistemology*, and *intertextuality*).

Take, as an extended example, the word *theory*, a keyword of the first order. Sometimes writers overtly trace alternatives as they stipulate a definition. John Warnock, for instance, notes that

the word theory . . . may carry a pejorative sense—"mere theory"—or a restricted sense, something like "empirically verified predictive explanation of the behavior of phenomena" . . . The word theory comes from the Greek *theia*, meaning "a viewing" . . . Etymologically, then, the word implies a frame, a text, and a context, a completed act of relating parts to parts and parts to wholes. . . . By theory, I mean something like "structure of meaningful relationships" or "that abstract conception of the whole by which the relation of part to part and part to whole may be well understood." (17)

In like manner, noting that he had previously “used the terms theory and philosophy . . . interchangeably to refer to any general propositions about writing and its teaching,” Richard Fulkerson stipulates that

a full “theory” of composition would include . . . a commitment about what constitutes good writing . . . a conception of how writers go about creating texts . . . some perspective about classroom procedures and curricular designs . . . [and] an epistemology. (410–411, emphasis ours).

As Fulkerson demonstrates, the instability of a keyword is often established by declaring it an umbrella term for a number of related concepts. In such cases, definition is yoked to division, the process of “dividing things by classes, . . . not trying to break any part after the manner of a bad carver” (Plato 135). Joseph Harris, for example, considers theory as “constative statement” (theory as knowledge) and “performative act” (theory as persuasion). “We can ask,” Harris suggests, “not only what a theory has to say about the nature of composing or interpreting but also what changes it would have us make in our work as teachers and intellectuals” (142–143). Lester Faigley separates “postmodern theory” from “critical theory” and proposes that the division can be mediated by “nonessentialist feminism, which draws from both bodies of theory” (213). John Clifford and Schilb however, while declaring themselves less than “secure” with *critical theory*, suggest that the term encompasses “postmodernism” and imply a distinction between it and “writing theory” (1).

Sometimes a keyword’s contested meanings are explicitly critiqued. Schilb (1991), for instance, writes that theory “bears contradictory meanings and thus proves unstable” (91). “In one sense of the word,” he says, “‘theory’ provides us with firm, objective, universal, bedrock principles for our ‘practice.’ In another sense, though, ‘theory’ relentlessly unsettles our claims to absolute knowledge.” Likewise, he says, while scholars “invoke ‘theory’ as they seek to provide [our] discipline with a stronger, clearer intellectual framework . . . [which] will enable us to coalesce as a field,” they do so by citing “theory” which “challenges the notion of disciplinary borders . . . [and] expose[s] the arbitrariness of topological divisions in the first place” (92). Sometimes keywords are consciously compared and contrasted with other terms in an attempt to understand their meanings. Charles I. Schuster, for instance, notes that “[t]he opposite of ‘theory’ is not ‘practice’ but ‘thoughtlessness’ or even ‘mindlessness.’ Theory is not opposed to practice; it is opposed to muddled thought, to confusion. . . . [T]heory and practice are inseparable, indivisible” (42).

But far more often, the meanings of a keyword are implicit and must be “read” from the contexts surrounding its usages, particularly when it functions tropologically, as a metaphor or a metonym for much larger issues. *Meaning*, then, quickly takes on an expansive sense—what the keyword *means* to our field’s disciplinary and institutional past, present, and future; what it *means* to our professional, intellectual, and emotional lives; what it

means to our (changing) values. In these ways, the contestations over meaning can become more complex, more political, and more personal. Steven Mailloux, for instance, describes theory positively, as “a growing empirical and rhetorical body of knowledge that all serious teachers of composition must master,” as the means by which “composition teachers are becoming specialists within the English Department (not just second-class citizens)” (271). Howard B. Tinberg suggests, however, that “[t]he rush toward theory in the field might just as well be described as a rush to get out of the classroom” (37). Stanley Fish discusses “theory hope—the promise that theory seems to offer” composition instructors (342), the promise of “a better set of methods for operating in the world” (346), while Schuster notes that since “practice” seems to be “a foundational principle of our discipline, . . . theory is suspect—and conceivably dangerous. . . . [I]t invites confusion, possibly paralysis” (35). Whereas Patricia Bizzell contends that “an overarching theory” could heal the long-standing and often bitter rift between literature and composition (175), Sandra Stosky argues that “borrowed” theories “may pose unresolvable problems . . . and serve as unintended conceptual barriers to important new research in the field” (37).

As the expression goes, “We’re just getting started here.” The impossibility of “covering” the range of meanings related to a keyword will be apparent in every essay in the same way that our limited list of terms represents the impossibility of gathering *all* of composition’s keywords together in a single book. The essays in this volume are meant to be suggestive, indicative of a range of terms and meanings too expansive to be corralled into our very small discursive pens. The study of our field’s evolving vocabulary must be a fluid project, one carried out not within this book but with it as we continue composing composition studies.

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academic discourse

The evolution of the term *academic discourse* in composition studies reflects the field's deepening awareness of variation in language use in professional communities and society generally. In the mid-to-late 1970s, usage of the term expanded, mainly through the work of Mina Shaughnessy, who used it to explicate cultural and linguistic conventions implicit in college teachers' expectations for student writing. Shaughnessy also employed the term to explain the difficulties underprepared student writers faced in their efforts "to approximate the high or formal style of academia" (1977a, 197) and to show how college writing often demanded tactics of disputation that posed special difficulties for students with non-mainstream cultural backgrounds. Her appreciation of these difficulties helped inscribe the term in controversies about the cultural relativity of language standards, such as those sparked by sociolinguistic work showing the "logic of non-standard English" (Labov) and NCTE's 1974 declaration endorsing "students' right to their own language."

In the late 1970s, Shaughnessy's goal of providing "a precise taxonomy of . . . academic vocabulary" for students was pursued by some compositionists who took a "close look at academic discourse" (Shaughnessy 1977b, 320). Patricia Bizzell argued that Shaughnessy's sense of academic discourse includes not merely surface features of language, but also "such ethical qualities as 'formal courtesy' and 'shrewd assessments of what constitutes adequate proof'" (1978, 355). Bizzell identified "the ethos of academic discourse" by considering the relationship between knowledge, language, and community (1978, 354-355; 1979). She defined academic discourse first and foremost by its rational qualities, contrasting "the 'rituals' of academic discourse" with students' "rhetorical postures" such as "the bald assertion of an opinion" and the assumption that "rational debate cannot resolve controversial problems," and suggested that such discourse comprises a shared "compendium of [cultural] knowledge that anyone should possess" (1978, 353-354). In short, academic discourse is the language of "a particular cultural group who shares this 'common stock' of knowledge" and a language

that offers the academic community "better opportunities for rational criticism of the here and now that we share with the larger community" (1978, 354; 1979, 770-771).

Expanding usage of the term was fueled by the writing-across-the-curriculum movement and the research on disciplinary language practices WAC has enabled. Indeed, since the early 1980s, the term has become a scene of increasing conflict over both what academic discourse *is* and what role specialized disciplinary languages should play in writing instruction. Bizzell argued that "academic discourse *constitutes* the academic community" (1982, 197). In making this case, she supported Elaine Maimon's view that academic genres "are defined by various scholarly communities to embody conventions particular to their disciplines" and constitute the academic discourse community (1983, 118; see also 111-113). Bizzell used the term to fault the "individualistic" biases of "authentic voice" pedagogies (such as Elbow's and Macrotic's) and of the then "current emphasis on writing as a cognitive process" (1982, 194-195). While Bizzell commended Maimon's conception of academic discourse, particularly as it is embodied in her influential textbook *Writing in the Arts and Sciences* (1982, *passim*), Bizzell's sense of academic discourse entailed a self-reflective critical component not evident in Maimon's representation of academic genres. For instance, Bizzell cautioned that "we need to reexamine the knowledge the academy disestablishes as well as that which it endorses" (1982, 206). However, despite their differences, Maimon and Bizzell perceived academic discourse as the requisite for becoming a member of the academic community, and therefore shared the goal of making the composition course "an introduction to composing academic discourse in the arts and sciences" (Maimon 1983, 117, 120-121; see also 1981; Bizzell 1982, 197). In contrast to this perspective, some compositionists by the late 1980s used this term pejoratively. Donald C. Stewart called academic discourse a "disgrace . . . whose purpose is to impede genuine communication with every resource the writer can muster" (68). Other critics used the term to describe professional elitism implicit in the unnecessary use of specialized language (Elbow 145-147) or the fragmented, alienating quality of much specialized knowledge (Spellmeyer 111, 115, 274).

As the 1980s progressed, a number of compositionists articulated a more heterogeneous, mutable conception of academic discourse and a more problematic sense of whatever "community" it might constitute. For instance, in his influential essay "Inventing the University," David Bartholomae argued that

[e]very time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion. . . . The student has to learn to speak our language. . . . to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, . . . reporting, . . . and arguing that define the discourse of our community. Or perhaps I should say the *various* discourses of our community. (134)

Learning the " 'distinctive register' of academic discourse," the student must "mimic" or "appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialized discourse" (162, 135). The shifts between singular and plural nouns in Bartholomae's essay—from "our language" to "peculiar ways" to "the discourse" to "the *various* discourses of our community"—are revealing. Bartholomae suggests the possibility of conflict within and between the "specialized codes" (156) of disciplines, but also invokes the unanalyzed unity of "our language" and "our community." Indeed, in a 1989 critique of representations of the "academic discourse community," Joseph Harris consolidates an emerging awareness that many influential "social" views of writing in the 1980s tended to "invoke the idea of community in ways at once sweeping and vague: positing discursive utopias . . . yet failing to state the operating rules or boundaries," consequently suggesting a " 'normal discourse' in the university" free from "conflict or change" (12). In opposition to social perspectives that present "academic discourse as coherent and well-defined," Harris contends that we should consider "it as polyglot, as a sort of space in which competing beliefs intersect with and confront one another" (20). In 1990, Bizzell offered a similar sense of heterogeneity, contention, and mutability in her revised thinking on the "academic discourse problem," which she argued cannot be addressed simply by "[le]t[ting] the freshman writing class inculcate the requisite knowledge . . . to participate in the academic discursive community," because that community "is not such a stable entity . . . is more unstable than this—more fraught with contradiction, more polyvocal" (258; see also 1992, 235).

Perhaps because of such skepticism about the unity and stability of academic discourse in general, competing terms such as "disciplinary discourse" (Bazerman 62, 66, 68), "discipline-specific discourse conventions" (Jones and Comprone 66) and "disciplinary style" (Linton *et al.* 64, 65, 73) have become more common in commentary concerning the role of specialized language in writing instruction. Some researchers follow older arguments in claiming that composition programs in English should explicitly teach "disciplinary genres" and "disciplinary style" even if all that is possible is to "introduce students to formal differences in the writing characteristic of different disciplines" or "[n]oticing the surface features of a disciplinary genre" (Linton *et al.* 64-65). By contrast, other researchers eschew attempts to "establish boundaries around [the] knowledge bases and discourse conventions [of disciplines]," instead emphasizing how "overlapping spheres of academic discourse" interact with the multiple literacies students bring with them to the university (Chiseri-Strater 164-165). In a similar vein, Cynthia Gannett has argued that it is inadequate simply to dichotomize between the "language habits and conventions of . . . marginal students and those of the university community." Rather, "a central task of social constructionist work is to explore the convergences, coalitions, and tensions . . . of discursive networks (some deriving from disciplines, others from particular methodologies, such as deconstruction, or from interdisciplinary enterprises, such as

feminism) which collectively compose the academic discourse 'community.'" Such work, Gannett contends, cannot afford to neglect the "critical connections" between such discursive networks and "the host of other discursive communities to which people belong" (8).

Obviously, the "academic discourse problem" remains far from resolved. Indeed, it seems likely that political differences over the basic purposes of language teaching and research will continue to unsettle both normative and descriptive definitions of academic discourse for the foreseeable future.

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attack" (1.1; 1354a). It is interesting to note how composition scholars have tried to distance themselves from this agonistic stance. For example, John Gage, in an argument writing textbook that relies heavily on Aristotelian theory, tells students that "I have treated argument here as a matter of finding and presenting the best possible reasons you can for your reader's understanding and assent, and not as a matter of trying to 'win' your case by overpowering the 'opposition'" (vii-viii).

It is not only the agonistic nature of Aristotelian argument that has caused composition scholars to bristle. If they consult the *Analytics*, they find argument as a complicated system of syllogizing that seems difficult to teach and disconnected from actual arguments in real situations. In his 1964 book, *The Uses of Argument*, Stephen Toulmin questions the Aristotelian "micro-structure of arguments" (96) and develops a new pattern for analyzing arguments based on jurisprudence. In lieu of the Aristotelian method of beginning with premises and syllogizing about the conclusions that must follow from them, Toulmin begins by examining the assertion, the claim, an arguer makes. Confronted with a claim, he writes, "we can challenge the assertion, and demand to have our attention drawn to the grounds (backing, data, facts, evidence, considerations, features) on which the merits of the assertion are to depend. We can, that is, demand an argument" (11). Though some teachers have simplified it for pedagogy (see Kneupper), Toulmin's model does not really alter the complexity of syllogizing: It is essentially an enthymeme that moves from conclusion to premises, rather than vice versa, and, according to James Stratman, composition teachers report that students have difficulties plugging the material from "real world" arguments into the model.

It almost seems as though compositionists could overlook the complexity of Aristotelian (or Toulminian) argument if it didn't appear so focused on shutting off dialogue. That feature, however, has motivated two schools of contention over argument. Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike initiated the first of these in their 1970 textbook, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*, introducing "Rogerian argument" to composition studies. Young, Becker, and Pike see "traditional argument" as most commonly "dyadic": "the writer . . . addresses his message directly to the audience he seeks to change" (273). Young, Becker, and Pike find traditional argument "ineffective in those dyadic situations that involve strong values and beliefs," and propose "an effective alternative to traditional argument" (274) suggested by the psychotherapist Carl Rogers. According to Young, Becker, and Pike, "[t]he writer who uses the Rogerian strategy attempts to do three things: (1) to convey to the reader that he is understood, (2) to delineate the area within which he believes the reader's position to be valid, and (3) to induce him to believe that he and the writer share similar moral qualities (honesty, integrity, and good will) and aspirations (the desire to discover a mutually acceptable situation)" (275). Doug Brent writes in a retrospective on Rogerian argument



argument

While many terms in the lexicon of composition studies are clearly metaphors, *argument* functions as a metonym. Traditionally, what has been packed into this term are the rational, logical, non-emotional reasoning processes involved in persuasive writing.

Both the traditional definition of argument and contentions over its meaning tend to emerge from its classical sources. Achieving a kind of intellectual cache from its roots in Western philosophy, particularly in Aristotle, argument is often associated with an essentially agonistic strategy of persuasion. In this view, an argument is seen as something that involves a proponent, armed with a thesis, and an opponent. The argument is, thus, an intellectual skirmish that can be "won" when the arguer foresees objections and counters them with evidence or proofs that are deemed more logical than the opponent's. A typical example of the traditional treatment of argument is Richard A. Katula and Richard W. Roth's 1980 article, "A Stock Issues Approach to Writing Arguments." Citing Aristotle as their theoretical forbear, Katula and Roth define argument as "not simply that emotionally based, contentious rhetoric . . . but that mode of communication which is intended to change attitudes and provide acceptable, logical bases for belief and action" (183).

Finding an Aristotelian definition of *argument* requires considerable synthesis, since there is no single primary source for his theory. Aristotle deals with argument in all six treatises in the *Organon*. Most compositionists working with argument draw on two works: the *Prior Analytics*, where Aristotle works out his theory of perfect inference via the syllogism and initially defines an *enthymeme* as "a syllogism from probabilities and signs" (2.27); and the *Rhetoric*, which extends the theory of the enthymeme and the example, the rhetorical tools of logical deduction and induction introduced in the *Analytics*. The second sentence of the *Rhetoric* links it to the dialectic of the *Analytics* and establishes the agonistic nature of Aristotelian argument: All people, Aristotle writes, use both dialectic and rhetoric, the former "to test and maintain an argument," and the latter "to defend themselves and

that Young, Becker, and Pike's non-agonistic strategy was one of several attempts, coming at the height of the Cold War, redefining argument as negotiation, not simply change: "conflict resolution [was] not just an ideal but a matter of human survival" (453).

Rogesian argument has not proved an unobjectionable alternative to Aristotelianism. In 1990, Phyllis Lassner reported that women students were angered by the presumption, inherent in Rogesianism, that the arguer must remain self-effacing and tentative with her audience. Lassner's concerns fit within a body of feminist composition theory that critiques the agonistic, monologic nature of argument, either traditional or Rogesian. In 1978, Sheila Ortiz Taylor contended that, given the inherent "politeness" of "women's language, . . . the aims and tactics of the argumentative edge constitute a double-bind" (385-387) for women being taught argumentative writing. Taylor sees traditional argument embodied in Sheridan Baker's directive in the third edition of *The Practical Stylist*: "The best thesis is a kind of affront to somebody" (3). Taylor writes, "[f]aught by society to defer and to qualify or avoid criticism, women are required by an institution, an agent of society at large, to assert, to oppose, compete, persist, and finally to compel agreement" (387). The most thorough feminist critique of argument theory and a suggestion of a feminist alternative to Aristotelianism are in Catherine Lamb's 1991 essay, "Beyond Argument in Feminist Composition." Detailing strategies of "mediation" and "negotiation," Lamb offers "several features of a feminist alternative to monologic argument": "Knowledge is cooperatively and collaboratively constructed"; "[t]he 'attentive love' of maternal thinking is present to at least some degree"; "[t]he writing which results is likely to emphasize process"; and "power is experienced as mutually enabling" (21).

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including the context as he perceives it. . . . [E]xperiences, contexts, and stimuli . . . are infinitely variable" (9–10). Refiguring audience as an active plurality necessitates a shift from audience analysis to audience construction. Edwin Black asserts that any given discourse exerts "the pull of an ideology"; those who attend it "look to the discourse . . . for cues that tell them how they are to view the world" (113).

Whether one conceives of "a real audience (not a teacher), who actually needs to know something" (Flower and Hayes 45) or imagines audience to be a "characterized reader" (Ross), audience is often framed as "an essential part of the writing process" (Berkenkotter 396). Just the same, some scholars have figured audience as a "force" that is "powerfully inhibiting" and ought to be ignored in the earliest stages of process (Elbow 51). According to Cheryl Armstrong, "writers may not disregard their audience as much as be tyrannized by it" (86). Armstrong proposes that a student writer develop a dual "audience awareness" in which "the writer conceives of the audience as a teacher in the role of examiner" and "herself in the role of reader" (87).

Refusing the importance of a "real" audience in most writing situations, Long argues that audience belongs more properly under the purview of rhetorical invention:

a writer's choice of alternatives determines his audience; that is, his decisions create a very specific reader who exists only for the duration of the reading experience. Rather than beginning with the traditional question, "who is my audience?", we now begin with, "who do I want my audience to be?" . . . What attitudes, ideas, actions are to be encouraged? (225)

Noting that texts are often valued because they violate expectations and thereby create change, Peter Vandenberg argues that to confine student writers to the production of "transactional" texts denies students a conception of audience as heuristic.

In composition studies, this conception of "audience created"—what Ede and Lunsford call "audience invoked"—often references Walter Ong. He contends that a successful writer develops the ability to "fictionalize in his imagination an audience he has learned to know not from daily life but from earlier writers who were fictionalizing in their imagination audiences they had learned . . . and so on" (11). For Ong, a writer must first "construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role—entertainment seekers, reflective sharers of experience and so on" (12). Barry Kroll argues that such a conception of audience may be "intimately connected with (and perhaps even indistinguishable from) a sense of genre and convention . . . gained not from social interaction but from broad exposure to various forms of written discourse" (182).

Few, if any, in composition appear to equate audience entirely with textuality, however. Laurie J. Anderson, for example, suggests that "audience" is an incomplete concept, dependent on an understanding of "conventional



audience

In a 1990 article published in *College Composition and Communication*, Richard Fulkerson declares that composition studies has achieved something of a "consensus on what constitutes good writing" (414). According to Fulkerson, the disciplinary attention given over to audience and audience analysis in writing textbooks and books about the teaching of writing is one reflection of the field's tacit agreement with "a rhetorical approach in which readers and their responses are the final criteria of effectiveness" (415). Yet as Fulkerson allows, consensus on the importance of audience to effective composing does not constitute agreement of any sort about what the term might mean. James Porter argues that *audience* is "especially problematic when we assume that it has a fixed meaning or if we ourselves fix the meaning in the way we teach or write about audience" (6).

Concern with audience can be connected to the recovery of classical rhetoric and its contemporary application to writing instruction (see Ede). In Book II of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle declares that knowledge of the character of an audience can be understood by analysis of its wealth, power, and relative youth. Armed with an "account of types of character," a speaker can choose persuasive strategies that will correspond with "emotions and moral qualities of each character type" (121–122). Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford have used the term "audience addressed" to refer to such positions that "emphasize the concrete reality of the writer's audience" and assume that "knowledge of this audience's attitudes, beliefs, and expectations is . . . essential" (156). Russell Long concludes that such positions reduce students' conceptualizing of audience to "noxious stereotyping" that teachers of composition "in any other context . . . fight diligently against" (223).

The usefulness of conceptions of "real" audience has been a matter of question in the field of Speech Communication for several decades. As early as 1966, Otto Clevenger asserted that every audience is distinguished by plurality, that "each individual behaves as he does because of his prior experience coupled with the stimuli operating upon him at the moment,

register . . . an accepted, imposed, or expected way of writing that is shared by both writer and reader" (112). Following the work of Douglas Park—"[t]o identify an audience means identifying a situation" (486)—recent work on audience appears to detail a symbiotic construction of writer, audience, and text. For Park, the basic issue of audience is one of "student writers learning to see themselves as social beings in a social situation" (488). Suggesting that audience is "a vital force of beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, existing in writing, in pre-texts that the willing writer can consult," Porter argues for a "sophistic notion of audience" in which a "writer does not 'analyze' an audience so much as become one with it" (114-115).

The sheer bulk of research on audience in composition studies appears to have a dual effect; it has widened the range of meanings that the term can be said to cover as it necessitates continued reference to the term. Like literacy or feminism, one cannot usefully deploy the term *audience* without qualification, illustration, or elaboration, nor can one introduce related or oppositional terms without reference to it. As Porter suggests, "[a]s soon as we claim decisively and univocally that 'Audience is such and such,' we are lost" (8).

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Lunsford (1987) echoes Shaughnessy's convictions that such medical terminology should be abandoned and that basic writing should be moved "from the fringes of concern into the full academic community where it becomes . . . an opener of long-closed doors to academic discourse, to intellectual rigor, to the way writing helps create ourselves and our worlds" (226). The nature of defining differences in writing ability, however, presupposes the language of "deficit theory" (Hull *et al.* 324) because one is forced to show how a particular concept is different from, and inferior to, the prototype. Hence, the primary metaphors for basic writing betray a reliance on the notion of deficit. The inside/outside metaphor has been most prevalent in the discipline (Wall and Coles 244; Foster 161–162), allowing for a mainstream/margins metaphor (Wall and Coles 232) and a boundary/passport metaphor (DiPardo 5; 169).

Basic writing students are generally constructed as those who find academic writing tasks especially challenging, and *basic writing* is often defined by certain artifactual evidence. Shaughnessy (1987) describes basic writing students as those who "produce . . . small numbers of words with large numbers of errors" and who seem to "be restricted as writers, but not necessarily as speakers, to a very narrow range of syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical options" (179). Similarly, basic writing is "clearly" identified as "relatively brief and unelaborated, with little subordination[. . .] many intrusions from oral language that are less appropriate to written language[. . .] [and] punctuation, capitalization, [and] spelling [which] are erratic" (Kutz *et al.* 39). Basic writers have also been portrayed as those students who use consistently inadequate prewriting strategies (Petl 22), who "lack the skills needed to write at all" and who would benefit from the lessons on writing from classical rhetoric (Tiner 374). Gail Stygall (1988) notes yet another facet of the basic writer—marked tenacity in the face of unusual adversity: "Like two boxers who are bleeding and winded but not yet ready to quit, basic writers reel into the freshman classroom each year" (28).

Definitions of *basic writing* and *basic writers*, however, are also based on characteristics not readily observed (see, e.g., Kutz *et al.* 40). Lunsford (1978) adds a dimension by noticing in basic writing students "a consistent egocentricity" which prevents their adopting a distanced voice as generally desired in academic writing (3). And in contrast to the scholarship that defines *basic writing* primarily on the basis of semantics or syntax, E. D. Hirsch, Jr. sees a culturally situated cause: a lack of "that whole system of unspoken, tacit knowledge that is shared between speaker and writer" (29). A somewhat different perception of cultural causes is based on economic and social factors which might inhibit success in academic settings because such success is neither prevalent nor outwardly esteemed in one's home culture; hence, those from working-class backgrounds or crime-ridden neighborhoods must make a deliberate, calculated choice to succeed in academia (Rondinone 884–885). Min-zhan Lu similarly points to the investment of culture in language, taking



basic writing/writers

Although there are a number of terms used to describe underprepared undergraduate writers and the courses that define them, the inception of the *Journal of Basic Writing* in 1975 appears to have established *basic writing* as the general description of pedagogy geared toward students who do not typically utilize conventional academic discourse (Gray 3; see also Kasden 4). According to Mina Shaughnessy (1976), "Basic writing, alias remedial, developmental, pre-baccalaureate, or even handicapped English, is commonly thought of as a writing course for young men and women who have many things wrong with them" (234). In a footnote a dozen years later, Mike Rose qualifies his remarks thus: "I will use the adjective 'remedial' and occasionally the adjective 'basic' . . . with some reservation, for they are often more pejorative than accurately descriptive" (353). And by 1987, Theresa Enos writes, "*Basic writing* is a troublesome and diverse term, having become so inclusive that it seems to defy formal definition" (v).

Noting that the "teaching of writing to severely underprepared" students is "the frontier of a profession," Shaughnessy (1987) elaborates on the pejorative nature of the terms associated with these students. *Remedial, English for the disadvantaged, compensatory, developmental*, and *basic* all suggest, to varying degrees, that the shortcoming is within the student more so than within the student's educational experience (177; see also 1979, 4). Moreover, she points to the relativeness of such labels: "One school's remedial student may be another's regular or even advanced freshman" (177–178). The tenor of Shaughnessy's essay here is sympathetic to the students who, through open admissions, have been given an opportunity to experience higher education. In fact, at times she calls them "new students," certainly a more respectful label than the conventional, widely used ones that intrinsically suggest fault. Shaughnessy (1976) notes, for instance, that "medical metaphors dominate the pedagogy (*remedial, clinic, lab, diagnosis*, and so on)" and that "teachers and administrators tend to discuss basic writing students much as doctors tend to discuss their patients" (234). Andrea

exception with what she terms Shaughnessy's essentialist view of linguistic codes as if those codes can exist separately from "the dynamic power struggle within and among diverse discourses" (329).

George H. Jensen spotlights the contestation between definitions of *basic writing* as symptom and as social interaction when he observes that many researchers tend to ignore Shaughnessy's thesis that basic writers are diverse and complicated. He worries that the individual characteristics—such as insecurity, preoccupation with "errors," holistic thinking, and gregariousness—that these researchers identified will combine to form an inaccurate, negative generalization of *the* basic writer (53–54).

The term *basic*, however, has not always pointed to deficiency. In a 1937 handbook described as "the kind of book which can be used by all freshman regardless of their ultimate intentions" (Moffett and Johnson vii), *basic writing* represents the essential knowledge about composing required at the college level. "For those who are seeking merely a competence in English composition, the sections on the word, sentence, paragraph, exposition, and letter writing constitute a complete course" (Moffett and Johnson viii).

Since the mid-seventies, however, *basic writing* has been consistently, if not exclusively, connected with remediation, marking it as a stop-gap measure for a temporary problem (Stygall 1994, 339) and encouraging administrators to define the field a particular way by staffing it with temporary adjunct faculty and teaching assistants (Stygall 1994, 339; DiPardo 170). Such a deficit-oriented use of the term leads to a great irony: unlike students who enroll in technical writing or creative writing classes to work toward identification as technical or creative writers, students enrolled in basic writing classes begin with identification as basic writers and work to distance themselves from it.

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collaboration

Collaboration refers not to a unified object but rather to a variety of pedagogies and practices, each grounded in somewhat different, and often conflicting, epistemological and ontological assumptions. Under the umbrella term of *collaborative learning* lies a range of pedagogical techniques, which most often involve small groups of two or more working together and which include, but are not limited to, peer planning, review, critique, tutoring, and conferences. As praxis, collaboration signifies not only the phenomenon of two or more authors working on a single project but also extends to the view that all writing is collaborative. As a theory, it is invoked to support bipolar concepts of discourse as both individual acts of cognition and as social acts.

Although collaboration as practice and pedagogy has a long history in the United States, dating back some two hundred years (Gere), collaboration entered our professional literature as a pedagogical tool. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, small peer groups were advocated as a way to manage the post-WW II swelling tides of student enrollments (Maize), to handle the increased paper load (Bernardette), to develop audience awareness (Drake; Hausdorff), and to shift the responsibility for learning to write off of the teacher and onto the student (Hayakawa). However, the assumptions driving the use of collaboration in the classroom varied widely, being grounded in and moving between two competing epistemologies—a Cartesian epistemology that defines writing as an individual act and a postmodern one that sees it as a social act. Anne Ruggles Gere explicates these two opposing views and their implications for writing groups, locating the roots of the former in Piaget and the latter in Vygotsky:

In Piagetian terms, writing groups provide a means to the end of individual performance in writing, but they are finally peripheral because the essence of writing lies in the individual effort of opening the mind's locked lid. Vygotsky's insistence on the dialectic between the individual and society, however, puts peer response at the center of writing because it makes language integral to thinking and knowing. (83-84)

The tension between these two views, which continues to play itself out in our literature, is evident in our post-WW II professional discussions.

In the late 1960s, Leonard A. Greenbaum and Rudolf B. Schmerl reported on a first-year writing course they had developed to promote learning how to write multi-authored documents. In small groups, students worked together to plan, draft, revise, and edit sections that eventually were compiled into a single monograph. This project entailed two important strands of meaning: collaboration as a method of composing multi-authored documents and collaborative writing as an epistemic process whereby "writing is a means by which you learn something about a subject" (146). Two years later, H. R. Wolf described a collaborative learning classroom in which he acted as a "synthesizer, not authority figure" (443), orchestrating students in small group discussions. But the assumptions driving this method were far different from those driving Greenbaum and Schmerl's approach. For Wolf, collaborative pedagogy was not a social process so much as a tool of the individual: "the papers that students wrote had that unmistakable imprint of the individual asserting his own-being-in-the-world, his own special sense of the world as it meets *his* eye and courses in *his* blood" (443). These two competing views—writing as a social process and writing as an individual journey—and two competing practices—collaboration as a means to produce a single, multi-authored product and to produce multiple single-authored products—are reconfigured in complex ways and appear repeatedly in our literature.

By the 1970s changes in material conditions within academia prompted a vigorous interest in collaboration as a pedagogical tool. With the advent of open enrollment, writing teachers were confronted with the inadequacies of traditional composition pedagogies (Shaughnessy). Collaborative learning was invoked as a method for teaching non-traditional students. For some it continued to provide a way to manage the drudgery of teaching writing (Brosnahan; Hardaway), for others it was a new means for individualizing instruction (Clark; Murray), and for still others it was a recognition of and a way to support learning and writing as social activities (Bruffee 1973).

Although collaborative pedagogical techniques were at times invoked to support traditional teacher-centered classes, most often they were advocated as a way of disrupting the traditional hierarchical power relationships between teacher and student—a goal epitomized in the title of Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*. Bruffee described this end as one of "establishing a 'poly-centralized' collaborative learning community in which the teacher moves to the perimeter of the action, once the scene is set" (1973, 637). Lou Kelly similarly spoke of seeking to develop "a community of learners" (650), and Jean Pumphrey argued for a "shift in emphasis from teacher-student to student-peer evaluation" (667). This thread appeared throughout the next two decades (e.g., Trimbur; Bruffee 1993) though at times with a twist. For example, for George Held and Warren Rosenberg, "alter[ing] the traditional

power structure" (819) of the classroom meant more than creating peer groups; it meant bringing in an undergraduate student as a team teacher. (For a comprehensive review of the research literature on collaboration in the composition classroom, see Anne DiPardo and Sarah Warshauer Freedman.)

While interest in collaboration as a pedagogical tool continued to mount throughout the 1980s, it also significantly expanded as an object of study to include examination of collaboration as a practice both inside and outside of academia. Studies of collaborative practices in the workplace (Odeil and Goswami) and in academia (McNenny and Roen) began to appear along with historical studies (Gere) and philosophical and theoretical examinations (Bruffee 1984; LeFevre). (See Bosley, Morgan and Allen for a comprehensive bibliography of research and scholarship on collaborative writing as a practice.) Studies of this practice reveal that there are many models of collaboration, which Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford usefully classify under two headings. One they term hierarchical, a product-oriented model "with power and authority distributed vertically within the hierarchy" (67); the other they term dialogic, "a more loose, fluid mode of collaborative writing, one that focused more on the process of collaboration rather than the end products, one that emphasized dialogue and exploration rather than efficiency and closure" (67).

The dialogic model supports the concept that all writing is collaborative, a view that gained currency in the 1980s. Yet this social view of discourse is not a univocal one. Drawing on Bakhtin's theory of "communication chain," Charlotte Thralls, for example, argues "all writing is inherently collaborative" (64). James Reither and Douglas Vipond assert, "writing is collaboration. It cannot be otherwise" (866). Marilyn Cooper and Michael Holzman define writing as social action, and Karen Burke and LeFevre argue that invention is social (i.e., collaborative) act even when undertaken by a single author. These views represent points along a continuum. At one end, collaboration may be understood, though Donald Stewart argues, mistakenly understood, as influence, "mean[ing] the effects of absorbed learning" (67), and at the other end, as the contingent and dynamic effects of social contexts.

Trimbur and Lundy A. Braun best summed up the impact of collaboration on composition studies when they pointed out that "the notion of collaboration has not only generated an important body of research and pedagogical innovation, but the term 'collaboration' has now entered into the discourse of studies of writing as part of the conventional wisdom" (31). Yet the term remains slippery. Byron Stay's use exemplifies this slipperiness when he warns that "the complexity of collaboration allows it to support as well as subvert authority within the group, give voice to students and silence them, improve final products and destroy them" (44; cf. Yin). Similarly, Melanie Sperling's research found collaboration to be "a shifting process shaped not only by conference participants but by the rhetorical circumstances of their

talk" (279). Multiple social contexts (e.g., writing classrooms, disciplines, professions), innovations in technology (Selfe) and competing philosophies and rhetorical ends of discourse challenge attempts to pin down one meaning for the term.

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development of meanings within this construction is important to note. Thirty years ago, a romantic version of composing can be seen coming to the fore, as in D. Gordon Rohman's assertion that "[w]riting is usefully described as a process, something which shows continuous change in time like growth in organic nature" (106). This romantic portrayal of composing has had a long life and finds expression in the work of scholars like Ann E. Berthoff, who has argued that composing is a process of meaning making, is the activity of abstraction, is *forming*, which proceeds, in great part, by means of imagination or the symbolizing of insight (66-67).

Conversely, composing has also been represented as an arithmetic, automatic, mindless, and biomechanical process. Writing in 1969, Leon A. Jakobovits represented composing as a mathematical operation, as the sequencing of linguistic elements in time-space by means of computational devices, that is, by means of known (mechanical) and unknown (creative) algorithms (325). In like manner, Barrett J. Mandel argued for an understanding of "writing per se as an automatic act," as the "recording and trusting" of "dictation which emanates from some point other than the conscious ego" (364). Mandel focused on composing as a scribal act, on writing as the process by which words "appear on the page through a massive coordination of a tremendous number of motor processes, including the contracting and dilating of muscles in the fingers, hand, arm, neck, shoulder, back, and eyes—indeed in the entire organism," to underscore his contention that writing is a process which "occurs independently of the conscious mind's control" (365).

Yet while Berthoff's and Mandel's constructions of composing may at first seem antithetical, they are, nonetheless, quite similar. Ultimately, for Mandel, "Writing is a human process whereby intuition (or illumination) . . . can disclose itself. Writing doesn't lay out the notions that are lying dormant in the mind waiting to be displayed. Writing is the 'seeing into' process itself" (366). This idea, that writing is not the transcribing of thought but rather the process of creating insight itself, sets the stage for the next major construction of writing and composing in composition studies, the one epitomized in the 1981 work of Linda Flower and John R. Hayes: writing as thinking, as a recursive cognitive activity, as problem-solving; composing as the goal-directed orchestration of a set of distinctive, hierarchical, highly embedded thinking processes.

Writing as thinking is closely related to the portrayal of writing as a process of learning. As Janet Emig said in 1977, "Writing represents a unique mode of learning—not merely valuable, not merely special, but unique" (122). Two years later, William F. Irmscher argued for a similar but somewhat more expansive view of writing as "an action and a way of knowing[,] . . . as investigation, as probing . . . as a way of learning about anything and everything[,] . . . as a process of growing and maturing[,] . . . as a way of promoting the higher intellectual development of the individual" (241-242). It should be noted that writing as learning is the strand of meaning from which the often-invoked images of writing as exploration and discovery



composing/writing

The range of meanings within *composing* and *writing* (referring here to the activity rather than the artifact) speaks volumes about where composition studies comes from and what it has done as a field. Any examination of *composing* and *writing*, which have been used as interchangeable synonyms for at least thirty years, must contend with some basic metaphors that have long shaped the field's discourse around these terms. In general academic discussions, writing has been represented as punishment, frozen speech, a tool of communication, a testable item, and a way to self-commune and get in touch with one's feelings. Composing has been construed as a basic skill or set of skills, a craft, an art, a science, as the transcribing of pre-existing thought or ideas for transmission, and as the mystical ability to select and order just the right items from one's "word horde" to achieve a desired effect. There is also a long record of attempts to equate composing with—or subsume it within—the act of reading. For instance, as J. Hillis Miller has said, "writing is a trope for the act of reading. Every act of writing is an act of reading, an interpretation of some part of the totality of what is" (41).

Nonetheless, scholars in composition studies have long noted that, etymologically, composing means "placing with." In other words, composing literally means putting words together. In a slightly larger sense, many have noted that composing means fashioning wholes by creating relationships among the parts, that composing means synthesizing information and/or values. For instance, in 1970, Robert B. Heilman wrote that composing is "an achieving of oneness: a finding of such unities, small and contingent as they may be, as are possible[,] . . . a resolution of discords, a removal of what doesn't belong, and a discovery of how to belong." This sense of composing slides easily into another common strain: that composing means composing oneself, or as Heilman puts it, "being put together by the process of putting together" (232), a sentiment expressed emblematically in the title to William E. Coles Jr.'s influential book: *Composing: Writing as a Self-Creating Process*.

The representation of writing as a process (as a series of linear and/or recursive steps or stages) is, of course, now commonplace. But the historical

arise. The chief spokesman for this perspective is Donald M. Murray, who has long contended that writing is a process "of discovery through language" (79), an "exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know" (80). Twenty-five years ago, Walker Gibson argued that these familiar metaphors construe composing as the process of "map-making," as the act of observing, recording, and accurately "reflecting the actual landscape" one is discovering and exploring (255). It would be better, he suggests "to think of composing as pot-making rather than as map-making." In this way, he says, we would understand composing as "forming a man-made structure" rather than as "copying down the solid shorelines of the universe," and thus better appreciate composing as joyful play and pleasure (258).

The most recent evolution in the construction of composing as a process can be generally described as an emphasis on writing as a social process. In 1986, Marilyn M. Cooper argued that writing is an activity through which writers engage with and locate themselves within a mesh of socially constituted systems of ideas, purposes, interpersonal interactions, cultural norms, and textual forms. Two years later, Geoffrey Chase first commended the field's increasing understanding of writing as a social activity, "as a form of cultural production linked to the processes of self and social empowerment" (13), and then elaborated his understanding of composing as the political act of accommodating, opposing, or resisting the dominant verbal-ideological scheme. An understanding of writing as a struggle—a struggle to move from Min-zhan Lu's portrayal of writing as a struggle—to a struggle to move from silence to words, a struggle to re-position oneself among verbal-ideological worlds. Furthermore, writing as a social process is the basis for the common trope of composing as conversation (writing as the entering into and engaging in a given disciplinary conversation) as well as the springboard for a variety of poststructuralist views of writing as the social (de)construction of reality, truth, and knowledge, or as James S. Baumlín and Jim W. Corder put it, writing as "the always unstable, always unfinished, always contingent . . . active construction of self and world" (18).

Oddly enough, almost no one has examined students' constructions of composing. Thankfully, however, Lad Tobin has carefully explicated how his own image of composing as "always a voluntary and purposeful journey" (445) clashed with his students' portrayals. His students represented writing as a dissatisfying, frustrating, aimless activity, as wasted motion without intention or intensity, as a journey without purpose and without end, "as an impossible puzzle they must solve, a maze or imprisonment from which they must escape" (448), as a force over which they have no control, as something separate from them which they need to fight off, and "as superficial, cosmetic, and ultimately external" (449). These students portrayed "writing as doing something they hated . . . because it is good for them," writing "as an activity that parents and teachers force on students for their physical, psychological, and spiritual health" (450), "writing as a trip to the dentist" (446).

In sum, the tremendous range of definitions within these keywords gives some indication of just how complex composing/writing is and, moreover, emphasizes just how central the contests over the meanings of these terms are to the debates that animate the field.

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discourse community

The term *discourse community* emerged in composition scholarship in the early 1980s, but its antecedents are various, much older, and just as vigorously contested. Both John Swales and Valerie Balester trace the use of *community* in the work of writers as methodologically diverse as Wittgenstein, Thomas Kuhn, Richard Rorty, Clifford Geertz, and Charles Willard. Yet sociolinguists and the matrix of scholars working at the intersection between philosophy and literary theory appear to have had the biggest influence on those writing in composition and rhetoric.

Though he doesn't use the term *discourse community*, in 1982 Martin Nystrand introduced the concept of "writer's speech communities" in which "the special relations that define written language functioning and promote its meaningful use . . . are wholly circumscribed by the systematic relations that obtain in the speech community of the writer" (17). Swales, also a sociolinguist, has argued that however tight the definition becomes for "speech community," it does not obviate the need for an alternative definition of *discourse community*: According to Swales, "[a] speech community typically inherits its membership by birth, accident or adoption; a discourse community recruits its members by persuasion, training or relevant qualification" (24). Swales claims to "appropriate" the work of "social perspectivists" to define characteristics "necessary and sufficient" for identifying a discourse community: "a broadly agreed set of common public goals"; participatory mechanisms of intercommunication that "provide information and feedback"; and a specifically appropriate genre or genres and a specialized vocabulary (24-27).

The influence of literary criticism, or perhaps more properly the texts that have been important to literary critics, on the evolution of *discourse community* has been profound. As early as 1964 Richard Ohmann mentions Northrup Frye in claiming that "[t]he community that a piece of genuine writing creates is one, not only of ideas and attitudes, but of fundamental modes of perception, thought, and feeling. That is, discourse works within

and reflects . . . a world view" (301). In addition to Frye, compositionists have invoked the speculative work on communities done by Roland Barthes, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Edward Said, and others. In particular, Stanley Fish's *interpretive community*—focusing as it does on reading rather than writing per se—has played a large role in helping to define *discourse community* by opposition (see Schilb).

Within composition studies, *discourse* and *community* by themselves each constitute keywords of the first order—definitions of both are frequently bound up with the problems they are used to discuss. Fusing the terms together would seem to radically intensify the potential for slippage. Yet according to M. Jimmie Killingsworth, a combination of the two terms "is useful in the theory and analysis of writing because it embraces the rhetorical concern with social interchange (discourse) and with situation or context (community)" (110).

A *discourse*, according to David Bartholomae, is a "peculiar way of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing." Discourses are plural, various, and constrictive; they constitute a variety of rule-based "voices and interpretive schemes" (135) with discreet "projects and agendas that determine what writers can and will do" (139). Bruce Herzberg has written that "language use in a group is a form of social behavior, that discourse is a means of maintaining and extending [a] group's knowledge and of initiating new members into the group, and that discourse is epistemic or constitutive of the group's knowledge" (qtd. in Swales 21).

Notwithstanding the manifold questions that arise from uses of the term *discourse*—for example, is it enabling or prohibitive? in what sense is *discourse* co-terminous with *rhetoric*, *language* and/or *knowledge*?—the term *community* has drawn far greater attention in composition scholarship for its instability.

"In *community*," Joe Harris (1988) writes, "we find a concept both seductive and powerful, one that offers us a view of shared purpose and effort and that also makes a rhetorical claim on us that is hard to resist. Yet there is also something maddening and vague about the term" (6). John Schilb finds that Elaine Maimon "uses the word so freely . . . [that] she labels as *communities* the whole academy, the various disciplines, subfields within the disciplines, individual classes," and contributors to and readers of the book in which her essay appears (44). Harris (1988) refers to such uses of community as "gambits," "*performatives*—statements . . . in which saying does indeed make it so" (6). He argues that "the 'communities' to which our theories refer all exist at one remove from actual experience. . . . They are all literally utopias—nowheres, meta-communities—that are tied to no particular time or place" (6–7).

Killingsworth laments the sometimes uncritical acceptance of *community* in composition scholarship, but argues that use of the term *discourse* alone, "without the ballast of *community*, which designates a (real or imagined) site

for production," leads to abstraction. He distinguishes, then, between local and global communities. Local communities are defined

simply as the place where writers ordinarily work . . . the site of the occupational practice by which he or she is identified in demographic descriptions. Global communities . . . are defined by likemindedness, political and intellectual affiliation, and other such "special interests" and are maintained by widely dispersed discourse practices made possible by modern publishing and other communication technologies. The global discourse community [is] mental. (111–112).

Any speaker or writer, Killingsworth maintains, is "involved simultaneously in both local and global discourse communities and will feel challenged to favor one over the other" (115). A local discourse community—presumably even "the individual as community"—is a specific site for conflicting discourse practices (117).

Killingsworth here articulates a definition of *discourse community* as a site of fragmentation and discord, an opposition to the earliest uses of the term in the field. In a powerfully influential 1982 article, Patricia Bizzell argued that "[g]roups of society members can become accustomed to modifying each other's reasoning and language use in certain ways. Eventually, these familiar ways achieve the status of conventions that bind the group in a discourse community" (214). Just two years later Kenneth Bruffee suggested that a "community of knowledgeable peers is a group of people who accept, and whose work is guided by, the same paradigms and the same code of values and assumptions" (642). Harris (1989) finds in similar constructs "the sense of like-mindedness and warmth that make community at once such an appealing and limiting concept" (21). "*Community*," Harris suggests, can function as a "stabilizing term, used to give a sense of shared purpose and effort to our dealings with the various discourses that make up the university" (14).

A similar stress on a shared or collaborative project runs through most other attempts to define 'discourse community' . . . Abstracted as they are from almost all other kinds of social and material relations, only an affinity of beliefs and purposes, consensus, is left to hold such communities together. (Harris 1988, 8–9)

Harris argues that "change and struggle within a community" constitute "normal activity," that "[o]ne does not need consensus to have community" (13).

When used to authorize a writing pedagogy, Vandenberg and Morrow argue that consensus-based conceptions "concretize the concept of community, making it a static target at which students can be aimed" (21). Such a pedagogy "tacitly supports the preservation of institutional authority by privileging discursive authority, a gesture that renders a community an oligarchy, an exclusive rather than inclusive construct" (22). Bizzell (1991) has come to argue for an interdependency between rhetorically-constructed institutions and discourse features that create and preserve each other.

Discourse community can come "to seem like an oppressive affirmation of one—and only one—set of discursive practices." According to Bizzell,

community seems to be an utterance that helps middle-class teachers fend off criticism from those both above and below them in the social order. To those below, it seems to promise that we're not excluding anyone. To those above, it seems to ensure that we're not admitting anyone truly disruptive of the status quo, either. (59)

Killingsworth argues that competing constructions of *discourse community* must be kept alive "as a defense against an uncritical adoption of the community concept" (110). One need look no further than her stack of contemporary composition textbooks and journals to find that, uncritical or otherwise, the perceived explanatory power of *discourse community* shows no signs of abating.

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empowerment

In 1991, Kathryn T. Flannery claims that "[t]here is much talk of empowerment in English studies. . . . Writing and reading are said to open up greater possibilities for learners to act in the world . . . , or to understand [themselves] in some fuller, richer way" (701). Madeleine Picciotto adds: "[t]he term empowerment has become central to the discourse of composition studies. Facility with certain forms of language . . . is a prerequisite for the achievement of social, economic, and intellectual power" (59). Still, Flannery cautions that the implicit meanings—and thus the perceived value—of the word "empowerment" in the literature of composition studies vary radically from one scene of writing to another (702-710).

Flannery underscores the complexities of definitions of empowerment by claiming that any model of pedagogy with a goal of "[e]mpowerment . . . has built into it a presumption of human beings as agents," a problematic category for "postmodern theory" which defines humans as culturally "produced" and thus to some extent "disempowered" (701-706). Picciotto pairs "power" with "powerlessness", a move that allows her to use "empowerment" to gauge the measures of authority oscillating between teacher, student, and institutional and social contexts (59-60).

Working within such contexts, Ira Shor claims that "[e]mpowering education . . . is a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change" (15); thus empowerment becomes a function of education in which the individual and the social intercreate each other. John Trimbur also advocates the power of the collective for the individual by arguing that the writing classroom is a site in which "the empowering sense of collectivity and the isolating personalization of an individual's fate" occur all at once (615). Within the social scene of the Writing Center, Gail Okawa argues for multi-ethnic peer tutors and maintains "that the very presence of such a . . . group [provides] visible evidence that students of different cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds can work together towards a common goal of empowerment" (10).

"Transformative visions of empowerment are central to feminist pedagogy as well" (Picciotto 60); often, these "transformative visions" correlate

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error

The written history of *error* leaves one with the sense that the phenomenon is, first, negative, and second, distinguished by its divergence from standard dialect more so than by its relation to other issues of acceptable school writing such as tone, consideration of audience, *ethos*, and the like. Albert R. Kitzhaber describes the teaching of writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as "dominated by an ideal of superficial correctness, of conformity to rules chiefly for the sake of conformity" (188). He points out that the Harvard entrance examination in English helped spark avid attention to such surface-level aberrations as indications of poor writing (200). In fact, L. B. R. Briggs, in 1882, fully equates "bad English" with "ungrammatical" English when commenting on results of the entrance examination (qtd. in Kitzhaber 203). Robert J. Connors and Andrea A. Lunsford (1993) also describe much of the teaching of writing in the twentieth century as involved with correcting and editing student papers, noting that the definition and counting of errors is associated with objectivity (202-203).

While the mid-century brought about a shift from looking almost exclusively at such sentence-level turbulence to examining student writing as a rhetorical device with the teacher as a responsive audience, the idea of *error* continues to elicit images of unconventional grammar, spelling, punctuation, and diction. In 1963, for example, James W. Ney construes error as exclusively a "sentence-level" problem. Writing in 1990, Gary Sloan likewise finds it necessary to base his definition of *error* on the guidance of grammar handbooks (300), although he gives a nod to the tentativeness of such a definition by sometimes enclosing *error* in quotation marks. Paramount to Sloan's study of the *frequency* of errors, though, is the *quantifiability* of errors; sentence-level errors are more readily countable than structural ones (see also Peckham 18, 21). Similarly, Connors and Lunsford (1993) distinguish between the "content of the paper[...] specifically rhetorical aspects of its organization," and "formal and mechanical errors," which nearly always tend to be indicated "using either handbook numbers or the standard set of mysterious phatic grunts: 'awk,' 'ww,' 'comma,' etc." (205).

Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* seems to be at the fulcrum of contested contemporary perceptions of *error*. Shaughnessy notes that the perception of *error* as an occurrence in written discourse that calls attention to itself due to its lying outside the bounds of acceptability has no doubt been common among compositionists (12). But "the guiding metaphor of error was transformed" by her work as scholars began to deal more fully with the political issues of student diversity and open admissions (Laurence 21). Before her book, *error* was used primarily, if not exclusively, in a pejorative sense. Errors were to be avoided, and the teaching of writing was shaped by the intent to eradicate such errors. Shaughnessy, however, advocated exploring student errors, making them the subject of inquiry "in order to determine at what point or points along the developmental path error should or can become the subject of instruction" (13). While she defines errors as anomalies (12), Shaughnessy delves into a course of action centered around the reasons for those errors. This perception of error, referred to as error-analysis, reflects Piaget's view that learning spawns a system of errors or "signals of the learner's way of coping with new challenges" (Foster 39).

Barry M. Kroll and John C. Schafer extend the perception of *error* as a point of inquiry, and their definition is fused with their attitude towards errors. In an effort to dispel the myth of the "composition teacher as revenge-thirsty monster wielding pen and red ink," they delineate a shift from product-oriented to process-oriented remedies. The latter approach, which is informed by cognitivist theory and views errors as "windows into the mind" of the writer, calls for treating each type of error as a useful starting point in discovering which linguistic strategies led to the error. But the former approach, grounded in behaviorist learning theory, involves identifying those types of errors, labeling them "bad," and promoting habits of accepted discourse (242-243).

Some scholars have attempted to delineate among kinds or degrees of error. Sidney Greenbaum and John Taylor, for example, offer a scheme in which errors fall into three categories: "clearly unacceptable," "divided usage," and "clearly acceptable" (169-170). In like manner, Muriel Harris and Tony Silva distinguish between global errors—surface features that interfere with the intended audience's reading of a text—and local errors—surface features that do not interfere even though they defy convention (526).

Other compositionists emphasize that error is better understood as a manifestation of a rhetorical intention. David Bartholomae argues, for instance, that "[a]n error (and I would include errors beyond those in decoding and encoding sentences) can only be understood as evidence of intention" and, thus, an indication of control (255). Gary Sloan likewise acknowledges error as a matter of intention and rhetorical choice: the "gap between prescription and practice make the word 'error' something of a misnomer. A number of the 'errors' . . . are perhaps better viewed as manifestations of rhetorical choice" (306).

Joseph M. Williams correlates the dissonance created by errors of grammar and usage with that of social errors. He suggests "[turning] our attention from error as a discrete entity, frozen at the moment of its commission, to error as part of a flawed transaction" (153). Williams notes the great diversity in definitions of error and a similar diversity in the feelings associated with particular categories of error: "The categories of error all seem like [sic] they should be yes-no, but the feelings associated with the categories seem much more complex" (155). Thus, he defines error as occurring in the interaction of the writer, the reader, and the formulators of handbooks (159). Connors and Lunsford (1988) likewise locate error in the interaction between writer and reader (396), an interaction that changes according to its historical context. In emphasizing "features of writing styles which are commonly displaced to the realm of 'error' and thus viewed as peripheral to college English teaching" (448), Min-zhan Lu likewise accentuates the social epistemic quality of error. She concludes that writing conventions are not essentially prescribed and constant through the ages; students must be taught how to operate within these conventions in order to succeed in their particular writing situations (457-458; see also Lazere 12; Owens 227-231).

Since conventions do not remain rigid over time or across different writing situations, error is an inherently relative and localized phenomenon. It is, nonetheless, one that is consistently construed as an artifact on the page or a product of the interaction among reader, writer, and rulebook.

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essay

For writing teachers (and students), the word rolls off the tongue as easily as any, and why not: essays, it seems to go without saying, are those works of nonfiction prose students try to write, often by reading other published essays. But this accommodating word, used interchangeably by teachers with terms like "paper," "composition," "project," and "exercise," is as ambiguous as it is adaptable. Consequently, researchers have tried to "explain" the rhetoric of the essay from a variety of angles. One researcher classifies essays as texts with abstract, philosophical, and multisyllabic vocabularies, distinguishing them from "literary discourse" (Stotsky). Another defines the essay as a single "macroparagraph," the test of its worth found somehow in the way its paragraphs hang together (D'Angelo). Elsewhere, one contends that the essay is not at all the hierarchical presentation of information according to conventional outlines but rather a horizontal progression of meaning in stages (Larson). And both vertical and horizontal renderings of "compositional unfolding," argues another, are equally at home in this discursive space best understood as something comparable to a musical composition (Hesse).

Interestingly, Montaigne, the "creator" of the medium, is frequently invoked to promote conflicting definitions of the essay. In one case Montaigne's writings are used as support for the idea of the essay as a laboratory for testing but not proving ideas (Zeiger). Some see in Montaigne a kindred spirit whose private ruminations take on potentially universal implications, the true mark of an essay (Atkins). These privilegings of the private-made-public, sometimes unapologetically "romantic" (Elbow 1995, 82), "egocentric" and "self-indulgent" (Atkins 637), are definitions fashioned partly in opposition to the "academic essay," a mode of discourse many consider tainted by dishonest objectification. These definitions are in turn challenged by those who applaud Montaigne's dispassionate attempts to unveil the truth through clear and independent thinking but adamantly reject proponents of the "personal" or "familiar" essay as succumbing to "misplaced passion, sentimentality, and even dishonesty" (Marius 40). And there are those who, less

concerned with positioning themselves specifically on one side or the other of the academic-personal debate, cite Montaigne's critique of scholastic discourse (its fragmented disciplines limiting the exchange of ideas with their artificial boundaries) to advance the notion of the essay as a site of authorial experience ever situated within and thus contributing to a distinct community (Spellmeyer).

Some views of the essay are primarily aesthetic: one sees the essay as an art form ideal for meditating on the self (Simonson); another entertains an apparently eros-driven reading of the essay which "tries to open, to stimulate, to inject multiple overtones so that insight is expanded and pleasure is aroused" (Brashers 155). Lynn Z. Bloom argues that ideally essays should be regarded as literary nonfiction, and not just articles, which are devices intended for passing along information. In contrast, the essayist is given permission to wander, comment on the process of the text's evolving composition, and in the words of Peter Elbow, "render experience rather than explain it" (1991, 136).

But critics of the familiar essay and autobiographical academic writing, like Gordon Harvey, charge that such definitions lend themselves to narcissism and bad thinking. Even the authorial "presence" Harvey claims all good essays must possess is more subtle than overt, and ought not to detract from the essay's primary goal of "academic analysis." Like Harvey, Gesa E. Kirsch and Joy S. Ritchie criticize the popularity of the personal essay among feminist scholarship, claiming that such attempts tend not to be innovative or alternative but simply offer essentialist renderings of a confessional voice leading to more master narratives. Joel Haefner argues that the essay is not the class-less, neutral vehicle promoting democracy through individualistic expression many claim, but always a "cultural product."

Others would maintain that personal writing is not always solipsistic, but can in fact be a tool for intellectual growth and social change. Margaret Byrd Boegeman argues that the function of the personal essay is to instill "self-reliance" and "self-possession," antidotes to rampant conformism in the pre-dominating culture. Allan Brick sees the essay as simultaneously personal and political, arguing for a "revolution" in which "personal writing" plays a fundamental role towards "an overall institutional commitment to the individual's democratic right to an education [where] personal identity, self-exploration, active creativity, and 'praxis' [are] essential to learning in all fields" (515).

One thing many of the above have in common is their assumption that the essay—whether interpreted as an aesthetic of the personal, a search for ontological truths, or a medium for social construction—remains separate from poetry, fiction, drama, and so on. Others are more critical of such distinctions. According to Shirely Brice Heath, the essay was originally epigrammatic in nature and consciously poetic, but has since evolved into a perversion where its unacknowledged function is to serve as a gatekeeper keeping certain classes and cultures outside of the academy. Although Winston

Weathers has introduced the idea of "grammar A" (classical modes of persuasion, objective voice, linear progression, etc.) as distinct from "grammar B" (experimental tropes derived largely from modernist literature), he insists that our understanding of the essay is incomplete until it includes both traditional and experimental styles. Lillian Bridwell-Bowles argues that essays should be thought of as "diverse discourse," critically experimental writing receptive to textual manipulation and language play more representative of our pluralistic society. And, arguing along with modernist and postmodern poets that grammar is content and vice versa, Derek Owens has read the essay as an open zone crying out for textual, performative, and technological innovation of the most extreme kind. Definitions such as these tend to blur the line between "poet" and "writer," and assume both "academic" and "personal" manifestations of discourse as too often elitist, patriarchal, ethnocentric, and psychologically debilitating. All of these writers and definitions have one thing in common, and that is a faith in the written word (constructed in some container labeled "essay") as a viable medium for information exchange and construction of the world. This faith contrasts sharply with what Ron B. Scollon and Suzanne B. K. Scollon have learned in their study of Athabaskan Indians and other ethnic communities where people are prone to reject much of written discourse, and instead privilege face-to-face dialogue over transmission of meaning through writing. Here, writers of essays and those schooled in what the authors refer to as "essayist literacy" (the necessary fictionalization of both author and reader in order to write for a large, hypothetical audience) are always suspect. Studies like this suggest that our own rituals of writing are always localized, culturally specific acts of self-promotion.

As we scan different readings (and thus, always, engenderings) of this word and its origins, it would appear that the essay can not signify any *bona fide* genre. Rather, the term might best be considered an "open rubric" the intention of which can only be defined locally by the "rule makers" of specific discourse communities: i.e., the teacher, the test maker, the editor, the publishing company. As paradigm shifts in our technology and culture continue to force us to revamp our definitions of literacy and writing, the debates over the appropriate meanings for the "essay" will most likely become even more heated and, perhaps to those outside academic communities, increasingly irrelevant.

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evaluation

In composition studies, *evaluation* typically represents the act of a teacher or peer placing value on the work of a student. Yet, James C. Raymond contends that composition scholars "have not even agreed on what it is we are trying to evaluate—whether it is the mastery of editorial skills, or indices of cognitive development, or success in communicating a semantic intention" (399). Thus, although composition studies has watched an ever-expanding list of evaluation methods and techniques develop and has seen the emphasis shift from evaluation as "judging" to evaluation as "coaching" (Faigley 395), the meaning of *evaluation* continues to vary (see also Siegel 303).

According to Robert J. Connors and Andrea Lunsford, teachers saw themselves primarily as editors in the first part of the century, correcting student papers and assigning grades. "rating" instead of "responding" to student writing (445-446). The subsequent proliferation of rating scales (for an extreme example of mathematical assessment, see Leahy) that occurred was met with some criticism, most notably by Fred Newton Scott, who stated that "whenever a piece of scientific machinery is allowed to take the place of teaching . . . the result will be to artificialize the course of instruction" (qtd. in Connors and Lunsford 447). Scott's disdain for the reduction of evaluation to mathematical scales finds resonance in composition studies' continued struggle today with evaluation's conflicted goals of assessment and instruction. Elaine O. Lees contends that evaluation is a paradox forcing teachers to assess "students as writers," using their papers as the "evidence" of their abilities. This practice relies on the assumption that "students have already succeeded in creating personas which suitably represent them" (373). According to Lees, in order to fulfill their goal of teaching students to write, instructors have to evaluate (respond to) students in such a way that students learn to "ignore the evidence that their ability has so far produced and believe in the possibility of producing something else" (374). Susan Miller further highlights the conflicted meanings inherent in *evaluation*, claiming that when methods of evaluation "separate the writer from the writing" to insure a "fair"

assessment, they move further away from the intentions of composition studies: "learning to write, getting better at writing, and being good at it" (176).

Mary K. Healy distinguishes between evaluation and response, defining evaluation as the "final 'assessment' of a work" and response as "a reaction to an initial or working draft" (qtd. in Lape and Glenn 439). However, Nancy Sommers contends that, even when assessing student rough drafts, many teachers formulate their comments as if they are assessing a final product instead of responding to a work in progress (154). Their comments reflect their sometimes conflicted desires to defend the grade given on one hand and to lead the student toward further discovery as a writer on the other, to both judge and respond at the same time. According to Lester Faigley, the writing-as-process movement has resulted in a change in meaning of evaluation from "summative" to "formative" (395), shifting the concept of evaluation to that of a pedagogical tool. Denise Lynch asserts that evaluation as a process to facilitate the educational goals of composition instructors can make students better writers, while evaluation as justification can "alienate or discourage" these very students (310). A teacher's evaluation, for Sommers, should ultimately act as a model "to help our students to become that questioning reader themselves[...] to help them evaluate what they have written and develop control over their writing" (148).

According to Anne Greenhalgh, a "responsible teacher" is a "responsive reader," whose comments "respect the differences between a teacher's and a student's responsibility to an emerging text" (401). Writing of the different voices of response offered by teachers, Greenhalgh breaks response into two categories: "interruptive" (based on reader response) and "interpretive" (based on external realities) (404). She claims that teachers tend to use more interpretive comments than interruptive, grounding their authority in "external realities" such as handbooks, instead of "responding to a particular text" (405). Lil Brannon and C. H. Knoblauch assert that evaluation should involve an exploration of the student's purpose, giving the student increased control over their work (163). They contend that evaluation is a vehicle for helping writers achieve their own purposes instead of a medium for teachers to "dictate choices that properly belong to the writers" (159).

Evaluation is often seen as the power to decide what is deemed good writing. According to Francine Hardaway, transferring partial power and responsibility from the teacher to the students through peer evaluation allows students to influence and apply evaluation criteria, demystifying the evaluation process and revealing to students its inherent subjectivity (577-578). Removing the power of evaluation from the teacher completely, Miller advocates the practice of self-evaluation, a process by which students assess their writing using their own individual criteria, as a way "to internalize new images of ourselves" (182). She asserts that "[w]ithout such judgments, new events are not occasions for growth; those who cook only to eat do not become chefs" (182). Self-evaluation privileges the individual growth of the

student as writer in contrast to many traditional evaluation methods that assess students in relation to each other. Barrett John Mandel argues for the removal of qualitative evaluation altogether, contending that "judgment in the form of grades and measurement (against 'standards') does more to prevent education than to encourage it" (623). Instead he advocates a quantitative concept of evaluation, claiming that this non-punitive system encourages students and produces writing that is "enormously superior" to that received under traditional qualitative evaluation (630).

Regardless of the assessment technique, evaluation typically results in a paper being returned to a student with marks and comments. According to Sommers, there exists within composition studies an "accepted, albeit unwritten canon for commenting on student texts." Sommers contends that at the moments when instructors charge their students with vagueness, their own comments often ironically comprise vague, general suggestions such as "choose precise language" or "think more about your audience," causing students to view evaluation as a presentation of "rules for composing" and leading them to view writing as "a matter of following the rules" (153).

Michael Platt and John V. Knapp argue that evaluation should be construed as a public, immediate, interactive, highly personal form of communication among students and teachers. Evaluation often baffles students who begin each class frantically attempting to determine what evaluation means to this particular instructor. Platt suggests transforming evaluation into a method of public review in small groups where both students and teacher give the writer immediate feedback on a paper (22-23). In a similar vein, Knapp proposes conference grading that brings the student and teacher together for the purpose of evaluation and allows the teacher to question the student about any items the instructor would generally ask herself if grading the paper alone (650-651). For Knapp and Platt, evaluation becomes an act of communication or miscommunication between a teacher and a student, between reader and writer.

Because each act of evaluation typically involves at least two human beings, this practice quickly becomes part of a complicated human relationship. As the context changes with each teacher, each student, each paper, evaluation becomes a dynamic act, and at times, the center of consternation.

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expressive writing

Richard Young articulates the problematic nature of "expressive discourse" when he notes that the term has been "variously defined, meaning anything from uncritical effusion about the self for those who are critical of romantic theory and pedagogy, to, for the more sympathetic, an aim of discourse prerequisite to all other aims of discourse" (30). Lester Faigley attaches the qualities "sincerity," "spontaneity," and "originality" to expressive writing, which, he notes, have also been used to define "'expressive' poetry" (528-531). Implicit here is the connection of "expressive" forms of writing to literary forms, a connection also made by James Kinneavy (393). In expressive writing, Kinneavy says, "it is the speaking self that dominates the discourse, and it is by discourse that he expresses and partially achieves his own individuality" (398). Kinneavy's definition incorporates three attributes of expressive writing that are common to most accounts: its connection to speech, its correlation to the "self" of the writer, and its function as a means of identity formation for the writing "self."

In associating expressive writing with speech, Kinneavy provides a common link to the theory of James Britton, who, along with his co-authors in *The Development of Writing Abilities, 11-18*, devise "a dynamic three-term scale" of language functions moving from "communicative" to "expressive" to "poetic," with the expressive function being of particular interest because of its connections to speech (10-11). According to Britton, language that "invites the listener to enter into [the writer's] world and respond to him as a person is revealing of self inasmuch as, being informal, and leaving much implicit, it is closer to the way the individual thinks when he thinks by himself than more developed or more mediated utterance. It is this function of language," Britton says, "which we have called *expressive*" (141). The expressive function, then, reflects the individuality of the writing "self" and is characterized by its informality and inexplicitness.

Britton also believes that the expressive function is at the core of all discourse production, citing it as "a kind of matrix from which differentiated

forms of mature writing are developed": as more complex writing tasks develop, "expressive writing changes to meet the demands" of those tasks (83). Janet Emig (citing Britton's model) agrees, stating that "the notions that all student writings emanate from an expressive impulse and that they then bifurcate into two major modes is useful and accurate" (37). Kinneavy, too, places "the expressive component" at the heart of all discourse, because it "is, in effect, the personal stake of the speaker in the discourse." (393) Samples of the sort of discourse that Kinneavy would deem "expressive"—in which the expressive component often dominates—take such diverse forms as diaries, journals, cursing, and suicide notes (393).

Jeanette Harris's 1991 study *Expressive Discourse*, however, is devoted to the notion that "the writing presently categorized as expressive is . . . more accurately and more usefully viewed as four different phenomena" which she labels "the interior text, the generative text, aesthetic discourse, and experience-based discourse" (x), the former two being "form[s] that a text assumes rather than type[s] of completed discourse," and the latter two being "types" of discourse that are "static and completed entities" (xi). While aware of the confusion and ambiguity that has surrounded the term "expressive writing," Harris believes that "one can accept an expressive approach to teaching writing without believing that the approach produces writing that constitutes a category of discourse" (170). Harris refers to the "rhetorical expressionists," those who employ an expressive approach, as seeing "writing not as a rhetorical act or a practical means of communication but as a way of helping students become psychologically healthier and happier, more fulfilled and self-actualized" (28). Peter Elbow (1991), as one of the "rhetorical expressionists" cited by Harris, has taken exception with this depiction (84). Harris' representation of "rhetorical expressionism" draws upon the taxonomies of theorists like James Berlin who, in *Rhetoric and Reality*, divides theories of composing into the categories of "expressionistic," "cognitive," and "social-epistemic." An expressionistic rhetoric, Berlin says, is distinguished by "its emphasis on the cultivation of the self" (73), and he adds that such a rhetoric "falls short of being epistemic . . . because it denies the place of intersubjective, social processes in shaping reality" (146). (For similar taxonomies that include "expressive" or "expressionistic" components, see Berlin 1982, 1988, 1990.)

Christopher C. Burnham, on the other hand, argues that an expressive rhetoric does indeed promote an epistemic view of language. He adds that "[i]ts aim is to better understand how writing comes to be in order to help individuals use language to create an identity and to act effectively in the world" (154). Citing Britton's work as his foundation, Burnham states: "As a functional category, expressive writing represents a mode rather than a form; it is a purpose that must be realized in the process of creating a text rather than a description of a text itself. . . . In short, the expressive function creates texts—notes, drafts, correspondence with collaborators, additional

drafts—that map out the process through which formal discourse evolves" (157). Despite the confusion of terminology, what Burnham here calls "a mode rather than a form" is similar to what Harris calls the "forms" of "interior text" and "generative text," expressive writing seen as a step in the process of developing other forms of completed texts.

Stephen Fishman, like Burnham, suggests that "there is more to expressivism than personal writing and self-discovery," that attention to the social realm is inherent in an expressive rhetoric (660). Using Elbow's work as a model, Fishman sees expressivism, with its "emphasis upon believing," or "the sympathetic hearing of diverse languages," as being "rooted in a romanticism that seeks not isolation but new ways to identify with one another and, thereby, new grounds for social communion" (654). Like Fishman, Maureen Neal (45–47) and Elbow (1990, 13–15) suggest the theoretical intersections between "expressionist" and social-constructionist theories of composing.

Among the theoretical developments that have contributed to the complication of the term "expressive writing" during the last decade have been the destabilization of the notion of the autonomous "self" and the related debate over the distinction between the terms "objective" and "subjective." David Bartholomae voices both of these concerns when he refers to "expressive discourse" as "a mode whose fundamental purpose, as many see it, is to perpetuate a figure of the writer as a free-agent, as independent, self-authorizing, a-historical, a-cultural; where writing is the expression of the thoughts and feelings of a particularly privileged sensibility" (123). He goes on to say that the "dangers of the expressive mode" are that it "makes everything an idealized human story, a story of 'common' humanity" and that it "resists and erases its own position within a discursive practice" (126); by so doing it attempts to be "objective" when objectivity itself is not possible. Elbow (1990) wishes to suggest, however, that critics of expressive writing often "give in to hierarchical thinking and assume that one side of any dichotomy must always win or dominate the other" (15). Just because personal expressive writing "invites feeling does not mean that it leaves out thinking; and because it invites attention to the self does not mean that it leaves out other people and the social connection" (10).

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feminism

In composition studies, feminism has been constructed as a classroom pedagogy, a research methodology, a rhetoric, and a social critique linked to other movements for social change and transformation. Theorists generally agree that feminism is a political movement designed to alleviate the patriarchal oppression of women; however, multiple debates have been waged over the relative meaning of the term *feminism* as well as over the multiple meanings of terms associated with feminism: *experience*, *femininity*, *gender*, and *identity politics*, as well as the categories *woman* or *women*. Given the contested nature of these terms, it is perhaps better to speak of feminisms—rather than feminism—in order to signify the contested, multiple sites of feminist teaching and theorizing.

From 1970 to 1985, pedagogical strategies identified as "feminist" began to make their way into writing courses taught by women's studies advocates. True to the feminist consciousness-raising movement that prevailed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Florence Howe portrays the feminist writing classroom as a collaborative, open-ended space designed to break women students out of "passive-dependent patterns and assumptions of inferiority," thus liberating them "to analyze sexual stereotyping and to grow conscious of themselves as women" (865). Likewise, Adrienne Rich encourages women teachers and students to empower themselves by learning to believe "in the value of women's experience, traditions, perceptions" (240). Similarly, Pamela J. Annas heralds feminism as a liberatory pedagogy that encourages women students to "discover or rediscover a new women's language, a kind of writing which is confident in asserting the particulars of women's experience—both in content and form" (370). Metaphors of discovery—as well as liberation—are deployed by feminists to represent the exploratory, transformative potential of feminism.

Not surprisingly, feminist pedagogical methods—an emphasis on personal voice, shared pedagogical authority, and collaboration—have much in common with expressivist approaches to writing instruction. Cynthia L.

Most recently, as Crowley (1991) notes, freshman English has come to be seen "as a venue for radical instructional politics" (164), as a place to "sensitize students to the fact that they live in an oppressive culture ridden with sexism, racism, and classism" (173). Finally, Crowley notes, the very size of freshman English as a universal requirement "subjects its administrators, teachers, and students to unprofessional and unethical working practices on a scale that is replicated nowhere else in the academy" (157).

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grammar

Twenty-five years ago, Charlton Laird lamented that "nobody knows what grammar is," that scholars "cannot agree how it works, how it is related to men and mental processes, or even how one should go about studying it, once it can be identified and defined" (181). In the time since, scholarship in composition studies has come to understand *grammar* as a keyword whose definitions are legion.

In 1985, for instance, Patrick Hartwell delineated five distinct kinds of grammar. Grammar 1, he said, is "the grammar in our heads," the internalized system of unconscious rules which speakers of a language share (111). Grammar 2 is "scientific grammar" (110), that is, the "attempt to approximate the rules or schemata of Grammar 1 by writing fully explicit descriptions that model the competence of a native speaker" (115). Next comes Grammar 3, the popular (mis)understanding of grammar as (mis)usage, as "linguistic etiquette." Hartwell defined Grammar 4 as "school grammar" . . . meaning, quite literally, 'the grammars used in the schools.'" Finally, he distinguished Grammar 5, "'stylistic grammar,' defined as 'grammatical terms used in the interest of teaching prose style'" (110).

The discussion of grammar in composition studies over the last thirty years seems to amount to a long series of responses to a single quotation. In 1963, Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer wrote:

In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based on many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing. (37-38)

But since this conclusion contradicts the commonsense belief that one's writing must be improved by a knowledge of grammar, this construction of grammar has been repeatedly attacked or ignored. Many teachers and scholars have maintained, despite the evidence to the contrary, that grammar would indeed help students write better, if only they studied the right kind of grammar.

Fueled by the belief that "because the newest form of grammar is so superior to the bad old grammars it will succeed where the others have failed" (Lester 227), scholars embarked on a quest for the "right kind" of grammar by means of a tremendous proliferation of redefinitions. Hence, in the last three decades, the literature in composition studies has manifested a great many new constructions of *grammar* through the addition of prefatory adjectivals such as *technical, functional, formal, systemic, prescriptive, true, applied, semantic, case, junction, text, instrumental, rhetorical, immediate constituent, comparative, streamlined writer's, Latinate, X-bar, Old, New, Montague, neo-Bloomfieldian, neo-Firthian, Interactive, function-word Structural, phonological Structural, Transformational-Generative, Tagmemic, Stratificational*, and, of course, *Traditional* (including *old-line Traditional, much-revised scholarly-traditional*, and *pragmatic traditional surface structure*).

More problematic than this sheer number of contesting (re)constructions of grammar, however, have been the occasions when scholars and teachers (re)defined and attempted to construe a Grammar 2 (scientific grammar) as the field's collective Grammar 4 (school grammar). In the case of generative grammar, for instance, when one scholar ultimately found that it had "not been an effective means for teaching skillful use of the language," he redefined it back into being solely a Grammar 2, concluding that since "transformational grammar is not a theory of rhetoric or usage or even competence in writing," we should study it instead for the insights it offers into our minds and our linguistic facility (Luthy 352-355).

In like manner, many have urged compositionists to understand grammar as "a subject in its own right . . . a discipline worthy of the name, a challenge worthy of the intellect" (Stockwell 59), as a theory which we should study for its own sake rather than as a practice which we study to avoid errors in writing. Grammar has also come to mean "a theory of generation," as in Richard M. Coe's "grammar of passages." Here, grammar refers to the system of constituent structure rules underlying whatever phenomenon is being examined which explains which patterns are preferred and which are proscribed. A similar meaning is apparent in constructions like Kenneth Burke's, where grammar refers to "the purely internal relationships" among the units of a system, their range of possible transformations, permutations, and combinations (xvi). For Winston Weathers, grammar refers to nothing less than "the set of conventions governing the construction of a whole composition," its subject matter, organization, development, structure, style, and communication goals (2).

Such expansive definitions obviously clash with more fundamental representations. For instance, grammar is frequently imagined as a useful tool, as in Jim W. Corder's description of "grammar as a sprightly instrument in composition" (480). As Laird points out, grammar has also come "to refer to elements and to matters elementary" (181), that is, foundational. In this vein, grammar has long been represented as being the center of the English

curriculum (recalling its status as one part of the classical trivium), as the key to control over and mastery of written language, as the chief indicator of competence in written English, and thus as a central element of every "back to basics movement." In contrast, other constructions of grammar as foundational include grammar as drill-and-practice exercises—the stuff of workbooks, as a crisis staved off by means of "grammar hotlines," as an illness in need of remediation in writing "labs" and "clinics," and as a stigma and a source of "Toxic shame—overwhelming embarrassment, usually triggered by becoming aware of a mistake" (Farrell 270).

Through the use of such contested meanings, grammar has come to be understood as being situated at the crux of the shifting power relation between teachers and students. As Hartwell has said, "At no point in the English curriculum is the question of power more blatantly posed than in the issue of formal grammar instruction" (127).

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ideology

The term *ideology* enters composition studies from Marxist discussions, where it may generally be said to point to ways in which ideas function as "a set of discursive strategies for legitimating a dominant power" (Eagleton 1994, 8). In compositionists' conversations, three very broad and interrelated areas of emphasis may be delineated; within each lie contrasting and contesting definitions of this keyword.

I. IDEOLOGY AND "FALSE" CONSCIOUSNESS

Some compositionists, especially those influenced by Marxist thought, define ideology as "false consciousness"—that is, in Ira Shor's definition, "manipulated action and reflection which lead people to support their own repression" (1980, 55)—and point unabashedly to "real" economic relations that are masked by its illusions. Richard Ohmann (1976) works from what he calls "a general principle of ideology"—that "a privileged social group will generalize its own interests so that they *appear* to be universal social goals" (86; emphasis added). Susan Miller (1991), focussing on subjectivity in *Textual Carnivals*, writes that "[i]ndividuals are placed, or given the status of subjects by ideological constructions that tie them to *fantasized* functions and activities, not to their actual situations . . . [and that] *mask very real* needs to organize societies in particular ways" (123, emphasis added). Miller here invokes Althusser's conception of interpellation, a process by which (in James Berlin's words) "ideology . . . addresses and shapes [subjects] through discourses that point out what exists, what is good, and what is possible" (1993, 103). In Miller's analysis, a culture would mask its need for cheap instruction in usage and orthography by interpellating its (poorly paid and predominantly female) composition teachers as nurturing mother figures who prepare students to take their place in literate society. Linda Brodkey draws an analogy between the ideological narratives through which a culture knows itself and Kenneth Burke's representative anecdotes, explaining that a representative anecdote (about, for example, the artist as solitary genius) "generates ideology"

in its selectivity, reduction, and scope and (thereby) constitutes a model to which students are taught (interpellated) to aspire (1987, 401).

But not every compositionist—or even every Marxist—who uses the word ideology places this emphasis on “false” consciousness. Some include Marx in their postmodern distrust of master narratives and use ideology to refer to any system of beliefs about the actual, the good, and the possible. Patricia Bizzell (1991) foregrounds this distinction in her assertion that compositionists tend to “use the term *ideology* to demonstrate that no person has access to unfiltered reality. . . . We do not really use *ideology* in Marx’s sense, as an explanation that distorts reality. . . . Rather, we tend to adhere more to Louis Althusser’s notion of ideology as an interpretation that constitutes reality” (55). In *Rhetoric and Reality*, Berlin stipulates that he will use the term

simply to refer to the pluralistic conceptions of social and political arrangements that are present in a society in any given time. These conceptions are based on discursive (verbal) and nondiscursive (nonverbal) formations designating the shape of social and political structures, the nature and role of the individual within these structures, and the distribution of power in society. (4–5)

In non-Marxist usage, ideology can refer to any narrow or constricting system of belief, as in E. D. Hirsch’s claim that national cultures and national languages transcend ideologies (1987, *passim*) and Maxine Hairston’s (1992) distress at what she sees as “the cultural left[’s] belief. . . . [that] any teacher should be free to use his or her classroom to promote any ideology” (188).

II. IDEOLOGY, HEGEMONY, AND CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Discussions of “false” or restrictive consciousness occasion questions about the degree to which an individual is aware (or could choose to become aware) of ideology and, from the perspective of that awareness, resist. To the extent that ideology names the boundaries of what is known or knowable at a given moment in history, it might be understood as a “misrecognition” from which one cannot entirely escape. Several left-oriented compositionists emphasize the “invisibility” of ideology and its “naturalizing” function. David Kaufer and Gary Waller, for example, point out that ideological formations not only prescribe actual behaviors but also “define or ‘naturalize’ possible ones,” such that ideology becomes “a kind of sociocultural epoxy-resin” that holds a culture together (75). Ohmann (1987) approvingly alludes to Terry Eagleton’s definition of ideology as that complex of beliefs and values and habits which makes the existing power relations of the society seem “natural” or “invisible” (Eagleton 1976, 4–5; Ohmann, 121). J. Elspeth Stuckey emphasizes Eagleton’s observation that ideology reflects “those misperceptions of the ‘real’ which contribute to the reproduction of the dominant social relations” (Eagleton, 1984, 54; Stuckey, 22) to support her assertion that “the ways in which literacy is thought about in this country are reductive and

dangerous” (21). Stuckey (22) and Kathleen McCormick (1994, 34) point to ways in which ideology covers up (and/or appears to resolve) a culture’s contradictions, those “fragmented . . . and incomplete sets of ideas that people use to get on in the world” (Faigley 1992a, 100). For example, (as McCormick points out) many first year students (and their teachers) believe both that the research paper should present an original point of view and that it should assemble as many sources as possible, without reflecting on the potential contradictions implicit in those beliefs. Indeed, David Shumway writes that “ideology is precisely what the culture makes us accept without reflection” (153).

That acceptance might usefully be considered in the context of what Antonio Gramsci calls hegemony. According to Victor Villanueva, “hegemony equals ideological domination . . . by consent” (20) in which the world view of the dominant class is understood to be “truth” and consented to by the dominated who are then (in Nancy Mack’s words) “controlled by it internally. Ideology becomes our mental police” (Mack and Zebroski 91). The leftist project then becomes an effort to promote reflection on, and resistance to, ideological assumptions, although Bizzell (1991) asserts that “[w]e may indeed free ourselves from a particular ideology, but the lever that pries us loose can only be another ideology, which manages at that moment to be more persuasive for reasons . . . that are culturally conditioned” (55).

Ideology may also be regarded as a consciously held set of ideas that one knows about but chooses not to abandon. Faigley (1989), for example, writes that a student who follows the formulae for writing a letter of application given in a standard business writing textbook “has voluntarily [accepted] the dominant ideology . . . by presenting himself as a commodity” (251).

III. IDEOLOGY AND/AS PRACTICE

A third strain of discussion addresses the question whether ideology is more usefully understood (exclusively) as a set of ideas or as a practical political force to be met with specific strategies of resistance. In composition studies, the tendency is overwhelmingly toward the latter construction. For Berlin, (1993) “ideology . . . includes a version of power formations governing the agent” (103). Faigley points approvingly to Althusser’s “redefinition” of “ideology as sets of cultural practices rather than as systems of ideas” (1992b, 40) and notes that Michael Halliday’s “social-semiotic view . . . [of ideology] gives language a very active role in coding experience and mediating social meanings” (1992a, 100). Throughout their extensive work, Shor and Giroux inscribe ideology as a force that constructs students and offer strategies for resistance. Similarly, Ohmann (1976, 1987) shows how ideology constructs the general public’s notions about the importance and usefulness of writing courses; Berlin (1988, 1996), Sharon Crowley, Miller (1989, 1991), McCormick (1990, 1994) explain how ideology constructs teachers’ and administrators’ notions about writing curricula. John Clifford (1991), Crowley (1991),

McCormick (1990), Ohmann (1976), Berlin (1988, 1996), Faigley (1992a), and Kathleen E. Welch (1987) describe some ways in which text-books and curricula interpellate the teachers and students to whom they are marketed. Michael Blitz and C. Mark Hurlbert look at such university communications as course catalogues and memos.

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method is "an aid in discovering [i.e., identifying with] the essential features of the behavior of groups or individuals" (1978, 37). And since Burke himself conflates "persuasion" and "communication" in his *Rhetoric of Motives* (see esp. 45–46), the *function* of his method is essentially the same as that of classical invention. However, as Young's comments on D. Gordon Rohman's pre-writing method suggest, its purpose is quite different from classical invention: central to pre-writing is "the presupposition that, if writing cannot be taught, it can nevertheless be coaxed by various means," such as through journaling or meditation (1976, 17–18). Unlike the goal of classical invention, "[t]he principle goal of pre-writing is the self-actualization of the writer" (18; for an alternative view, see Autrey). As for the third of these theories, Kenneth Pike's tagmemic invention, Young describes it as combining pre-writing's focuses on "the discovery of ordering principles and on psychological changes in the writer" and classical invention's focus of "finding arguments which are likely to produce psychological changes in the audience" (23). This theory, Young (1978) says, "conceives of invention as essentially a problem-solving activity, the problems being of two sorts: those arising in one's own experience of the world and those arising out of a need to change others" (39). (See Young, Alton L. Becker, and Pike's *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* for a textbook application of the tagmemic method.) While each of these theories constitute heuristic procedures, their differing forms and functions are the result of differing approaches to the composing process.

Absent from Young's overviews of contemporary theories of invention are references to the influence of theories from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an era which, he argues, witnessed "the virtual disappearance of rhetorical invention" (1987, 37; see also Winterowd 344). The influence of eighteenth-century rhetorics, as well as developments in the fields of philosophy and psychology, had a significant impact on composition instruction through much of the twentieth century. Those who comment on this "current-traditional" theory typically see invention as being "outside of the composing process" (Berlin 64–68). Crowley (1990), though, argues "that a viable theory of invention was implicit in . . . current-traditional rhetoric and that [it] was intimately tied to modern privileging of authorial voice" (xiii). She elsewhere notes that this notion of invention has its roots in eighteenth-century ideas of "genius" or "natural ability" (1985, 51–53). Based on her studies of nineteenth-century textbooks, Crowley outlines three different methods of invention common to current-traditional rhetoric: "the utilization of prior knowledge and natural ability," both of which are unteachable; "disciplined exercise of the mental faculties" gained through such activities as reading, conversation, and meditation; and "method" or "planning," undertaken through such means as outlining or studying the works of good writers (52–56).

Crowley's description of the *inventional theory implicit in current-traditional texts mirrors what Karen Burke LeFevre has called "Platonic*



invention

Invention is one of the five canons of classical rhetoric. Edward P. J. Corbett explains that "*Inventio* was concerned with a system or method for finding arguments" (22). He specifies "that there were two kinds of arguments or means of persuasion available to the speaker," the "non-artistic means" (e.g., witnesses, tortures), which "were really not part of the art of rhetoric," and the "artistic means," comprised of the three rhetorical appeals (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*). "The method that the classical rhetoricians devised to aid the speaker in discovering matter for the three modes of appeal," Corbett adds, "was the *topics*," which "constituted a method of probing one's subject to discover possible ways of developing that subject" (22–24). In addition to the use of the topics, Thomas Sloane tells us, the *inventio* of Cicero included the "continual practice of debating one side [of an issue] and then the other" (466; see also McClish). Sharon Crowley (1994) shows how classical invention has been adapted by composition studies when she refers to inventional devices as "sets of instructions that help [speakers and writers] find and compose proofs appropriate for any rhetorical situation" (30). It has been generally accepted that these "sets of instructions" are equivalent to what are routinely called "heuristic procedures," what Richard Young, in his 1976 bibliographic essay, refers to as any "explicit plans for analyzing and searching which focus attention, guide reason, stimulate memory and encourage intuition" (1). That which is said to *qualify as* an inventional device or heuristic procedure, however, has been deliberated throughout the history of composition studies.

As an illustration of the many and disparate conceptions of invention, Young discusses four different theories—one of which is classical invention—that have found acceptance in contemporary composition studies. While each constitutes a "theory of invention," he wishes to show clear distinctions between the *function* of classical invention and the functions of the other three theories. First is Kenneth Burke's dramatic method; unlike the classical topics, which "are aids in discovering possible arguments," this

invention," a system wherein "ideas are created in the mind of an atomistic individual and then expressed to the rest of the world" (1). But LeFevre argues that this conception of invention "sketches an incomplete view of what happens when writers invent" and that "invention is better understood as a social act" (1). Invention thus "becomes an act that may involve speaking and writing, and that at times involves more than one person; it is furthermore an act initiated by writers and completed by readers, extending over time through a series of transactions and texts" (1). LeFevre makes clear that she is drawing on theories and examples of processes of invention in a variety of fields in order to expand the definition of "rhetorical invention" (4-5). Doug Brent, too, expands "rhetorical invention" to include the "social act" of reading as a heuristic procedure, which aids in the development of a reader/writer's "belief system," and "contribute[s] to the building of further discourse" (14). For Brent, "invention must be seen as a Janus-headed process" that "looks backward [i.e., when one reads] to previous stages of the conversation," and "at the same time . . . looks forward to the audience to which the rhetor will present her knowledge" (118). Invention for Brent and LeFevre is thus a recursive, dialogic activity that one engages in during all stages of the writing process.

LeFevre and Brent are among those in composition studies that have promoted conceptions of invention that stretch the limits of classical *inventio*. Indeed, as early as 1970, the "Report of the Committee on the Nature of Rhetorical Invention," noted that the classical notion of invention "tends to rob the invention process of its dynamic character" (105). Expanded definitions of invention see it "not just as a method of retrieving what we already know, but as a process that constitutes our inquiry" (LeFevre 123). Paul Kameen uses the term "imagination" to describe these forms of "modern invention" that are strategies "for the methodical acquisition of new knowledge": classical invention is thus "a fairly mechanical 'special case' of creative thought that imagination absorbs into its broader systems," he asserts (85-86). Young (1976), however, states that "heuristic search is neither purely conscious nor mechanical" since its effective use is reliant upon "intuition, relevant experience and skill" (2).

It is this commingling of classical invention with other definitions of the process that prompted Young to state: "It is becoming increasingly apparent that as new and significant methods of invention emerge we need to develop a more adequate terminology which distinguishes various arts or methods of invention from *the* art of invention, that is, the members from the class" (1976, 17). More recently, Young and Yameng Liu characterize "the study of invention in writing" as "draw[ing] from the classical theory of *inventio* and yet go[ing] beyond many of its specific assumptions and conclusions," arguing that "invention" is most fruitfully conceived in its broader sense (xiii).

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How?" (499). Andrea A. Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin echo Sledd's assertions, explicitly linking the implications to teaching:

It is necessary to ask what kind of literacy we want to support . . . Since the teaching of reading and writing can never be innocent, literacy workers must choose pedagogical methods with care, mindful of the theoretical assumptions with which those methods are informed. (2)

Further complicating the discussion are back to basics solutions in which it is increasingly unclear what "basics" are. Donald Lazere supports the teaching of "radical" basics, maintaining that "[factual knowledge, mechanical and analytic skills (including remedial instruction in reading and writing standard English) . . . can help empower [students] both in gaining access to academic sources expressing oppositional ideas, and in mastering the culture of the critical discourse themselves" (19). Although Lazere's goal is toward a "liberatory literacy," enabling students to be critical of the discourse they are learning, aspects of his argument have some resonance in cultural literacy championed by E. D. Hirsch. According to Hirsch, to be truly literate, a person must be conversant with a specific body of knowledge known to educated people, or, more precisely, the cultural knowledge of the dominant society. While Hirsch's position has been attacked as being ethnocentric (see, for example, Johnson), his argument reinforces a link between language and knowledge, calling into question the traditional definition of literacy as skills acquisition. As Jeff Smith succinctly states: "If I'm going to teach words, I have to teach the world, too" (218).

But whose world? Richard Courage argues that non-school and school-based literacies compete and that learning the latter does not necessarily insure the ability to function in society: "[O]ur highly elaborated, discursive, stylistically complex literacy practices could . . . lead to our being labelled 'functionally illiterate' . . . in the workplace" (492). Courage advocates the concept of multiple literacies and suggests that teachers find ways to help students bridge the gaps between different literacies. In this vein, Patricia Bizzell contends that an "academic literacy" created through a collaboration "that successfully integrates the professor's traditional canonical knowledge and the students' non-canonical resources" (150) can circumvent both the prescriptiveness of traditional conceptions of literacy (which she calls literal literacy) and the cultural biases of Hirsch's program.

But even Bizzell's academic literacy is potentially a locus of ideological struggle. The hegemonic nature of literacy has been frequently discussed by critical pedagogues (see Freire, Roy) who, in place of traditional literacy inculcation, promote what they call critical literacy. The goal of critical literacy is to help students resist the authority and power of the dominant



Literacy

In the collective consciousness of the United States, fueled by the media and political interests, the term literacy has come to mean competence in reading and writing. According to UNESCO, literacy is required "for effective functioning in [a] group and community" (qtd. in Winterrowd 7). Over the past twenty years, theorists in both literacy and composition studies have challenged these relatively unproblematic conceptions, contesting some of the essential terms (such as *reading*, *writing*, *competency*, and *functional*).

Most scholars extend the definition of literacy to political and social domains. Citing Jenny Cook-Gumperz, Glynda Hull *et al.* point out that even within the realm of the classroom, literacy involves the "social process of demonstrating knowledgeability" (Gumperz) and that "competence in classrooms means interactional competence as well as competence with written language: knowing when and how and with whom to speak and act in order to create and display knowledge" (301).

Because literacy agonistically and antagonistically inhabits both popular and academic spheres, an uncontroversial definition is difficult to come by. The popular opinion that the United States is in the midst of a "literacy crisis," for example, stems from a particular view of what literacy is. Jimmie M. Killingsworth explains that nationally circulated editorials such as Merrill Sheils' "Why Johnny Can't Write" (first appearing in Newsweek, 1975) imply that literacy is "reified and measurable" (Killingsworth 35). Low scores on standardized tests are supposedly proof of the problem while changes in school curricula to improve test scores (by moving "back to basics") are the solution. Andrew Sledd argues that debates about literacy levels are unproductive because "there is no thing, literacy, only constellations of forms and degrees of literacy, shifting and turning as history rearranges the social formations in which they are embedded. Pieties about literacy with a capital L ought to be scrutinized: Which literacy? Whose literacy? Literacy for what?"

discourse through dialectical (and critical) approaches to language and knowledge. According to Henry Giroux:

Literacy in its varied versions is . . . the practice of representation as a means of organizing, inscribing, and containing meaning. . . . Hence, literacy becomes *critical* to the degree that it makes problematic the very structure and practice of representation; that is, it focuses attention on the importance of acknowledging that meaning is not fixed and that to be literate is to undertake a dialogue with others who speak [and we may add: read, write] from different histories, locations, and experiences. (brackets in Roy; qtd. in Roy 699)

Critical literacy depends upon resistance to the status quo, and while critical pedagogy has enjoyed some popularity in composition studies (as witnessed by the frequent references to Freirean literacy theory—see, for example, Holzman), it has also come under attack for (the same kind of coercive practices it militates against (see Ellsworth)). (C. H. Knoblauch suggests that for critical literacy to be workable “[t]here must be an enlightened, continuous, sometimes forceful and even raucous reappraisal of possibilities as concrete social conditions require” (138).)

At the heart of many literacy discussions is the contention that certain cognitive and intellectual benefits accrue through the acquisition of print literacy. Theorists Walter Ong, Jack Goody and Ian Watt, and Eric Havelock maintain that the oral mind is quite different from the literate mind; their discussions tend to privilege the literate mind for its ability to reason, categorize, synthesize, and analyze with greater sophistication. Studies such as those by Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole and Shirley Brice Heath suggest that school-based literacies enable students to do well at tasks required in school but don't necessarily contribute to other kinds of intellectual development.

Some definitions of literacy are more tightly wedded to print than others. Cheryl Glenn contends that one of the barriers to perceiving literacy in broader terms within the discipline of composition has to do with a preoccupation with writing. In her discussion of medieval literacy, Glenn refers to work done by Heath, Scribner and Cole, Ong, Havelock, and Hirsch to argue that:

No matter how wide-ranging our twentieth-century views of literacy might be . . . we continue to privilege the written word. . . . Our concepts of literacy are inevitably colored by our own dependence on the physical artifact (on handwriting, on hard copy) and on our deep-seated insistence that reading and writing are inseparable arts. Thus, the text-dependency—reading books, writing books, and reading and writing about those books—in our own documentary culture and noetic world makes very difficult an accurate conception of alternative literacy practices, be they current or distant in time. (497)

Indeed, one could make the case that the focus on print literacy is what distinguishes composition studies from literacy studies. Louise Wetherbee

Phelps points out that composition is “logically subordinate” to fields like literacy “if looked at from their own altitude, which is why composition, dealing with written discourse, is so often described as a branch of rhetoric or literacy” (78).

In the future, as computer technology changes the ways texts are produced, manipulated, and regarded, scholars will be obliged to redefine “text” and textual literacy as well as reformulate what it means to be literate (see Tuman, Selfe and Hilligoss).

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Literature

Over the past fifty years, the term *literature* has appeared in juxtaposition with the term *composition* in virtually all of our professional discussions and has been invoked variously to designate particular kinds of texts, or processes of reading and interpreting such texts, or the scholarly discipline of literary studies. Understanding how this term has been used by those in composition studies, why it continues to be paired with and against composition, and how its use has changed requires an understanding of the specialized meaning it obtained during the rise of English studies as a profession.

The etymology of *literature* reveals that its original meaning was akin to contemporary definitions of literacy (i.e., the ability to read and write) and that it referred to a wide range of imaginative and non-imaginative texts (Williams 1977). Terry Eagleton notes that it was during the Romantic period that "literature"—a privileged, 'creative' use of language—was . . . brought to birth, with all the resonance and panoply attendant upon traditional rhetoric, but without either its 'authoritarianism' or its audience" (107). In short, *literature* came to serve as a synecdoche for a privileged canon of imaginative texts of prose fiction, poetry, and drama. In the process, literature and literacy were bifurcated, the former coming to "refer primarily to the language" and the other "to the people" (Williams 1983, 212).

This bifurcation had an enormous impact on how English departments were structured, and led ultimately to the separation of literature and composition (Robinson). The differentiated sense of literature both as a scholarly field and as an object of study fueled vigorous debates concerning the role of literature in writing courses. On one side, those who defined literature as a particular object of study requiring a particular disciplined approach sought to protect literature against the undisciplined, and thus argued against its inclusion in a composition course (Goss). On the other side, those promoting the use of literature defined it almost solely in terms of an object of study. Some focused on its message, arguing that it provided the composition course with content, depth, and richness (Rubinstein); others on its structure, arguing

that it provided useful models (Calderwood) or that it enabled students to develop a stronger and more refined sense of language (Brown); and still others on the effects of engaging with literature as an object, arguing that it enlarged students' worldly experience (Ashmead), that it had a humanizing effect (Fenstermaker), or that it developed critical thinking (Booth 1956) and critical reading skills (Fulkerson).

Despite the apparent differences among these various views, what seems to unite them is the assumption that literature represents a stable product—namely, imaginative texts—that demands a special, disciplined kind of reading. This assumption is embedded in the dominant trope invoked for literature between the early 1950s and the late 1970s. A geo-political metaphor of *place* held sway. Typical of this trope was the 1956 CCC symposium on the *place* of literature in first-year composition as well as in the most common title of this time, which was some form of "Literature in Composition" (Thorson; Hart, Stack, and Woodruff; Hayford; Stone).

Although literature was viewed by many teachers and scholars as a stable object, its pedagogical use was defined in various ways that cluster around two major views: as an object of contemplation in literature classes and as one of utility in composition classes. Leonard S. Rubinstein, for instance, warned that "at every moment the success of such a course [composition that incorporates literature] is imperiled by the teacher who forgets the difference between the use of literary material for literary purposes and the use of literary material for compositional purposes" (273). Implicit in Rubinstein's caution was the notion that literature required distinctly different treatments depending on its pedagogical location. This assumption, in part, led some to call for a ban on literature in the composition classroom. Raymond Goss, for example, argued that "students can be taught to be better writers only by writing and by talking about what *they* have written, not what someone else has written" (212; cf. Steinberg).

Not only was literature divorced from composition in terms of object and uses but reading and writing were largely viewed as discrete opposing skills (Memering). By the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, these assumptions were challenged as new theories in both literary and composition studies shifted the focus away from the products of reading and writing toward the processes of both. As a result, as Marilyn S. Sternglass pointed out, "relationships among [reading, writing, literature and literacy] have undergone shifts from being treated as parallel processes . . . , to being treated as transactive processes" (1), that is, as epistemic activities.

Viewing reading and writing as interrelated epistemic processes radically redefined literature, shifting it from a static object to a dynamic process. Anthony R. Petrosky, for instance, argued that "our comprehension of texts, whether they are literary or not, is more an act of composition—for understanding is composing—than of information retrieval" (19). Thus, for some,

literature was reconceived as a tool for teaching composing processes, including strategies of invention (Peterson, L.) and revision (Burkholder). Such views paved the way for emerging efforts to draw connections between reading and writing (Newkirk; Petersen).

Throughout the 1980s, critical theories (including deconstruction, hermeneutics, feminism, neo-Marxism, postmodernism, and cultural studies) further transformed the object of literary studies by drawing attention away from seeing text, even as a process, in isolation toward seeing it as imbedded in discursive systems. Robert Scholes, for example, asserted that "a piece of writing must be understood as the product of a person or persons, at a given point in human history, in a given form of discourse, taking its meaning from the interpretive gestures of individual readers using the grammatical, semantic, and cultural codes available to them" (16). Such redefinitions of literature not only served to extend the boundaries of what could be properly conceived of as literary text but also established potential intersections between literature and composition as scholars and teachers became increasingly interested in understanding the social, political, and cultural contexts in which writing as praxis and product are embedded. Concurrently, advances in computer technology also contributed to reconceptualizing literature by drawing attention to social aspects of discourse and challenging traditional boundaries between reading and writing, and thus, between literature and composition (Moulthrop and Kaplan).

Yet despite significant transformations in literary and composition studies, Edward Rocklin has noted that, "the two realms overlap in their focus on and reconception of the *text* as both deriving from and being the source of a process; but they diverge in focusing, respectively on the *writer* and the *reader* of that text" (187). This divergence helps shed light on the tertiary use of the term *literature* in our professional discussions, namely, to designate the scholarly field of literary studies. Since the early 1980s, most of the debate on this level has centered on a perceived gap between literature and composition as fields of study (see, e.g., Booth 1981).

Disputed views of *literature* are evident in the antithetical characterizations of the relationship between composition and literary studies drawn by Winifred Bryan Horner and Jay L. Robinson. Horner argued that "in reality, literature and composition cannot be separated either in theory or in teaching practice. Composition theory and critical theory are indeed opposites of the same coin" (1). In response, Jay Robinson denied the synergy Horner described by arguing that

in reality, or at least in the one I occupy literature and composition *are* separated, certainly in anything that can be called practice, and certainly in the ways they are regarded and supported as practices. As I read the history of critical theory in my working lifetime, critical theory and composition theory have indeed not been 'opposites of the same coin' but currencies as different as the pound and the yen. (488)

Some scholars have suggested that part of the problem may stem from the ways in which we continue to conceptualize literature. For example, Anne Ruggles Gere and Rocklin have both called attention to the problematic assumptions underlying the bridge metaphor so often used to discuss the perceived gap. Gere noted that the metaphor of the bridge "emphasizes separation and difference. . . . These two [reading literature and writing compositions] stand on opposite sides of a chasm, linked only by bridges of good will, mutual interest, or pedagogical value" (617). Rocklin similarly noted that "in speaking of 'bridging the gap' we are accepting as given a culturally created condition that is hardly inevitable, and accepting the constraints of the metaphor that may prove to be an obstacle to thinking clearly about the project we have undertaken" (178). As a remedy, he suggested reconceptualizing the relationship as one common ground rather than two whose gulf must be spanned.

Although the assumptions that led to the creation of a geo-political trope to represent the relationship between literature and composition both inside and outside the classroom have long been challenged, the trope remains firm in our discussions. Jane Peterson's challenge to the field draws attention to this very issue: "Why do we focus our discussion on the texts assigned instead of the ways we expect students to read in Freshman English?" (312); "let's admit that the original question about the *place* of literature in Freshman composition identified an inappropriate starting point" (314, italics mine). Her challenge calls for displacing the spatial metaphor so the field may be freed to think in other, more effective, ways about literature and its relationship to composition.

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Logic

In composition studies, *logic* is a term typically associated with only one kind of discourse (argumentative writing), but whose meanings are nonetheless consistently marked by schisms and self-contradictions.

To begin with, composition studies' "transmutations of technical logic into comp-logic" are error-filled and frequently "bizarre," according to Richard Fulkerson (450; 441). In comp-logic, he says, "induction" means "going" from the particular to the general, "moving" from individual pieces of evidence to a conclusion, while "deduction" means "going" from the general to the specific, "moving" from a general statement to a conclusion about a particular case. The motion metaphor in these definitions, he contends, makes students confuse the order of presentation of an argument with the type of reasoning (437-438). But in technical logic, Fulkerson says, the difference between induction and deduction "involves neither the notion of movement nor the notion of general and specific. In technical logic, any argument in which the premises purport to prove the conclusion . . . is a deduction. And all other arguments . . . are induction" (438). The other element of comp-logic, he writes, is the teaching of a confusing list of common fallacies which "are not clearly defined and distinguished from each other," the definition of a *non sequitur*, for instance, enveloping those of *post hoc*, hasty generalization, and stereotyping (443-444).

Despite Fulkerson's critique, logic remains a central force in composition instruction because its long-standing definition as "the discipline of analyzing and evaluating argument" leads to a commonsensical conclusion that it must therefore be useful in teaching argumentative writing. In this vein, logic has long been represented as offering students organizing structures for their writing, or as Jack Pitt puts it, "valid deductive forms in accord with which paragraphs or entire essays can be organized" (89-90). It has been frequently said that by arranging their data "along a logic" (Smith 313), students can avoid writing shapeless, directionless papers. In this way, logic is also construed as a motive force or engine sequentially driving a text forward.

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multiculturalism

Multiculturalism refers to the inclusion in the educational mainstream of texts, theories, and questions by and about previously marginalized groups. It is part of a larger concern about diversity and difference in the humanities which gained force in the 1980s from sources such as civil rights, feminism, French post-structuralist theory, a concern about political correctness, changes in U.S. demographics, and the move toward a global economy. Most conceptions of multiculturalism focus primarily on race and ethnicity, though its definition is often extended to gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion.

Michael Geyer claims that multiculturalism in general education is "not a body of academic thought but a contested politics of social and cultural transformation in which academics participate" (513). Debate over multiculturalism is in part a function of the diverse definitions of the term, definitions which are, in part, determined by ideological positions occupied by participants in the discussion.

Some conceptions of multiculturalism, implicit in the work of radical educators such as James A. Banks, Wahncema Lubiano, and William G. Tierney, stress educational and social transformation. They maintain that an effective multicultural education questions existing power structures and addresses the social and political contexts of education. Lubiano defines what she calls "radical" or "strong" multiculturalism as a way to reconstitute academic knowledge and academia itself: a "system for reconceptualizing education and its relation to power" which "aims at critical engagement with the entire process of information creation as well as political, economic, and social decision-making" (11; 19).

Self-proclaimed radical criticisms of some multicultural approaches reveal the tensions between different proponents' definitions of multiculturalism. Implicit in these criticisms are an insistence on political awareness and social transformation absent from less overtly political versions of multiculturalism. Lubiano distinguishes "strong" multiculturalism from some multiculturalists' attempts to "'manage' diverse student populations and

curricula" and from the reduction of multiculturalism to "cultural relativism, to an empty and non-critical pluralism" with slogans such as "different strokes for different folks" and concepts such as a "national melting pot" which ignore issues of power relations among diverse groups (11-13). Tierney also criticizes definitions of multiculturalism which avoid political questions about "how power and knowledge function to create socially created categories" (4). Geyer calls such versions of multiculturalism "signs of a distinct turn to a plural middle ground" which support a merely symbolic inclusion of marginalized groups and ignore social injustices (516). Banks criticizes what he terms the "contributions approach," the "heroes and holidays approach," and the "ethnic additive approach" for leaving the mainstream curriculum unaltered, ignoring important cultural contexts, and reinforcing stereotypes and misconceptions (192-195). Banks defines effective multiculturalism as a "transformation approach" that changes basic curricular goals and assumptions, enabling students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives (196).

Other definitions of multiculturalism also stress the political nature of the term, but these frame the politicization of education as inappropriate, and dangerous. Roger Kimball links multiculturalism with political correctness and considers them manifestations of higher education's "ideological indoctrination" that constitute an "assault on free speech" and "an abridgment of fundamental liberal principles in the name of 'diversity,' 'difference,' and 'pluralism.'" (10). Dinesh D'Souza defines multiculturalism and political correctness as a "victim's revolution on campus" leading toward "an education in closed-mindedness and intolerance" (qtd. in Kimball 7).

Furthermore, both radicals and conservatives see multiculturalism as affecting not only curriculum and classroom practice but university policies such as investments, research, hiring, and promotion. Radicals see this as a necessary and desirable goal (Lubiano 15), while conservatives oppose these changes, labeling them "affirmative-action thinking" with lowered standards in order to fulfill quotas (Kimball 9).

Some definitions of multiculturalism in composition are based on the relation(s) between language and culture. Lillian Bridwell-Bowles argues that the multicultural composition classroom is one way to change society, that multiculturalism entails a consideration of social and political contexts in approaching language and texts:

if we are to invent a truly pluralistic society, we must envision a socially and politically situated view of language and the creation of texts—one that takes into account gender, race, class, sexual preference, and a host of issues that are implied by these and other cultural differences. (349)

Implicit in some compositionists' discussions of multiculturalism is a definition of the term as a cultural negotiation between students and teachers, as a bridge between home and academic cultures created by multiculturalist course content. Terry Dean, for example, stresses that "teachers need to

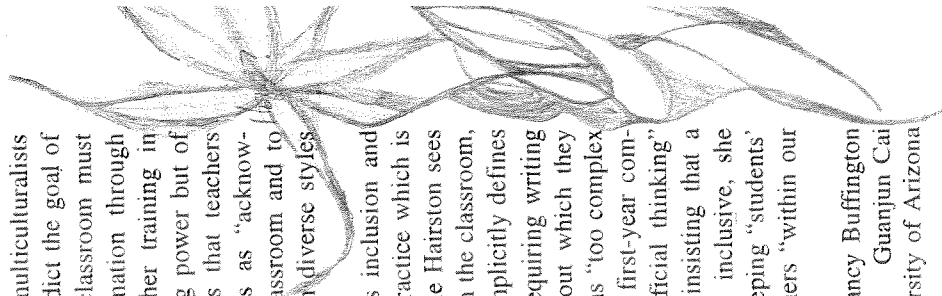
structure learning experiences that both help students write their way into the university and help teachers learn their way into student cultures" (23).

Other compositionists define multiculturalism as a way of perceiving student texts in terms of conflict rather than mediation. For Min-zhan Lu, a multicultural pedagogy involves considering the composition classroom as a manifestation of Mary Louise Pratt's "contact zone" and "explicitly foregrounding the category of 'resistance' and 'change'" when approaching student writing (447). Lu applies this version of multiculturalism to a consideration of student texts, developing a "multicultural approach to style, particularly those styles of student writing which appear to be riddled with 'errors'" (442).

Inherent to most pedagogical discussions of multiculturalism is its definition as a problem in teacher training. For many radical multiculturalists such as Lubiano, current concepts of teacher authority contradict the goal of multicultural education; power dynamics in the traditional classroom must be reconceived to meet the goal of institutional transformation through multiculturalism. Harvey Wiener defines multicultural teacher training in composition and other fields not as a problem of negotiating power but of acquiring general "multicultural literacy," which he describes as "acknowledging] . . . the cultural equipment students bring to the classroom and to the collegiate society at large," learning and interacting with diverse styles students bring from other backgrounds (101-102).

Some compositionists agree with abstract goals such as inclusion and diversity, but define multiculturalism as an overly political practice which is pedagogically unsound and unnecessary. For example, Maxine Hairston sees multiculturalism as a counterproductive intrusion of politics in the classroom, a practice which constrains both students and teachers. She implicitly defines multiculturalism as creating a "high-risk" environment and requiring writing topics that students "perceive as politically charged and about which they feel uninformed" (189). Hairston describes multiculturalism as "too complex and diverse" to be dealt with in writing courses, especially first-year composition courses, and as fostering "stereotyping and superficial thinking" (190). She maintains that multiculturalism is unnecessary: insisting that a student-centered writing classroom is inherently culturally inclusive, she seeks to "promote genuine diversity in our classes" while keeping "students' own writing [at] the center of the course" and writing teachers "within our area of professional expertise" (186).

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paradigm

Paradigm entered the field of composition studies by way of Thomas S. Kuhn's analysis of the history of the physical sciences. In composition studies, where it proved both fertile conceptually and valuable politically, it became a buzzword in the 1980s and was often associated with what were taken to be the competing paradigms of current-traditional rhetoric and process theory. By the 1990s, the boundaries of the term had been stretched so far that it could be used to signify any theoretical, methodological or conceptual model a particular writer might happen either to advocate or oppose.

A paradigm, as Kuhn initially defines the term in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, is a scientific achievement that shares two essential characteristics: first, it must be "sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity"; second, it must be "sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve" (10). In a postscript added to the second edition of the book, however, Kuhn acknowledged that a critic of the first edition found that within its pages, the term was used "in at least twenty-two different ways" (181). Two of the senses in which the term was used, Kuhn added, needed especially to be distinguished. On the one hand, he explained, a paradigm is a "disciplinary matrix," or "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community." On the other, paradigms are "exemplars," or "the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science" (175, 182, 187).

Richard E. Young in 1978 was the first to apply Kuhn's concepts and terminology to the field of composition studies. Young acknowledged that "Kuhn's work is an effort to account for deep and rapid changes in the sciences" and that "there is some question whether it is legitimate to apply it to other disciplines," but Young concluded that there were sufficient similarities between scientific disciplines and composition studies to warrant

his undertaking (29n). He defined a paradigm as that which "determines, among other things, what is included in the discipline and what is excluded from it, what is taught and not taught, what problems are regarded as important and unimportant, and, by implication, what research is regarded as valuable in developing the discipline" (29). He also defined a paradigm as "an eye to see with" (30). The first of these definitions indicates that for Young, a paradigm is what Kuhn calls a "disciplinary matrix." The second indicates that, since an eye perceives selectively, a paradigm operates as what Kenneth Burke calls a "terministic screen." Young argued that one paradigm (which he called the "current-traditional" paradigm but which has subsequently also been called the product-centered paradigm) had guided the teaching of writing since the beginning of the century. Its features, which Young said were "obvious enough," included

the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper; and so on. (31)

One of the chief faults of the current-traditional paradigm and a chief reason why it did not provide an adequate model for teaching or research, in Young's view, was its failure to include invention within the province of rhetoric (33). Young concluded that the current-traditional paradigm was no longer viable and that a new, process-centered paradigm, based on new theories of invention, was emerging in its place (35).

Four years after Young's article appeared, Maxine Hairston joined him in using Kuhnian concepts to explain developments in composition studies. In particular, she appropriated Kuhn's notion of the "paradigm shift," defining it as the "replacement of one conceptual model by another" and arguing that "our profession is probably in the first stages of a paradigm shift" (77). To Young's list of the features of the current-traditional paradigm, Hairston added the following three: "its adherents believe that competent writers know what they are going to say before they begin to write[...] that the composing process is linear, . . . [and] that teaching editing is teaching writing" (78). Hairston then listed twelve features of the emerging, process-centered paradigm for the teaching of writing. The new paradigm was rhetorically based, it was informed by other disciplines, notably by linguistics and by cognitive psychology, and it was grounded in empirical research into the writing process. Any instructor who subscribed to the new paradigm would view writing as a recursive process. She would value expressive as well as expository writing. She would intervene in the actual writing of her students and then evaluate what they wrote in accordance with how well it fulfilled their intentions (86).

Louise Wetherbee Phelps, however, argued in 1988 that the "reorientation of composition from product to process" did not constitute a "paradigmatic change" (135). She conceded that contemporary composition theory was dominated by the opposition of process and product and that this opposition had "succeeded in reversing the value structure of composition pedagogy and, by opening a new field of questions and topics, in reconstituting the field as a research discipline" (132). But she argued that the "process/product opposition is itself compartmentalizing, in that it separates the text from the historical process of production, and writing from reading" (135). She concluded that composition studies was currently in "a transitional stage leading to a genuinely new paradigm as yet only dimly perceived." This new paradigm, when at last it did emerge, would be recognized "by its power to reintegrate texts into a dynamic of discourse." Phelps acknowledged, however, that since paradigms as she was defining them "are made up of precisely those assumptions that remain tacit, unrecognized, and unexamined," recognizing the new paradigm would require special powers of perception (136).

Susan Miller's answer, in 1991, to the "question of whether a paradigm shift has actually occurred," was "[N]ot quite." Miller argues that "process theory has not yet provided an accurate or even a very historically different theory of contemporary writing, even if we grant it partial paradigmatic status" (108). She concedes it has been politically useful for composition studies to claim to possess "a 'paradigm' like those that centralize the activities of other professional groups and well-established disciplines" (105). She also concedes that "the process model has, as New Criticism did for literature, stabilized a field that originally was a loosely connected set of untheorized practices" (115). According to Miller, however, "'Current-traditional' or 'product' theory appears to have been created at the same time that process theory was, to help explain process as a theory pitted against old practices," and both theories "share underlying assumptions about the 'problem' that each approach to teaching has addressed" (110-111). The creation of the bipolar opposition between the theories, Miller argues, was a politically diversionary tactic which worked to "sustain what is in fact a single paradigm for the field" (10). She suggests, moreover, that the term *paradigm* is overused, pointing out that "[j]ust as the telescope and the microscope have been credited with paradigm shifts in science, so too have cheap paper, ballpoint pens, word processors, and disposable textbooks created a new situation in which writing can be reconceived" (107).

Robert J. Connors observed in 1983 that composition scholars were using Kuhnian terminology in two primary ways. The first, of which Connors said the Young and Hairston analyses were the most popular examples, "involves the assumption that the field of composition studies already has a paradigm and either is or should be in the midst of shifting to another paradigm." The second "consists in the assumption that the field is in a preparadigmatic

stage" (4-5). Connors noted that the use of the term *paradigm* amounted to a claim that "composition studies should be a scientific or prescientific discipline" (5). He criticized Young and Hairston for having failed to distinguish between different senses of *paradigm*, noting that for Kuhn the term had signified both "disciplinary matrix" and "exemplar." Composition studies, according to Connors, possessed an understructure of values and beliefs but lacked exemplars. This lack of models upon which to base the solution to problems was due, Connors explained, "to our not having very much agreement on what are to be the methodology and conditions for puzzle-solving within our field" (9).

Stephen M. North has observed that the paradigm-shift account of developments in composition studies is more remarkable for "what it tries to do" than "for what it says." He suggests it should be read as a sort of "power play" whereby Young and other advocates of change have attempted to set new agendas for composition research. According to North, Young's claim that composition was guided by a paradigm (albeit a "current-traditional" paradigm) at the turn of the century amounts to a claim that composition has had the coherence of a discipline since the century began. North observes, moreover, that Young's characterization of composition studies as a field governed by a paradigm does not square with the eclecticism of his (Young's) research agenda. Nor does it square with what North calls the "methodological pluralism" of composition teaching and research (318-321).

Competing methodologies, of course, can be said to grow out of different research paradigms. Susan H. McLeod, for example, describes quantitative and qualitative research methods in this way. After noting that she is using the term paradigm "in the Kuhnian sense of a system of shared beliefs or a world view," she argues that quantitative methods grow out of a positivist research tradition (374). Qualitative methods, on the other hand, are the product of a "new paradigm, which has been described not only as post-positivist but also 'hermeneutical'" (375). McLeod argues that the two paradigms "need not be incompatible." Instead, she says, they represent "different ways of looking at the world, different stances, different lenses through which we may examine phenomena." McLeod concludes that "[a]s long as we are aware of the paradigms, we can choose our methods carefully and wisely, according to how well they fit what we and others need to know" (379).

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“personal world of meaning” (908). Unlike Hairston, Knoblauch and Brannon see the teacher’s role as auxiliary to the process of writing rather than central to it. And finally, to Berthoff pedagogy is a hybrid of these distinct orientations: teaching is interventionist up to a point, motivational beyond that (909).

The significant differences between Hairston’s and Knoblauch and Brannon’s configurations of process pedagogy might also be viewed as the differences between a discipline-centered approach and a student-centered one, two perspectives which William F. Woods argues dominated composition texts from 1960 to 1980. Woods writes that the discipline-centered see pedagogy as a civilizing influence; it offers values, skills, and precepts to primitive beings, whereas proponents of a student-centered pedagogy perceive themselves as giving voice to (inherently good) humanity (395–396).

Divergent as these perspectives are, they hold in common at least one trait: their localized focus on individual teachers and individual students. Process pedagogy is secure in its nonpartisanship. However, it eventually came under fire for this very serenity in the midst of conflict, or as Linda Brodkey writes in the late 1980s, for preserving the fiction of “universal education,” in which “teachers and students relate to one another undistracted by the classism, racism, and sexism that rage outside the classroom” (139).

Paulo Freire’s call in 1982 for “education as the practice of freedom” (6) was strongly influential in ushering in the contemporary era of critical, sometimes called “oppositional” or “radical,” pedagogy. Freire juxtaposes two forms of pedagogy:

Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way men exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable. . . . Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates. . . . Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality. (71)

To many, it was immediately obvious that choosing one or the other of these pedagogies would result in radically different people, schools, and societies. Freire’s primary contribution was in revealing the interactions between education and society, thus elevating pedagogy to its prominent contemporary position as an agent for social change.

However, for many in the discipline, this viewpoint equating education with “liberation” compromises ideals of objectivity and the possibility that education might be a wholesome, virtuous endeavor. Hairston argues that the classroom is not the place to confront political forces or to address social wrongs, declaring that “[a]s educators of good will, we shouldn’t even have to mention our anger about racism and sexism in our society—that’s a given” (187). For her as for many others, pedagogy is decidedly not linked in any essential ways to the ills of society; rather it is an ideal form of interaction



pedagogy

In general academic usage, *pedagogy* has been a term of ignominy for centuries. *The Oxford English Dictionary* describes it as “the function, profession, or practice of a pedagogue,” which carries “a more or less contemptuous or hostile sense, with implication of pedantry, dogmatism, or severity.” Or as Jane Tompkins puts it, “[w]e have been indoctrinated from the very start . . . to look down on pedagogy. . . . [T]eaching was exactly like sex for me—something you weren’t supposed to talk about or focus on in any way but that you were supposed to be able to do properly when the time came” (655).

Pedagogy—with no adjective—became (retrospectively at least) current-traditional pedagogy, then process pedagogy (composed of diverse forms of teaching undergirded by broadly ranging assumptions) and finally critical pedagogy. That pedagogy entered composition studies not routinely linked with an adjective suggests it was then assumed to be self-evident, separable from theory. Richard Fulkerson argues that, as a general rule, theory and practice began to be conflated in pedagogy only in the 1980s; before that, it was accepted teacherly practice to discuss the characteristics of good writing without also imagining how writers might write or how teachers might enable writers (410–411).

Four who figured prominently in the early 1980s’ project of theorizing process pedagogy were Maxine Hairston, Ann E. Berthoff, C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon. However, as Steven Lynn concludes from Hairston’s “The Winds of Change,” Berthoff’s *Forming Thinking Writing: The Composing Imagination*, and Knoblauch and Brannon’s *Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing*, these conceptions of process pedagogy were more diverse than similar. For instance, pedagogy for Hairston is an interventionist procedure in which the teacher conveys information, rehearses strategies, and renders accepted models of thought (903). Knoblauch and Brannon, on the other hand, consider pedagogy to be less a matter of providing students with patterns and more an attempt at motivating students to create their own

among dedicated teachers and diligent students occurring within the politically neutral space of the classroom.

The view of pedagogy from the political left, as expressed by James Berlin, is that "a way of teaching is never innocent. Every pedagogy is imbricated in ideology, in a set of tacit assumptions about what is real, what is good, what is possible, and how power ought to be distributed" (492). Within this framework, pedagogy has been assigned sharply conflicting tasks: to help students understand themselves better, to impress on students the radically communal nature of writing, to urge learners to resist inequity in its many guises. Lou Kelly, for example, reflects the late 1960s slogan of "power to the people" when he articulates the expressivist assumption that truth resides in the individual: "the student's own language and the experiences . . . that he wishes to share make the best content for composition" (3). Cynthia L. Caywood and Gillian R. Overing maintain that pedagogy, by facilitating and legitimizing students' and women's voices, can restructure patriarchal ways of being (xii). Elizabeth Flynn argues that, by replacing the "figure of the authoritative father with an image of a nurturing mother," pedagogy has reconstructed learning itself as a collaborative and cooperative, rather than competitive and autonomous, undertaking (423).

But to those for whom writing is a social rather than an individual act, pedagogies of self-discovery have too little to say about resisting the totalizing impact of mainstream culture. As Susan C. Jarratt (1991) puts it, "affirming the voice of a white, middle- or upper-middle-class student often involves teachers in . . . endorsing the clichés of competitive self-interest that perpetuate a system of racism, sexism, and classism" (109). Donald Lazere argues "the present, generally unquestioned (and even unconscious) imposition of capitalist, white-male, heterosexual ideology that pervades American education" (190) and describes a pedagogy that offers "systematic exposure to a full spectrum of ideologies" present in the rhetoric of political speeches, news reporting, and journals of opinion (191). Dale M. Bauer contends that pedagogy should prepare women and men for responsible citizenship by modeling a range of behaviors including "how to belong, how to identify, as well as how to resist" (391).

And finally, pedagogy is sometimes defined as vigilance against the coercion of pedagogy itself. To Greg Myers, collaborative learning and peer evaluation encourage unthinking conformity and the failure of skepticism needed if, for instance, students are to identify their interests as different from their employers' (170). Alan W. France contends that pedagogies of expressivism and textual criticism are internally contradictory, claiming empowerment for students but actually, by alienating them from public discourse, bringing them "to terms" with the social inequities of commodity capitalism (602).

Composition's interest in pedagogy and our claims for and about it, although disparate and conflicting, have been fairly intense. Jarratt (1995)

strikes a proprietary note in her response to Tompkins's extensively-debated "Pedagogy of the Distressed," contending: "Here was Tompkins, a person with a major reputation in literary criticism and theory who had seemingly just discovered the concept of pedagogy, coming to lecture a group of people, many of whom had spent their professional lives working on pedagogy. Jarratt writes: 'I'm glad she discovered pedagogy, writing, and the West. But curiously, I find myself already in those places she discovered, a native in habitats stumbled upon by an anthropologist'" (351).

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peer evaluation

The term peer evaluation enjoys widespread, often casual, use in composition studies, and yet the meanings assigned to it are as diverse and mutable as the field itself. The activity of evaluation is equated with sharing, editing, reviewing, responding, empathizing, sympathizing, inquiring, helping, critiquing, criticizing, tutoring, describing, writing, correcting, fixing, and facilitating. Peers have been variously represented as, among other things, fellow writers, surrogate teachers, members of a general audience, members of a specific discourse community, critical readers, sympathetic responders, apprentices, and masters.

In its most practical terms, peer evaluation is a pragmatic time saver affording instructors a way to "get the job done" that conserves time and energy while also effectively serving students. This "works good" reasoning has, according to Karen Spear, resulted in "[o]ne of the most perplexing gaps between theory and practice in teaching writing," the use of peer response groups (1). Located within the space of this gap, however, is a diverse body of publication made coherent by its persistent attention to the relationships of writers, readers, teachers, texts, and institutions as they are manifested in discussions of production, authenticity, ownership, community, authority, and meaning.

In many classrooms, peer evaluation is a way to teach standards of productivity and correctness traditionally associated with essay literacy. In Alan Cooper's "group correction," students "strenuously confine themselves to the features at issue: no correcting spelling or agreement during a session on FRAG's, R-O's and c.s.'s" (347). Through the process of writing and editing, "the student learns about his own susceptibility to committing these basic errors, and about his ability to detect them in the writing of his classmates" (347). In his discussion of the limitations of peer evaluation, Michael Graner identifies his and others' concern that peer evaluation is often nothing more than "small talk or social chit-chat," (41) or a case of "the blind leading the blind with unskilled editors guiding inexperienced writers

in a process neither understands well" (40). Alternatively, he presents peer evaluation as a "revision workshop" that does not require teachers to "sur-render any classroom control" and allows them to "supervise the group and ensure that the task is being completed" (43).

Issues of authority and control have been addressed very differently by others who see peer evaluation as generative of an egalitarian community of writers within the existing academic structure. Donald Murray presents peer evaluation as a way to develop critical thinking in "a community where apprentices and masters work side by side in the practice of their craft" (187). As writers "struggle to make their meanings clear to others" by "put[ting] on the skins of particular readers" they "find out what [they] mean" (189). Additionally, Murray represents peer evaluation as a means of diminishing the authority of the teacher and encouraging students "to learn to appeal to many individual readers and to handle their contradictory responses" (190) in order to "develop their own meanings and their own voices" (187). Murray's position is slightly modified in Peter Elbow's "teacherless classroom," where peer evaluation is a way to foster learning without teaching. Elbow's goal is to enable "the writer to come as close as possible to being able to see and experience his own words *through* seven or more people. That's all" (77). This experience allows the material in the writer's head "to be restructured by what the other person says" (50) in an effort to produce ideas or points of view unavailable to the writer before peer evaluation.

James Moffett views the term classroom learning as an oxymoron, describing peer evaluation as an opportunity to provide instruction that is "individual, relevant, and timely" by engaging students in "authentic kinds of discourse such as exist outside of school" (193). Moffett presents peers as a "natural audience," in contrast to the instructor, whose often authoritarian role is "potent enough to distort the writer-audience relationship" (193), the effect of which is "to dissociate writing from real intent and pervert the rhetorical process into a weird irony" (194). Within Ken Macrorie's "helping circle," peer evaluation is a means of promoting self-sufficiency within individual writers by training them to develop an internal critic. While Macrorie shares with Murray, Elbow, and Moffett a concern for the development of writers' critical faculties, his understanding of how these faculties are generated differs from their positions in an important way. While the others emphasize the active and continuous role authentic readers and their responses play in peer evaluation, Macrorie presents the dialogue of writers and readers as being important only to the extent that it promotes a sensitivity to, rather than a dependence on, responses from readers. Evaluative standards established by the interaction of writers and readers are then to be internalized by the writers so that they "can be better critics of their own work when they are alone with it" (88). Macrorie is careful to emphasize that the writer, whether assisted by others or not, is "ultimately responsible for his sentences" (88). *yes*

Others have challenged the notion that peer evaluation should emphasize authentic, uncritical, responses to student writing. Many who are committed to the use of peer evaluation as a way to familiarize writers with audience expectations are, nonetheless, suspicious of what they perceive to be excessively sympathetic reading practices. Asserting that students too often create "coherence out of incoherence" in the writing of their peers (124), Elizabeth Flynn presents peer evaluation as an activity that "necessitates sophisticated reading skills, the ability not only to comprehend but also to critically assess writing that is frequently incoherent, unfocused" (126). Critical assessment, Flynn points out, is often lacking in students whose authentic responses frequently defer to the authority of the text. Peer readers, therefore, "must be trained to recognize incoherence, and the training must be rigorous enough to counter their conditioned expectations about the nature of written texts" (127). Joan Wauters also promotes a more critical approach, presenting "non-confrontational critique" as a form of peer evaluation that addresses some of the problems she identifies in authentic response centered approaches. In Wauters's practice, "editing teams" respond to a writer's draft without the writer being present, which "allows [the editing teams] adequate privacy for more deliberate responses" (160).

Further complicating issues of authenticity and authority in peer evaluation are theories of collaborative learning and social construction that represent writing as a primarily social act involving not just the immediate classroom communities formed by individual writers and their peer readers but a much broader and larger community. Kenneth Bruffee, whose *A Short Course in Writing* was the first influential composition textbook based on collaborative learning, cites peer evaluation as a type of collaborative learning situation in which, "students learn to describe the organizational structure of a peer's paper, paraphrase it, and comment both on what seems well done and what the author might do to improve the work" (1984, 637-638). Such an exercise "makes students aware that writing is a social artifact, like the thought that produces it" and "provides a social context in which students can experience and practice the kinds of conversation valued by college teachers" within "a community of status equals: peers" (642). According to Bruffee (1993), "[l]earning to make sound evaluative judgments about each other's writing and explain them effectively is what peer review is all about" (170).

In affirming the power of social construction and collaborative learning theories, John Trimbur returns to issues of student-teacher authority, once again presenting peer evaluation as a means of redistributing what he believes to be an uneven distribution of power and authority in the classroom. Rather than returning to individual autonomy as a means of restructuring classroom authority, Trimbur asserts that "consensus need not inevitably result in accommodation" (603). He asserts that a "fear of consensus often betrays fear of peer group influence—a fear that students will keep their own records,

work out collective norms, and take action" and that such a position is "implicitly teacher-centered and authoritarian" (604). "A rehabilitated notion of consensus in collaborative learning," he writes, "can provide students with exemplary motives to imagine alternative worlds and transmutations of social life and labor. In its deferred and utopian form, consensus offers a way to orchestrate dissensus and to turn the conversation in the collaborative classroom into a heterotopia of voices" (615).

Carrie Shively Leverenz, however, questions Trimbur's assertion that students can escape the normalizing function of consensus by "agreeing to disagree." She suggests that the traditional authoritative and hierarchical structures of academic culture represented in peer evaluation are so pervasive that true peer relationships among students may not be possible (271). Paul Heilker's Foucauldian analysis of writing groups more fully radicalizes the position held by Leverenz, describing the innocent circle of desks often accompanying peer evaluation as "the collaborative composition cell" (5). According to Heilker, peer evaluation is a practice that "actually disempowers students and does so in an especially efficient and ingenious manner: by having them do the work of making each other yet even more visible" (9).

Despite (or, in many cases, as a result of) the application of theory to practice, it seems the use of peer evaluation in teaching writing remains a "perplexing gap" in composition studies. While some may fret over the patchwork of (not always new) terms, practices and theories that constitute the meanings of peer evaluation, the resulting state of indeterminacy will continue to serve the field well in animating practitioners, theorists and researchers to construct even more meanings for an exigent element in the theory-practice of our field.

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process

Process entered into the lexicon of composition studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a method of writing instruction that relied heavily upon invention strategies. The process method developed in contrast to "current-traditional rhetoric," which tended to emphasize the correctness of the writer's text as a "product" and to disregard the creative and intellectual processes of the individual writer who created the text (Crowley). Consequently, process quickly came to mean "a critique (or even outright rejection) of traditional, product-driven, rules-based, correctness-obsessed writing instruction" (Tobin 5) that generated formulaic student papers. Process rebelled against this "feel-nothing, say-nothing language" (Macrorie 18) by focusing on the cultivation of the student's "authentic voice" (Stewart). As a result, "the focus in the teaching of writing" shifted from "a product-oriented, content-conscious, point of view to a process-oriented, holistic point of view" (Pianko 275).

Beyond such general methodological contours, early attempts to define process took place in a "terminological thicket" (Sommers 209). Theorists sought to define *the* composing process as an unvarying pattern rather than to examine the processes of individual writers. However, they were largely unsuccessful in their efforts because they used the same nomenclature to describe process as to describe product; they were able to identify stages of the product but not the operations of the process; and they failed to develop "the necessary vocabulary to adequately discuss the psychological and intellectual operations of the composing process" (Sommers 209-210). Their efforts demonstrated the need for a research model that would raise important questions about writers' composing processes and that would lead theorists "to ask basic ontological questions of how the process differs from the product" (Sommers 211).

Expressivists like William Coles, Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie, Donald Murray, and Donald Stewart argued for a definitional model that associated process with a writer's effort "to discover meaning in experience and communicate it" (Murray 21). Exploration of the self through language was the central goal of any writer's composing process (Murray 26), and this process

of self-discovery was revealed in the development of the writer's personal ability to create meaningful relationships among the ideas presented within the writer's text (Gorrell). One consequence of this perspective is that process pedagogy and personal writing often came to be linked "in practice and perception" (Tobin 6).

The importing of ideas from cognitive and developmental psychology into composition studies during the 1970s eventually moved the expressive model from the realm of personal explorations and self-discovery to a consideration of the thought processes underlying all creative activities. Thus, process became associated with an effort to understand metacognition. A leading advocate of this approach was Janet Emig, who used a process model based on case-study methods and think-aloud protocols to examine how writers actually composed. By far, the most extensive influence on the cognitive model of process emerged from the work of Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, who sought to examine "writing behaviors and concomitant mental activities" (Pianko 277). Flower and Hayes discussed ways of combining problem-solving strategies with critical inquiry strategies as a means for students to coordinate and carry out the act of composition. Frank D'Angelo presented a similar perspective by transforming *topoi* into cognitive strategies. The underlying assumption was that cognitive structures and conceptual processes are related (Stallard).

The cognitive model gave a scientific base to composition studies (Voss 279), but it was criticized for oversimplifying the dynamics of the writing process. Further, both the cognitive and the expressive models came under fire for focusing on the composing processes of individual writers while ignoring the social and cultural influences shaping those writers' identities. Theorists such as David Bartholomae, James Berlin, Patricia Bizzell, Kenneth Bruffee, and Marilyn Cooper advocated a social view of the writing process that reflected a postmodern sense of multicultural influences and of anti-foundational epistemologies. This perspective, generally called social constructionism or social-epistemic rhetoric, maintains that knowledge and all meaning-making activities are the product of social interaction. As a consequence, the social-epistemic model of process introduces the writer to a dialogic pedagogy based on discourse communities and the construction of knowledge within those groups. In social constructionism, writers come to understand the writing process through group interactions, consensus building, and collaborative learning, but some theorists, such as Paolo Freire, Ivan Illich, Stanley Aronowitz, and Henry Giroux, argue that this pedagogical approach merely replicates existing power structures and encourages social elitism and accommodation to the existing order (Ryan). For these theorists, often identified with the concept of "liberatory" or "radical" pedagogy (Ward 91), instruction in writing as a process should be based on "dialogic methods that attempt to subvert the traditional form of education as a 'depositing' of information in students" (Ward 91). In a liberatory pedagogy, the social

process model of writing instruction works toward encouraging the student to examine and ultimately transform the social structures, "including the social structure of schooling" (Ward 95), that are oppressive in enforcing conformity and hegemony.

Irene Ward states that the expressivist, social-epistemic, and liberatory perspectives "often assume varying and sometimes contradictory notions," yet "all of these perspectives are considered part of composition's 'process' paradigm" (129).

Recently, reevaluations of the "process paradigm" have been undertaken by theorists seeking to understand and evaluate the legacy of this influential concept. Charles Bazerman questions whether the process movement was ever truly successful in addressing the ontological question of how process differs from product. As he states, "The distinction and/or relation between process and content of writing is as slippery and dangerous as that other ancient binary chestnut of the arts of representation: form and content" (140). Gregory Ulmer, William A. Covino, and Thomas Kent have applied poststructuralist and deconstructionist ideas to composition pedagogy "to devise a postprocess, postmodern theory for composition studies" (Ward 130). The effort is to redefine earlier models of epistemology, language, and communication in light of poststructuralist theories. Kent, for example, argues that "many of our most influential theories of discourse production and analysis can explain satisfactorily neither the nature of language nor how the effects of language are produced" (505). Lad Tobin contends that the process movement opened up for investigation and critique many of the concepts central to poststructural theorists in the 1990s. Without the process movement, issues of the decentering of teacher authority, the hegemony of social conventions, and the social aims of discourse would not be as accessible to contemporary theorists. In recontextualizing process within the poststructural 1990s, when "the writing process movement has begun to get squeezed by the past and the future, by the right and the left" (5), Tobin considers its legacy an essential defining element within newer theories of the postmodern era. In a practical vein, Tobin argues, too, that many of the fundamental beliefs of the writing process movement—"that writing should be taught as a process, that writing can generate as well as record thought, that students write best when they care about and choose their topics, that good writing is strongly voiced, that a premature emphasis on correctness can be counterproductive"—"continue to hold power for most writing teachers and students" (7). The result is "an odd though not unusual discontinuity between theory and practice" in which "the writing process movement, and particularly its emphasis in expressivism, is frequently dismissed in contemporary scholarly books, journal articles, and conference papers, while it is still embraced by huge numbers of classroom teachers" (7).

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(109). Chase also observes that resistance “is a behavior that actively works against the dominant ideology” (15), but he is more concerned with the individual student’s emancipation, a sense perhaps closer to that designated as “empowerment.”

While he quotes Giroux’s Gramscian formulation of resistance approvingly—“resistance must have a revealing function, one that contains a critique of domination”—Chase restricts the concept to the personal experience and perspective of individual students: “Resistance . . . refers to a student’s refusal to learn in those cases in which the refusal grows out of a larger sense of the individual’s relationship to liberation” (15). From the beginning, therefore, Chase gave Giroux’s formulation of resistance a personal, experiential cast, making it a micropolitical picture of the individual student’s interface with institutional authority.

But what happens when students resist not the status quo but the leftist composition instructor? Resistance can become affirmation of authority rather than its interrogation. Students are thus seen as representatives of rather than allies against cultural conservatism. In other words, while Chase’s view allies instructors and students in resistance to the status quo, the leftist perspective (often designated “advocacy”) places instructors in resistance to a status quo that includes their students. Christopher Wise, for example, writes of his student’s resistance to Freud’s ideologically repugnant concept of childhood sexuality. Dale Bauer explores student resistance in the form of antipathy to feminist teachers and their practices. In an attempt to better understand this process, Karen Fitts and Alan France have studied the rhetorical strategies students use to resist “oppositional” pedagogy.

Some scholars, however, worry that teacher-advocacy (i.e., the instructor’s open identification with a political position) will silence student resistance rather than appropriating it for effective writing pedagogy. Maxine Hairston has argued that resistance—in the form of socio-political conflict between instructor and students—will result in “intellectual intimidation” rather than fruitful dialogue because of the instructor’s power and students’ apprehension about their grades. Pedagogical conflict and resistance thus force students into a “fake discourse” of vacuous generality, hypocrisy, and political correctness (188–189). A similar concern has been recognized on the left by Donald Lazere, and Carl Herndl observes that “[politically] confrontational pedagogy is more likely to produce opposition among students, than to encourage cultural resistance” (359).

In the years since Chase introduced “resistance” as a means for students to challenge demands that their writing reproduce the conventions of academic discourse, scholars have continued to broaden the concept in their examination of the individual-institutional interface. Min-zhan Lu provides a recent example, arguing that grammatical error and “inappropriate” usage are often best seen as student resistance (rather than ignorance and insensitivity) to discursive authority (448). Lu asks us to consider the writing classroom



resistance

The term *resistance* in composition studies most commonly refers to a general opposition to authority, a student’s opposition to pedagogical authority and, especially, a writer’s opposition to discursive conventions. Thus, the term’s connotation depends on an author’s stance toward classroom politics (for a range of positions, see Hurlbert and Blitz). Most often, resistance is considered a positive good, a signifier of student agency (Ewald and Wallace) or of democratic defiance of elitist practices (Stygall). In composition studies, “resistance” is almost always an activity of students, its connotation determined by the instructor’s stance toward the specific power relationships of a pedagogical situation.

As a structuring concept of contemporary composition theory, “resistance” was introduced by Geoffrey Chase’s 1988 essay in *College Composition and Communication*. Chase borrowed the conceptual apparatus of his argument from Henry Giroux (1983). Following Giroux, Chase divides student response to pedagogical authority into three categories: accommodation, opposition, and resistance. Accommodation is the “process by which students learn to accept conventions” of discourse communities (14). Opposition and resistance are both means by which the relatively powerless contest authority (or “domination” in Giroux’s Gramscian lexicon). For Giroux, opposition refers to disruptive behavior that is likely to be reactionary: the “appropriation and display of power,” which, like sexist or racist insults, is “fueled by and reproduces the most powerful grammar of domination” (103). Because Chase is concerned only with college writing instruction, he limits opposition to students’ failure “to learn the patterns and conventions of a particular discourse community” (15).

More interesting is the way Chase applies Giroux’s concept of “resistance.” Giroux draws his Gramscian theory of hegemony and resistance from British cultural studies, especially the work of Paul Willis (98–107). He writes that resistance “must have a revealing function, one that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and for struggle in the interest of self-emancipation and social emancipation”

as a multicultural "contact zone" and to reconceptualize "deviations from the official codes of academic discourses" (448). Instructors might then teach "a range of choices and options" that would include "ways of resisting the unifying force of 'official' discourse" (455-456).

Lu's concept of resistance reflects the dominant contemporary usage of the term. It preserves Giroux's Gramscian "critique of domination" while maintaining Chase's primary emphasis on enabling individual students to negotiate their own positions "in the context of . . . socio-political power relationships" (448). While the cultural politics of this usage remains implicit, its Gramscian origin can be perceived in Lu's professed multicultural objectives: to understand students' difficulties with official discourses as "the refusal of 'real' writers to reproduce the hegemonic conventions of written English" (447). In composition studies, as throughout American culture, it seems the exercise of power (including resistance to it) is seen from the individual's perspective.

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revision

Although revision is regarded as an essential component of writing, researchers and practitioners disagree upon a definition of the term. Revision has been represented as a quick form of editing—the act of finding errors and polishing sentences at the end of the writing process, as an epistemic act, as a way for the writer to make a written piece conform to readers' expectations, and as an embedded subprocess within other subprocesses of writing.

The definition of *revision* as error correction within a linear model—pre-writing, writing, and postwriting (Britton, Burgess, Rohman)—prevailed until the early 1970s. In 1978, Donald Murray, perhaps the first to pointedly study revision, renamed the linear stages in the writing process "prevision," "vision," and "revision." He defined revision or "seeing again" as "what the writer does after a draft is completed to understand and communicate what has begun to appear on the page" (87). Murray makes a distinction between internal revision, "everything writers do to discover and develop what they have to say," and external revision, "what writers do to communicate what they have to say" (87). Although Murray's work was embedded within a linear stage model of writing, his view of writing marks a transition in writing theory.

By the late 1970s, revision is given theoretical attention within a process-oriented rather than product-focused conception of writing, and is no longer defined simply as the act of making editorial changes. At this point, researchers began supporting a dynamic hierarchical cognitive theory of writing, involving planning, transcribing, and reviewing. The new model emphasized the recursive nature of writing as exemplified in the work of Linda Flower and John Hayes, who define revision, or "reviewing," as a goal-directed process that can take precedence over and interrupt all other writing processes at any time. Sondra Perl defines revision similarly as the way a writer looks forward and backward as he or she writes—backward to what is written, forward to what will be read. She suggests that writers are guided by a subjective "felt sense," which she defines as the "internal criterion writers seem to use to guide them when they are planning, drafting, and revising" (367). These

definitions of revision as a process embedded within other subprocesses of writing expanded earlier conceptions of the term, which defined revision as editorial proofreading performed as the last stage of a linear writing process.

As interest in the process of revision increased, it became increasingly more difficult to define the term. Researchers of the early 1980s seem to disagree whether the term means changes that are made to the final product, or the process authors go through in their minds when they write, or both. Beach's problem-solving model and Bridwell's model of revision appear to include both the mental process and the actual changes made. Scardamalia and Bereiter preferred to separate revision process and products, explaining that their model of the process of making textual changes was not called a model of revision because revision refers to something that happens to a text. More recently, Scardamalia and Bereiter coined the term "reprocessing" to refer to the mental aspects of revision, saying that "reprocessing is a more suitable theoretical term than revision because it refers to what goes on mentally rather than being tied to differences in surface behavior." Reprocessing "spans everything from editing for mistakes to reformulating goals. Revision is a special case of reprocessing, applied to actual text" (790).

Regardless of their conceptualization of the term revision, most researchers who define revision—implicitly or explicitly—do take into account rhetorical elements affecting the final written product. In 1980, for example, Nancy Sommers examines how authors consider their readers' expectations and particular occasions for writing. She defines revision, or "re-seeing," as a recursive rather than linear process guided by "a sequence of changes in a composition—changes which are initiated by cues and occur continually throughout the writing of a work" (380). Sommers describes the act of revision as analogous to both reading and writing, and so weaves "changes" and "cues" into a process of revision around a text that involves both "re-creating" and "de-creating" a text. Likewise, Carol Berkenkotter views revision in terms of audience awareness. She defines revision as the way skilled writers "automatically internalize their audiences" and then use this sensed audience and their relationship to it to help them modify assigned writing tasks, select appropriate types of discourse, and make a wide range of "rhetorical, organizational, and stylistic decisions" while they write. And Faigley and Witte—in opposing implicit constructions of what revision has meant to some researchers in the field—define revision not as "the number of changes a writer makes," but rather changes that "bring a text closer to fitting the demands of the situation" (411).

Other definitions of revision suggest that it is performed not only in a rhetorical context but in what Kenneth Dowst terms an epistemic context—as a means for generating knowledge. For example, Sommers defines the revision of mature writers as part of the ongoing process of invention, as a technique for producing meaning. Faigley and Witte define revision in terms of discovering what "exactly" one has to say (107). And Bartholomae and

Petrosky define revision as "stages in the ongoing process of working out what we know and what we can say about the subject that engages us" (168).

Despite the attention revision has received in the last twenty years (both theoretical and pedagogical), Nancy Sommers (1992) suggests that still "left unexamined [is] the most important fact of all: revision does not always guarantee improvement; successive drafts do not always lead to clearer vision. You can't just change the words around and get the ideas right" (26). Likewise, Jeffrey Carroll asserts that "revision in itself has little value to the composer beyond privileging a mode of writing that emphasizes variation, repetition, and a sense of process. Revision does not guarantee progress or success or quality in writing, and in fact can work against it" (69). While revision may be largely prescriptive, Carroll argues that "it must also be subordinate to the intentions and expectations of writer and reader, and to the intertext which defines them" (72). He suggests that "a recognition and exploitation of this intertextual web . . . may lead to a more practical and profitable view of revision as *ongoing* and *summative*, not mechanistic and microstructural" (70). Carroll (re)constructs revision as "dipping into the intertext—the internalized sum of texts that readers and writers draw upon—a nonquantifiable act that occurs as a natural part of our reading and writing" (69).

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rhetoric

Rhetoric is buffered by storms of signification coming from two directions. From one direction comes the general public's perception, reinforced by the popular media, of rhetoric as bombast, figurative language designed to cover up either deception or shallow substance. Some compositionists distance themselves from this meaning (see, for example, Erika Lindemann's dismissal of it as a "fraudulent practice" [35]), yet one finds in some corners of composition studies a fascination, kindled by French deconstructionists, with the figurative nature of language. J. Hillis Miller (1985), for example, proposes that "rhetoric [as] knowledge of the intricacies of the tropes should be taught in courses in composition, along with grammar and rhetoric in the sense of persuasion" (101). From another direction comes the implied meaning, embraced within most academic circles, of rhetoric as the subject matter that gets taught in composition courses. Embodying a definition of composition as applied, "taught" rhetoric are collections of essays for writing teachers and scholars—for example, Richard Graves' 1976 *Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers* and Patricia Harkin and John Schilb's 1991 volume, *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age*. This definition leads authors to refer to composition textbooks as rhetorics; consider, for example, Richard M. Coe's *Process, Form, and Substance: A Rhetoric for Advanced Writers*.

For most of this century, rhetoric, supported by a tradition of philosophical/theoretical scholarship, has been invoked to rescue composition from its seemingly anti-intellectual baggage of word-, sentence-, and paragraph-level pedantry. As early as 1936, I. A. Richards proposed that his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, "a study of misunderstanding and its remedies," should offer an antidote to traditional rhetoric, which represented "the dreariest and least profitable part of the waste that the unfortunate travel through in Freshman English" (3). In the 1960s, two versions of the term came to the fore. The first considers the degree to which any piece of written discourse—a theme, a novel or story, an advertisement, an editorial, and so on—embodies an

implied "speaker," a writer attempting to shape a message that she hopes will be effective for a certain "audience" of readers. The major spokesperson for rhetoric was Wayne Booth, whose 1963 essay defines "The Rhetorical Stance" as the "common ingredient that I find in all of the writing I admire":

a stance which depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and particularities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character of the speaker. (141)

In a later article, Booth makes it clear that rhetoric should be couched in the current times: "[I]t would be naive to think that reviving Aristotle or Quintilian or Campbell or Whately could solve our problems. . . . The revival must do more than echo the past" (11). The second 1960s' conception of rhetoric, however, was boldly historical. It aims to find sources for contemporary composition pedagogy in the pre-Socratic sophists, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and their successors. Leading the cause in the 1960s for rhetoric in composition was Edward P. J. Corbett. In a 1963 essay, "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric," Corbett explains the concepts of rhetorical appeals, audience, status theory, arrangement, imitation, and style developed by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian and suggests their application in contemporary composition classes. His 1965 textbook, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, embodies Corbett's belief that "the elaborate system of the ancients, which taught the student how to find something to say, how to select and organize his material, and how to phrase it in the best possible way, is still useful and effective—perhaps more useful and effective than the various courses of study that replaced it" (ix).

While these 1960s-inspired significations are still frequently invoked when *rhetoric* is used without an article, a vast array of different theories of speaking and writing employ the term either preceded by the indefinite article and followed by a prepositional phrase or preceded by a specific adjective. The only characteristic these theories share is that their proponents seem to envision their rhetoric as being able either to explain how speakers and writers behave in certain situations or to direct speakers and writers to generate language that has certain, presumably effective, characteristics. In 1963, for example, Francis Christensen promulgated "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" comprised of a series of syntactic strategies—primarily addition and movement of modifying phrases in sentence-final positions—that would add "texture" to prose (8).

In 1965, Richard Young and Alton Becker offered an essay, "Toward a Modern Theory of Rhetoric: A Tagmemic Contribution." Young and Becker based their work on Kenneth Pike's linguistic theory of tagmemics, holding that "any linguistic unit is assumed to be well defined only when

three aspects of the unit are specified: its contrastive features, its range of variation, and its distribution in sequence and ordered classes" (456). Arguing that "the procedures the linguist uses in analyzing and describing a language are in some important ways like the procedures a writers uses in planning and writing a composition" (457), Young and Becker developed "an epistemological heuristic" based on the tagmemic triad of contrast, variation, and distribution. Young and Becker, thus, saw their tagmemic rhetoric as primarily a tool for invention, leading the writer not to overpower and subdue the belief systems of the reader; instead, "the writer must seek to have his readers identify his message with their emic system" (94).

In the 1980s, James Berlin held a strong brief for what he termed epistemic rhetoric, in which "truths arise out of dialectic, out of the interaction of individuals in discourse communities" (17). Berlin explained further:

Truth is never simply "out there" in the material world or the social realm, or simply "in there" in the private and personal world. It emerges only as the three—the material, the social, and the personal—interact, and the agent of mediation is language. (17)

To Berlin, thus, epistemic rhetoric represented primarily an attitude toward language use that sees all elements of a communicative transaction—"interlocutor, audience, material world"—as "verbal constructs" (16).

In her 1991 book, Susan Jarratt envisions a feminist rhetoric derived from the philosophical, linguistic, and social theories of the pre-Socratic sophists. Acknowledging the basic sophistic belief in the anti-foundationalism of knowledge, feminist rhetoric, according to Jarratt, places an emphasis on "habit and practice, on historical contingency [of truth claims], and the rejection of essence" (70). Sophistic rhetoric enables a feminist reading/writing practice of breaking into the "received histories" of the discourse of man (78). For Jarratt, then, feminist rhetoric encourages writers to accept openly the "positionality" of their claims and to situate their claims in ways that will give voice to women's ideas that have long been marginalized by male-centered discourses.

Finally, extending her research on writing and cognition in the 1970s and 1980s, Linda Flower has recently proposed the existence of cognitive rhetoric, which, she notes, "locates its inquiry in a fine-grained analysis of individual minds, in action, in problematic rhetorical situations" (172). According to Flower, cognitive rhetoric asks whether "this constructive, interpretive, knowledge-forming process" operates

for everyone alike[.] . . . for the politically conscious as it does for the naive, for the educated as it does for the illiterate, for a student before and the same student after a composition course? . . . Cognitive rhetoric, then, works by building observation-based theory; it pursues the concerns of rhetoric with the exploratory methods of the social sciences, which can uncover revealing comparisons. (172)

To Flower, then, cognitive rhetoric represents a set of principles and methods for studying how situated writers construe their tasks, their personae, their readers, and their texts.

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self/the subject

The terms *self* and *subject* are often used interchangeably in composition studies, so much so that definitions of the terms may seem indistinguishable. Nevertheless, a closer look at how compositionists employ them yields a number of useful distinctions in addition to a noticeable shift from the use of *self* to the use of *the subject* to define the writer, or the writing *self/subject*. These terms fluctuate in meaning due to the necessity to borrow from debates in philosophy, social science, psychology, political science, and rhetoric as compositionists struggle "over the meaning and status of the writer, or the writing subject" (Clifford 39).

During the 1970s, the self was generally defined by scholars like William E. Coles, Jr., Donald Murray, and Peter Elbow as a romanticist, personal, core, self uninfluenced by social forces or historical context. James A. Berlin (who labels this expressivism) attributes this portrayal to the Platonic belief in the soul whose truth is discovered "through an internal apprehension, a private vision of a world that transcends the physical" (1982, 771). For example, Coles makes a distinction between the "literary self . . . construable from the way words fall on a page" and the "other self, the identity of a student," a self that is a mystery, one with which a teacher "can have nothing to do" (12). In a similar vein, Murray teaches that writing is a process of listening to one's self. He tells students, "[p]lay close attention to your own self, learn from your own learning" (xi). One metaphor associated with this kind of central, personal self is voice, and both Murray and Elbow utilize voice as a way to explain what they mean by self. As Murray puts it: "Voice is the writer revealed" (144). Elbow varies this only slightly when he notes (see Berlin 1988, 486) that the "main source [of his theory of writing] is my own experience" (16). Experience, voice, and that "other identity" sound the defining bell of an essential, core self.

Berlin's definition of the self, a central tenet in his theory of social-epistemic rhetoric, departs radically from the expressivist conceptions of self described above. According to Berlin, "[t]here is no universal, eternal, and

authentic self that beneath all appearances is at one with all other selves" (1988, 489). In social-epistemic rhetoric, "the subject is itself a social construct that emerges through the linguistically-circumscribed interaction of the individual, the community, and the material world" (489). Berlin's subject may be caught in a web of "socially-devised definitions" (489), but this does not mean, he argues, that individuals can never act to change their social conditions. Blending the terms *self* and *subject*, Berlin's construction marks the turning point in composition in the late 1980s when *the subject* becomes a political and linguistic term for defining the self.

According to Richard Lanham, the history of Western education has been an "uneasy combination of the two basic concepts of the self, central and social, of the two complementary basic conceptions of society, of language as transmission and language as creation, of thought as rule-governed and thought as coaxing chance" (147). Lanham envisions the self as a *process* of oscillating between the poles. In other words, for Lanham, the self is situated in a matrix of consciousness (14) within which it alternates between the extreme poles of "central and social, sincere and hypocritical, philosophical and rhetorical" (25). Indeed, Lanham goes so far as to say that the whole of humanities teaching sustains that "bi-stable oscillation which forms the heart of the Western self" (25).

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s, resistance to either the central or the socially defined self grew, fueled by a surge in composition's alliance with postmodern theory. Several recent critiques focus on deconstructive, psychoanalytic, and discursive definitions of *the subject* in composition studies. After Jacques Derrida claimed, "the subject of writing [is] . . . a system of relations between strata: The Mystic [Writing] Pad, the psyche, society, the world" (227), some compositionists began to adopt deconstructive approaches to writing instruction. Sharon Crowley, for instance, writes that Derrida's deconstruction of a sovereign self means that "the scene of writing thus mandates the writer's pluralization" (34). Not only is the "subject" enmeshed in multiple relations, but when writing, "writer becomes audience" as well (34). In short, a plurality occurs in the "subject" in at least two ways: as part of a plural system of relations and as a movement between plural roles (as between writer and reader) (see also Neel 122-123).

In 1987, *College English* devoted two special issues to psychoanalysis and the problem of the "subject" in composition pedagogy (see Davis). Gregory S. Jay follows Jacques Lacan in defining *the subject* as "a phenomenon of language," as an entity "that comes into being through the assumption of positions offered to it by cultural discourses" (790). Not long afterward, Susan Miller published the first full treatment of the subject in composition: *Rescuing the Subject*. She calls for retheorizing a writing subject "quite different from the unitary speaking subject whom both modern philosophy and oral rhetoric have imagined" (4). Unwilling to completely deny a central self, and yet also unable to continue to argue for the unitary speaking subject,

Miller situates the writing self in the inescapable middle terrain. Adopting a Nietzschean perspective, Miller argues (with Paul deMan) that the human subject has no privileged viewpoint, that such a perspective "is a mere metaphor" (deMan 109, qtd. in Miller 25). In short, she maintains that this "metaphoric construction of a self, which I have placed in the space a theorized writer occupies, substitutes a 'human-centered' meaning for the possibility of cosmic insignificance" (25). Lester Faigley shares the ambivalent middle terrain between modernity and postmodernity with Miller when he portrays the subject as a "momentarily situated" and "metropolitan" subject capable of "both crossing social divisions" and "negotiating among many competing discourses" (239). Leaning toward the postmodern, however, Faigley agrees with Jean-François Lyotard that "subjects are like nodes in networks of discourses," moving in and out of heterogeneous subject positions and "contingent discourses" (218; 227).

To conclude, the *self* and *subject* are terms with complex histories and diverse definitions that can occupy extreme poles of oppositional meaning. From Elbow, who posits a central, core self to Victor Vitanza who counters that "when the Subject writes, or chooses, the Subject is always already written, or chosen" (398), the self and subject occupy the center of a dialectical tension in composition studies that continues to provoke critical and productive discourse.

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Social construction

Generally speaking, the interpretive turn in composition to social construction represents a new paradigm for understanding how meaning is made, how knowledge is constructed, and how the self is constructed. To say, however, that social construction is a recent phenomenon is to ignore the meanings that allowed it to gain such prominence in our field and the meanings that threaten its current status.

Social construction is the result of efforts that were underway shortly after the turn of this century with the onset of progressive education. So writes James A. Berlin: "Even before 1930, attempts had been made to shift the attention of the writing classroom away from expressionism on the one hand and current-traditional rhetoric on the other" (82). Mara Holt agrees and claims that composition articles from that period attest to this shift. According to Holt, "articles on pedagogy in the 1930s begin by offering a social approach to teaching English as part of a national economic remedy" (542). Thus, early portrayals of social construction are those of "social approaches" to writing instruction linked to hard times and progressive democratic education.

Most composition scholars, however, cite key texts from the 1960s and 1970s when drawing the map of social construction and its culmination in the 1980s within composition studies: Thomas S. Kubn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*, Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, and Clifford Geertz's *Local Knowledge* (see Bruffee, LeFevre, and Faigley). As the titles suggest, these authors radically reconceive how reality and knowledge are constructed. Of interest to composition, and absent from this list, is a representation of social construction as "rhetorical in nature" (Faigley 15). According to Lester Faigley, due to poststructuralist critiques of modernist notions "that language provides an unproblematic access to reality" (8), rhetorical views of language have redefined how the self and knowledge are constructed. Faigley calls his approach a "social view" (similar to Berlin's

"social-epistemic" category of rhetoric). That is, "an individual writer [is] a constituent of culture" (17).

Given the convergence of modern and postmodern discourses within a number of disciplines, there seems to be no argument that *social construction* is a broad term for a new philosophy of knowledge and reality. For example, Kenneth A. Bruffee (1986) claims that a social constructionist position "assumes that entities we normally call reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers" (774). From this view compositionists derived consensus-oriented models of learning likewise being developed in other fields, but largely the result of higher education open admissions policies in the early 1970s (Bruffee 1984, 637). That is, due to larger and larger classes, teachers had to turn to having students teach each other. Using social constructionist theories, teachers advocated collaborative learning as alternatives to teacher-centered authoritarian models of learning. In Bruffee's view, since knowledge is a "social artifact," this challenges the "traditional basis of the authority of those who teach" (648; 649). In other words, for Bruffee *social construction* means a consensus-oriented pedagogical theory that restructures traditional classroom hierarchies.

The questions that seem to occupy current debates about social construction include: "Who (or what) does the constructing? Who gets included? What are the effects?" Thus, recent contested meanings of *social construction* are a series of differing views about the ideologies it harbors. By the late 1980s, leftist critiques of social constructionist pedagogy began to coalesce. John Trimbur, for instance, refers to scholars, like David Foster, who worry that "the use of consensus in collaborative learning is an inherently dangerous and potentially totalitarian practice that stifles individual voice and creativity, suppresses differences, and enforces conformity" (602). Citing Foster's notion that collaborative learning is based on an "epistemological mistake," Trimbur reports that, for Foster, social construction means indoctrination and the loss of individual autonomy. In addition, Trimbur suggests, leftist critics like Greg Myers worry "that Bruffee's social constructionist pedagogy runs the risk of limiting its focus to the internal workings of discourse communities and of overlooking the wider social forces that structure the production of knowledge." In Myer's opinion, Trimbur says, knowledge and reality are indeed socially constructed, but social construction also encompasses the "wider social forces" outside knowledge communities (603). Thus, by the early 1990s, composition scholars had alternately embraced and rejected social construction (see Faigley 15, 31-35).

While some define it as a new method of invention—assigning articles about social construction as a heuristic to show students how they are socially constructed (Rouser)—others say social constructionists do not see beyond its methodological value. That is, some say they do not go far enough in questioning the theoretical bases in which the methods are grounded. Victor

J. Vitanza, for example, explains that when compositionists (using recent work by Patricia Bizzell, David Bartholomae, John Trimbur, and Karen Burke LeFevre) shifted "the conceptual starting place for a theory of composition from the self as inventor (or *ethos* or the cognitive perspective) to the community as inventor (or *pathos* or the social perspective)... they neglected [ed] to point out similarly that the social (or *pathos* or consensus) is itself previously (and insidiously and invidiously) constructed" (157). For Vitanza, *social construction* means that the social itself is constructed, it doesn't *do* the constructing. These critics contend that social construction should be understood as both a philosophy and a practice/method of displacing previous epistemologies and models of learning that privilege individuals, authors, the teacher, and in some instances, the social itself.

In summary, most definitions of *social construction* prompt compositionists to agree that it has radically altered conceptions of knowledge, reality, the self, and writing. How it has been deployed and to what ends is another matter. As Christina Murphy points out, on the one hand, social construction is a force that has fostered new attitudes toward diverse student populations (multicultural voices) and helped usher in diverse perspectives (feminism, Marxism, deconstructionism, social science/communication interests) (33). On the other hand, social construction is a pedagogical theory that can stifle dissent and ignore different learning styles (27-28). It represents a highly restricted view of the self, a style of teaching that deemphasizes the emotions, and a utilitarian approach that identifies with the more conservative views of education that seek to educate students for the workforce (31-32). As it currently stands, the contestations over social construction lead Murphy to issue precautions when embracing or rejecting its principles:

Social constructionism provides us with a paradigm that explains a number of aspects of writing instruction; however, to argue that it provides all the answers, or even answers sufficient to warrant the devaluing of other theories and philosophies of education... seems unwise. (36)

Whether it is a new paradigm or a panacea that elides other valuable theories, Murphy sounds the call for continued inquiry into this term and its representations, avoiding what Carole Blair calls the search for a "meta-ideology" (qtd. in Murphy 36) so that rhetoric and composition may not close down the question of social construction, but seek ways to sustain the tension among the different philosophical and pedagogical meanings of the term.

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students

Students is an omnipresent term in composition studies and a contested keyword in a number of ways. First and foremost, Andrea Lunsford has said that those working in the field should not use the term at all because it is misleading, because it habitually blinds those who invoke such a reductive, homogenizing, generic categorical referent, and that teachers and scholars need instead to start speaking and writing about the individuals that populate writing classrooms in terms of their idiosyncratic matrices of age, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and so on. Similarly, Sharon Crowley has argued that composition teachers need to relinquish their common, debilitating conception and representation of students as people with no locations, no histories, and no politics.

Lunsford's and Crowley's arguments notwithstanding, the disciplinary language of composition studies has constructed the people referred to by this signifier in diverse, highly contested, often contradictory ways over the last three decades. Many of these historical representations have had remarkable staying power and exist today as sometimes obscured yet ever-present strands of the meaning of *students* in composition studies. In 1966, for instance, W. L. Garner characterized students as "late adolescents," as "self-centered, restless, striving, discontented, driven by glands, hedonistic, insecure, volatile, idealistic, scatter-brained, emotional, seething, imbalanced [and] unpredictable" (228-229). In a similar vein, three years later, Stever Carter typified students as passive, apathetic, and resigned. Students are also he said, "a wall of clichés," dogma, and homily, and have no true ideas of their own because their minds are "abstracted," "uncreated," and characterized by their "formlessness" (40-42). Writing at the same time, Donald M. Murray portrayed students as a group whose power comes from "a rhetoric that is crude, vigorous, usually uninformed, frequently equated students with lab rats or pigeons in Skinner boxes in his behaviorist pedagogy, and Jerry Farber imagined *The Student as Nigger*, asserting that students have a "slav