were challenged to find something truly meaningful to write about. Several students moaned that unfortunately nothing dramatic had ever happened to them, so they had nothing of equal value to write about. Interestingly enough, these students, who thought they had lived uneventful lives, often wrote better essays for this assignment. Without the shocking impact of a significant crisis to rely upon, they had to wring more subtle and often sensitive significances out of their mini-traumas. Deeply reflective and perceptive essays were written about a decision to forgive a family member, the first shot on a hunting trip, and a father-daughter conversation.

Class members also expected more from each other — more openness, more personal commitment, more honesty, or else they felt disappointed. They were also more curious about each other. Effervescent and gregarious, Linda did not seem like a childhood rape victim. We carry stereotypes of how such people should look: withdrawn, anxious and tentative. If Linda had such a secret, what about the others? Was their jocularity a cover for equivalent psychic traumas?

At the end of the assignment, reading the polished drafts, class members were engrossed and often moved by the detailed authenticity and depth of their classmates' writing. They felt the power of such personally committed writing. This experience, and the individual redrafting and writing group work that led up to it, allowed them to realize that no secret formula (known only to teachers and professional writers) exists for writing effectively; student writers could see that they carried the essay "in them" and hard work was required to get it out and onto the paper. Furthermore, as more accomplished writers, they could now begin to understand the process by which professionals write about their experiences, and to have more respect for the results.

But you may be more concerned about Linda, about all the Lindas who came before her and who made themselves vulnerable in such a potentially damaging way. As teachers are we not responsible for the repercussions? To that question I unerringly answer "yes." We have to hold ourselves responsible. Exercises such as this which deal with our students' most intimate and intense memories require us to use care and skill in administering them. Linda's willingness to share her terrible moment was a tacit statement of trust and a plea for it to be returned in kind. She had taken my request seriously and asked me to do the same. While challenging her to enrich and analyze her depiction, I had to keep in mind that this had other implications beyond a writing exercise. The temptation to capitalize upon the high drama of this pedagogical moment has to be tempered by constant vigilance. By remaining sensitive to what Linda was going through as she relived her memory, I could be more certain she would benefit as much as the class from the exercise. In this way, as with all classroom lessons that are basically personal and confrontive in nature, we can ensure that our students will not only be willing to continue with them, but will find them valuable. If we don't manage such exercises well it seems to me that we will be forever doomed with "dummy runs" and essays in which no one is at home. And we will be missing an opportunity for students to come to appreciate literature in a wholly personal way.

Revitalizing Style: Toward a New Theory and Pedagogy

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In the past several years, we have seen various attempts to define and explain the dramatic changes occurring in the field of composition studies. In particular, Richard Young, James Berlin and Robert Inkster, and Maxine Hairston have spoken of a "paradigm shift," a change in the basic assumptions and attitudes that underlie all our theory and pedagogy.[1] One result of this paradigm shift has been a noticeable decline in the status of style as a pedagogical concept. By this I mean that the teaching of style no longer enjoys a prominent place in our discipline.

Some see this as a change for the good. For too long, they argue, style dominated our pedagogy — almost to the exclusion of other concerns. And of course they are right. But what I fear may be happening now is an over-correction of sorts. Style hasn't just stepped back to take a less dominant role in our teaching — style is out of style.

Before I go any further, it is probably wise to stop and explain what I mean by style in this context. To do so is no easy task, for style has had a protean identity over the years. "Historically," says Linda Woodson, "style has been interpreted both narrowly, as referring only to those figures that ornament discourse, and broadly, as representing a manifestation of the person speaking."[2] Most often, however, those who write about style in texts and in journals define style, implicitly or explicitly, in terms such as these:

> The style of a piece of writing is the pattern of choices the writer makes in developing his or her purpose. If the choices are consistent, they create a harmony of tone and language that constitutes the style of the work. A description of the style of any piece of writing is therefore an explanation of the means by which the writer achieved his or her purpose.[3]

In practice, discussions of style nearly all deal with particular linguistic choices: with diction, syntax, and tone. So I'll start out my own discussion with this definition in mind, though the definition itself, if regarded narrowly, may well be a factor in style's decline.

What, then, are the reasons for that decline? I think there are two. One has to do with the claims of competing concerns. As modern composition studies rediscovered its roots in classical rhetoric, it discovered whole areas of study that had been neglected for years. One of these areas, invention, has attracted much attention of late, and as rhetoricians rush in to fill the gap in research, interest in style has declined. The same could be said for other new areas of interest, such as the composing process. Although there is really no need to see these new fields as competing with the old, the politics of our profession and the rhetoric that it gives rise to have created such an effect.

Of course this is not to say that no one is interested in style these days. Style does have a place in the New Rhetoric — or rather, it has a place in both branches of the New Rhetoric that Richard Young has identified.[4] And this is the second reason for style's decline. For so far, neither branch of the New Rhetoric has offered us a sound, complete, and adequate theory of style. Until such a theory is formulated — or at least until such a formulation

seems *possible* — we are left with a good deal of skepticism and confusion.

Is such confusion resolvable? Is there any way to reclaim for style the respect which it has lost? I believe there is, and a little later in this essay I will make some preliminary suggestions toward that end. But first, I must go back and fill in the substance of the argument I have just outlined.

A good place to begin, I think, is with the whole notion of a "paradigm shift," or, more specifically, with the concept of competing paradigms. When we look at the work of the scholars I mentioned earlier — Young, Berlin and Inkster, and Hairston — one thing we see them all doing is trying to define the characteristics of the old paradigm, the "current-traditional" paradigm, as it has come to be called. In doing so, all take note of the prominence given to style. Here is what Richard Young has observed:

> The overt features [of the current-traditional paradigm] are obvious enough: 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 (Paradigms, 31; emphasis mine).

Picking up where Young left off, Berlin and Inkster trace the rhetorical history of the old paradigm, exposing the philosophical and epistemological assumptions on which it is based. As they do so, they also note the importance of style in the paradigm. The most salient assumption of current-traditional rhetoric, say Berlin and Inkster, is the notion that reality is fixed, knowable, and rational, and that discourse, to be valid, need only conform to that reality:

> One may ask how one piece of discourse is to be distinctive from any other discourse, given the powerful impetus for conformity that grows from the epistemology of the current-traditional paradigm. The answer lies in the concern for style, for here is the one avenue by which one may write distinctive prose, given the assumptions behind the paradigm. Hence, the elevation of style in the texts (5).

What Young and Berlin and Inkster have said here is most assuredly true: we need only look at the more traditional handbooks and texts in our field to see how important the concept of style has been for teachers of composition. And I must point out that nowhere do these authors suggest that style is an inappropriate concern. If they see a problem with the old paradigm, the problem isn't with style *per se,* but with an over-emphasis on style. Maxine Hairston is particularly careful in this regard. She closes her essay with the caution that "it is important for us to preserve the best parts of earlier methods for teaching writing: the concern for style and the preservation of high standards for the written product" (88).

Alas, though, intentions are sometimes beside the point, and in this case I fear that the otherwise useful concept of competing paradigms has had some unfortunate side effects. For one thing, it sets up false dichotomies. The process/product opposition is one that many have been uncomfortable with. Less noticed, but just as unfortunate, is a similar implied opposition between invention and style. For instance, consider this prominent item in Hairston's proposed "new paradigm," a list of twelve tenets of current composition theory: "It teaches strategies for invention and discovery; instructors help students to generate content and discover purpose" (86). Here invention, the first of the five canons of classical rhetoric, gets mentioned by name; in contrast, neither style nor arrangement appears on the twelve-item list. Earlier in Hairston's essay, however, style was twice mentioned explicitly in association with the old paradigm. Thus, though no opposition between style and invention is stated, one does get conveyed in subtle ways nonetheless.

In Berlin and Inkster, too, invention seems to get counterpoised with style. Recounting the factors that led Hugh Blair "to reject the heuristic procedures of classical invention as mechanical algorithms," the authors go on to say, "One need not search far in modern texts to find that this legacy is still with us: 'The stylistic side of writing is, in fact, the only side that can be analyzed and learned'" (3). The point that Berlin and Inkster make is a valid one: for modern rhetoricians and textbook authors since Blair, invention has not until recently been regarded as a teachable art. But to go on and quote an author who says that only style can be taught is a little misleading. After all, arrangement — that second canon of classical rhetoric — has also been a concern of the current-traditionalists. When it is left out of discussions like these, a false opposition of style and invention inadvertently gets implied.

Just as damaging to style's reputation as this implied opposition is the power of connotation. Let us look once again at Richard Young's definition of the old paradigm. Certain features he mentions are connotatively neutral, including "the strong concern . . . with style." Others, however, are negative, and they have a kind of rub-off effect on their less judgmental neighbors. Take, for example, "the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process." It's hard to say at this point when "composed product" acquired the negative connotations it holds for us today, but I would argue that the term itself gave us very little choice. Given our characteristic humanist antipathy toward the market-place, "product" will generally always have negative associations. (If you don't agree, try substituting a term like "finished discourse" and compare the effect. The latter term is more neutral, but it doesn't have that alliterative antithesis that "product/process" has.) The last item in Young's definition has an even stronger negative bias. Current traditionalists, says Young, have a "preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper." Here the negative associations of "preoccupation" are obvious. (For an interesting contrast, compare this item in Hairston's proposed new paradigm: "It includes a variety of writing modes, expressive as well as expository.") Finally, consider the rhetorical effect of mentioning style in the same breath with usage. Usage has fallen on bad times of late — largely because it has become the domain of prescriptive grammarians and linguistic reactionaries like Edwin Newman and William Safire. What this casual yoking of terms may suggest is that style belongs in that same domain — a suggestion which produces the effect of guilt by association.

If the rhetoric of competing paradigms has had, in certain respects, a chilling effect on our attitudes towards style, so has the rhetoric of the composing process. In the past few years, considerable research has been devoted to investigating that process (or those processes, to be more accurate). Much of it remains descriptive, while some results in the formulation of models. Probably the most well-known and comprehensive model is the cognitive process model constructed by Linda Flower and John

Hayes. In this model, "a writer uses a goal to generate ideas, then consolidates those ideas and uses them to revise or regenerate new, more complex goals."[5] As the examples that Flower and Hayes use indicate, many of the goals that writers set and revise are stylistic goals, having to do with such matters as word choice, syntax, and tone. Thus, their model could well be used to explore the complexities of style. But in actuality, the work that derives from the cognitive process model rarely pertains to style. Why is this? I suspect it's because of the rhetoric of the model itself.

One salient feature of the Flower-Hayes model is its hierarchical structure. Writing processes are "hierarchically organized" and writers "create a hierarchical network of goals." Within this hierarchical structure, "low level goals" (such as stylistic goals) are embedded within or subsumed to "higher level" goals involving, for instance, content, organization, or audience adaptation. As writers work, they "not only create a hierarchical network of guiding goals, but, as they compose, they continually return or 'pop' back up to their high-level goals. And these higher-level goals give direction and coherence to their next move" (379).

What Flower and Hayes say here makes perfect sense and rings true to our intuitive notion of how writers work. But almost inevitably, its effect has been to focus our interest — as teachers and researchers — on the "top level" or "middle-range" goals of the writer. Partially, this is because those "higher level" goals are so crucial. They do "give breadth and coherence to local decisions about what to say next" (379). But consider the connotations involved. When "narrow," "local," stylistic decisions occupy a "low-level" position in the "hierarchy," it's hard to see them as very important. Thus, though the Flower-Hayes model is broad and inclusive enough to account for stylistic decisions at all levels and stages in the writing process, the rhetoric of the model — like the rhetoric of competing paradigms — to some extent undermines the significance of style.

This same effect can be seen in some of the recent work on revision, particularly that of Donald Murray and Nancy Sommers. In a 1978 essay entitled "Internal Revision: A Process of Discovery," Murray divides the revision process into "two principal and quite separate editorial acts": internal and external revision. In setting up this division, Murray is not attempting to be rigorously scientific, as later researchers have been. Rather, he has a rhetorical purpose in mind. He wants us to see that revision includes not only matters of "form and language, mechanics and style" (external revision), but "everything writers do to discover and develop what they have to say, beginning with the reading of a completed first draft" (internal revision). It is this latter kind of revision that Murray is most interested in and goes on to discuss in his essay.[6]

If we look at the essay closely, we see that Murray clearly intends no denigration of style. For one thing, he concedes that "external revision has not been explored adequately or imaginatively." For another, as he goes on to discuss "internal revision," he is in fact discussing matters of style:

> . . . language itself leads writers to meaning. During the process of internal revision [writers] reject words, choose new words, bring words together, switch their order around to discover what they are saying. 'I work with language,' says Bernard Malamud, 'I love the flowers of afterthought.'
>
> Finally, I believe there is [another] area, quite separate from content, form, or language, which is harder to define but may be as important as the other sources of discovery. That is what we call *voice.* I think voice, the way in which writers hear what they have to say, hear their point of view toward the subject, their authority, their distance from the subject, is an extremely significant form of internal revision (44).

What Murray is saying here is important, and I will return to it later. For now, though, I will only point out one thing. Although Murray is clearly discussing style as an aspect of internal revision, he never actually uses the word there. He does mention style, however, when discussing external revision, and when he does, he inadvertently packs it with all the slightly disparaging connotations of words like "conventions" and "mechanics." Here again, as in delineations of the old paradigm, we have the effect of guilt by association. Very subtley, the pedagogy of style gets devalued.

A similar phenomenon occurs, I think, in the work of Nancy Sommers. In "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," Sommers writes:

> Experienced writers see their revision process as a recursive process — a process with significant recurring activities — with different levels of attention and different agenda for each cycle. During the first revision cycle their attention is primarily directed towards narrowing the topic and delimiting their ideas. At this point, they are not as concerned as they are later about vocabulary and style. [However,] during the later cycles, . . . the experienced writers' primary attention is focused upon stylistic concerns.[7]

Throughout this section of her essay, Sommers speaks of ideas, form, and style as separate "objectives." Because these objectives cannot be attended to all at once, she says, the writer must prioritize one or two. In her research, Sommers found that experienced writers tend to prioritize idea and form, leaving "stylistic concerns" for the later cycles of the process. Student writers, on the other hand, seem to get hung up on lexical concerns, perhaps because they "do not have strategies for handling the whole essay" (383).

The problem with Sommers' rhetoric here is that, as Murray has suggested, style and stylistic concerns are often tied in with other aspects of writing. It's true that narrow stylistic concerns can and do impede the composing process for many of our students; but likewise narrow ideas or narrow notions of form can impede the process. Although Sommers' research has broadened (and thereby strengthened) our concept of revision, she is still employing a fairly traditional and limited concept of style—and this in itself is part of a larger problem.

The problem, ultimately, has to do with our failure, as a profession, to come up with a unified theory of style. In his essay, "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition," Louis Milic distinguishes three different philosophies of style: 1) rhetorical dualism, which sees language and thought as separate entities, with style being the "dress" of ideas; 2) aesthetic monism, which sees style (and form) as an inevitable consequence of content; and 3) psychological monism, which regards style as the expression of a unique personality ("Style is the man").[8] In Milic's terms, Sommers would be a dualist. For her, by implication at least, style can be separated from idea and form, and when it is, it can be attended to in meaningful ways. In this, Sommers resembles a wide range of modern composition theorists and pedagogues, a heterogeneous group that Richard Young has labeled the "new classicists."

For the new classicists — including such people as Edward Corbett, Winston Weathers, Francis Christensen, and Joseph

Williams, style is a teachable art. It is taught by first determining what expert stylists do, then constructing heuristics that will help beginners master—and eventually internalize—their techniques (Young, Arts, 57-58). On the one hand, this view of style is liberating. It takes style out of the domain of the handbook rhetoricians and makes it a serious object of research and investigation. It encourages computer-based stylistic analysis and results in the formulation of such innovative heuristics as sentence-combining and generative sentence-building, as well as in the revitalization of classical concepts like imitation. On the other hand, though, the new classicists' pedagogy of style is problematic. Despite protests to the contrary, it often tends to be prescriptive. (One thinks immediately of people like Williams here, but Christensen too was accused of promoting a particular kind of style.)[9] In addition, the heuristics proposed by the new classicists are often hard to implement. Imitation exercises, sentence-combining, stylistic analysis—all of these take enormous amounts of time. For teachers committed to a process-centered approach to composition, such time takes away from the already limited time their students have for drafting and revising, and in their view the benefits may not be worth the costs.

More problematic than practical limitations, however, is one shaky assumption that underlies new classical pedagogy. This is the assumption that most stylistic decisions are conscious decisions—or can be made conscious with careful attention to the revision process. Ian Pringle has already raised objections to this assumption, in a review of Joseph Williams' text *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace.* Calling attention to the work of second language researcher Stephen Krashen, which makes a distinction between conscious *learning* learning of language and unconscious *acquisition,* Pringle argues the following:

> If students are to produce literate writing, they will do so primarily on the basis of what is acquired, and what they acquire will come to them not through the explicit study of style (or for that matter grammar), but from 'comprehensible input,' from reading good, relevant models . . .[10]

Of course Pringle's point of view is also problematic. In the first place, it assumes that the model implies that stylistic decisions are "primarily" acquired, not learned. At this point, though, Krashen's model is purely hypothetical. It may *suggest* directions for further research, but as yet it can tell us little about what specific aspects of language may be consciously learned and which must be unconsciously acquired. And secondly, we must remember that Krashen's model is not only a construct, it's a construct that may be more field-specific than we realize. Its adequacy as a descriptive model of the acquisition of *written* language has yet to be fully explored.

Nevertheless, what Pringle is voicing here is a reservation that many would share. It's the same reservation implied by Milic in his essay "Rhetorical Choice and Stylistic Options." In that essay, Milic considers the very question that Pringle (via Krashen) has raised: to what extent are stylistic decisions *conscious* decisions? Citing personal experience, observations, and anecdotes about professional writers, Milic concludes the following:

> Without for a moment denying the possibility that some part of a writer's style is conscious artistry or craftsmanship, I am convinced that most writers, even some of the greatest, knew very little about what they were doing when they wrote and had much less conscious control over the final product than is commonly supposed.[11]

With some exceptions, he seems to corroborate Krashen.

What all this suggests is that there are complex aspects of style that the dualist theory of the new classicists is ill-equipped to deal with. These aspects, the unconscious aspects of style, are of interest to the "new romantics."

The new romantics, says Richard Young, are committed to the notion that creativity is a mysterious process—a process that is ultimately unavailable to conscious, rational analysis and control. Thus, the creative process (which includes the composing process) cannot be taught in the conventional sense—but it can be facilitated by a teacher who acts as helper or guide (Young, Arts, 55). For new romantics like William Coles, Peter Elbow, James Miller, Gordon Rohman, and others, style is also a matter cloaked in mystery. But what the romantics mean by style is radically different from what new classicists or current-traditionalists mean. Take Peter Elbow, for instance. For Elbow, style is virtually synonymous with voice. Thus, it isn't so much a skill to be learned as a capacity to be realized. Style is something the writer discovers within him or herself, and the teacher's role is not to teach it but to encourage and facilitate its expression.

Like the new classicists' approach, this new romantic attitude has had a mixed effect on the status of style in our pedagogy. On the one hand, it inflates the concept's importance. For Elbow, it is voice more than anything that gives writing *power.* On the other hand, though, just because voice is so important, the concept becomes all-pervasive and tends to diffuse. As it does so, it carries off with it the language we need to describe it, and what we are left with is just the kind of vague, subjective abstraction that Louis Milic has decried in traditional studies of style.[12] Here, for example, is Elbow's reaction to a sample student passage:

> This writing has the lively sound of speech. It has good timing. The words seem to issue naturally from a stance and personality. But what strikes me is how little I can feel the reality of any person in these words. I experience this as a lack of any deeper resonance. These words don't give off a solid thump that I can trust.[13]

If style as a pedagogical concept has suffered at the hands of the new romantics, it may be because of the necessary subjectivity of their approach.

At this point it becomes clear that the problematic assumptions underlying the new romantics' approach to style are in fact the opposite of equally problematic assumptions held by the new classicists. If the classicists embrace an essentially dualistic notion of style, the romantics are committed to the view that says "Style is the man." If the classicists view style as a conscious art to be mastered, the romantics see it as an unconscious voice to be discovered. The question is this: to what extent are these two theories of style mutually exclusive? Is there any way of reconciling them, and in doing so revitalizing the teaching of style?

For Louis Milic, the theories *are* reconcilable. He has no problem seeing that real writers "write in a certain way because they select the most effective artifices of expression, but also because they are unconsciously bound to the requirements of individual personality." Still, Milic thinks that "For teaching, a dualistic theory seems to be essential, at least in the early stages." He has no faith in new romantic approaches to teaching style (Theories, 126). In part, Richard Young shares Milic's view: "The durability of these two fundamental conceptions of rhetorical art and the effectiveness of the pedagogical methods based on them suggest

that in some sense both are true — in spite of the fact that they seem incompatible." Though he doesn't propose it himself, Young believes that "there may be a more adequate conception of rhetorical art that does not lead us to affirm the importance of certain psychological powers at the cost of denying the importance of others" (Arts, 60).

From what Young and Milic say, it is clear that they see the essential differences in theories of style as psychological differences. It could be, though, that the conflict goes even deeper. According to John Gage, for instance, different theories of style are manifestations of more deeply rooted philosophical assumptions about the nature of language and reality.[14] If these assumptions can be reconciled in a theory of hermeneutics — and Gage's remarks about rhetorical communities suggest that they can — then we may not have to wait long for a unified, comprehensive theory of style. What such a theory will look like we do not yet know. But in light of what I've been saying here, I would expect it to meet the following criteria:

1. *A new theory of style would offer a broad yet workable definition of style.* This definition would be specific enough to distinguish stylistic considerations from other concerns of the writing process, such as content and formal matters. At the same time, it would be broad and inclusive enough to account for overlap between style and invention, say, or stylistic decisions and audience adaptive techniques.

If we look once again at the textbook definition of style given earlier, we see that it contains the seeds of such a definition. On the one hand, it describes style as a "pattern," a "harmony," a set of consistent choices. On the other hand, it also sees style as "a means by which the writer achieve[s] his or her purpose." What the definition implies is that style is both "product" and "process," both a set of observable features of a finished text and a way of discovering what that text will become. Such a flexible definition is crucial if we are to develop style's full potential as a rhetorical and pedagogical concept.

2. *A new theory of style would take into account the wide range of psychological operations that go into the making of stylistic decisions.* That is, it would account for not only the conscious, rational decisions that Milic calls "rhetorical choices," but for the murkier matter of the formation of stores of unconscious "stylistic options" as well. In particular, it would provide some means of distinguishing when such operations are *acquired,* when they are *learned,* and if/when they might be effectively taught.

This is not to say, of course, that there is a clear line of demarcation between conscious and unconscious choices. Still, a complete definition of style will recognize that some of those choices are more indirect than others: they are influenced by social background, by linguistic experience, and by intellectual capacity; by deep psychological factors and momentary situational constraints. In short, they are complex and fascinating — a fertile subject for further research.

3. *A new theory of style would be grounded in sound and consistent philosophical/epistemological assumptions about the nature of language and reality.* Ideally, such a theory would mediate between those who see language (and style) as representative of a fixed, orderly reality, and those who see it instead, in John Gage's terms, as "a useful but imperfect . . . manifestation of a reality maybe orderly, maybe not" (617). As I mentioned earlier, Gage himself has laid the foundation for such a theory. What it relies on ultimately is the concept of the rhetorical community, a community within which linguistic positivists and relativists can meet and, to some extent, coexist. In this community, which Stanley Fish has called the interpretive community, the essentially arbitrary and self-referential nature of language is acknowledged, yet a flexible set of acceptable meanings and standards is agreed upon. The fact that these meanings and standards change is not taken as cause for concern but as natural and expected — the result of a continuous dialogue in which meaning is negotiated.

In terms of style, such a concept *seems* to undercut monistic theories because it regards both the self (the individual personality) and meaning as relativistic constructs — entities that are themselves created by language (style). But if these constructs are seen as existing within a rhetorical (or interpretive) community, they can be provisionally regarded as determinant, even while their relativistic nature is acknowledged. Thus, the theory accomodates both dualistic and monistic concepts of style.

Richard Lanham outlines another way of resolving the problem of conflicting theories in his essay "*At* and *Through*: The Opaque Style and Its Uses." For Lanham, conflicting theories of art (and style) can be resolved if seen as points on a matrix constructed around a single variable: "degree of self-consciousness." Although he argues in different terms, Lanham seems to agree with Gage when he says that "each theory, if adequately rigorous and comprehensive, creates the object it criticizes."[15] In doing so, he implies, it also creates its audience, its rhetorical community, by whose standards and expectations its adequacy and rigor are judged.

In more practical terms, a new theory of style would have certain pedagogical consequences. By broadening our narrow definitions of style, it would force us to reconsider our notions of when, where, and how style can be taught in the process-centered classroom. Is it best to encourage students to prioritize content and form as they go through the writing process — or can style sometimes be profitably focused on even in earliest drafts? Is it enough to concentrate on those aspects of style that are most accessible to conscious control — or are there ways of reaching and shaping the less conscious processes too? And what about style as voice? Is it something the writer discovers within his or her unique individual self — or is it an interpretive construct the writer creates as he/she goes along?

All these are provocative questions, and they merit our serious attention. If we begin to address them in the context of a comprehensive theory — avoiding the negative rhetoric we hear in our discipline lately — we may be able to bring style back into style.

Notes

[1]Richard E. Young, "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention," in *Research in Composing,* ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana: NCTE, 1978), pp. 29-47; James A. Berlin and Robert P. Inkster, "Current-Traditional Rhetoric: Paradigm and Practice," *Freshman English News,* 8 (Winter 1980), pp. 1-4, 13-14; Maxine Hairston, "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," *CCC,* 33 (February 1982), pp. 76-88.

[2]Linda Woodson, *A Handbook of Modern Rhetorical Terms* (Urbana: NCTE, 1979), p. 58.

[3]James M. McCrimmon, *Writing With a Purpose* (Eighth Edition), (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), p. 311.

[4]Richard Young, "Arts, Crafts, Gifts and Knacks: Some Disharmonies in the New Rhetoric," in *Reinventing the Rhetorical Tradition,* ed. Aviva Freedman and Ian Pringle (Ottawa: CCTE, 1980), pp. 53-60.

[5]Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," *CCC*, 32 (December 1981), p. 386.

[6]Donald Murray, "Internal Revision: A Process of Discovery," in *Research in Composing*, ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana: NCTE, 1978), p. 91.

[7]Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," *CCC*, 31 (December 1980), pp. 386-87.

[8]Louis Milic, "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition," *CCC*, 16 (1965), pp. 66-69, 126.

[9]Richard Lanham's "Paramedic Method" in *Revising Prose* is also frankly prescriptive; however, his broader theory of style, which I will refer to later, is more complex and inclusive.

[10]Ian Pringle, "Why Teach Style? A Review Essay," *CCC* , 34 (February 1983), p. 94. For an explication of Krashen's model see "On the Acquisition of Planned Discourse: Written English as a Second Dialect," in *Proceedings of the Claremont Reading Conference* (1978), pp. 173-185.

[11]Louis Milic, "Rhetorical Choice and Stylistic Option," in *Literary Style: A Symposium*, ed. Seymour Chatman (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 87.

[12]Louis Milic, "Metaphysics in the Criticism of Style," *CCC*, 17 (1966), pp. 124-29.

[13]Peter Elbow, *Writing With Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 292.

[14]John T. Gage, "Philosophies of Style and Their Implications for Composition," *College English*, 41 (February 1980), pp. 615-22.

[15]Richard Lanham, "*At* and *Through:* The Opaque Style and Its Uses," *Literacy and the Survival of Humanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 58-86.

IF YOU MEET THE BUDDHA ON THE ROAD WITH A ROSETTA STONE: A DIALOGUE ON STRATEGIES OF INQUIRY AND THE NEW RHETORIC

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The product-centered paradigm of the current-traditionalists has dominated writing instruction for a number of decades, and challenges to it by rhetoricians who favor a process-centered model have produced not only the obvious product-centered vs. process-centered debates but a new subset of debates over whether the process of generating discourse is itself teachable. In "Arts, Crafts, Gifts and Knacks: Some Disharmonies in the New Rhetoric," Richard Young states that what distinguishes the new rhetoric from traditional rhetoric is the former's insistence that the "basic process of composition is discovery" but notes that adherents of the new rhetoric divide into two "apparently irreconcilable positions": "classicists" who see art as "the knowledge necessary for producing preconceived results by conscious, directed actions" and "romantics" who see art as "magic, as glamour" (55-56). The pedagogical implications of the first position are that "the principles of composing are teachable, whereas the latter position appears to preclude teaching those principles. Classicists teach the 'knacks' of successful writers, that is, heuristics, to students, whereas romantics are 'designers of occasions that stimulate the creative process'" (Garay 99). The classicist/romantic split of the new rhetoric explores not only the relationship between language and meaning but the writing teacher's relationship to the creative process itself — to the student's "art" of creating and crafting discourse. At issue is the nature of the teacher's role — the degree to which intervention in the creative process through the presentation of heuristics (or learning strategies and problem solving techniques) aids or diminishes the student's capacity for skillful written expression.

As freshman composition teachers, we found ourselves enmeshed, during recent academic seasons, in the classicist/romantic controversies of the new rhetoric, with Christina Murphy a firm adherent of the classicists' belief in the teachability of certain strategies of inquiry related to the writing process and Bonnie Dickinson an equally firm adherent of the romantics' view of the writing process as essentially insular and individual and not accessible to formulaic instruction. The intricacies of the split, as well as its pedagogical implications, were made manifest to us by our students in response to a writing assignment in which second-semester freshman composition students were asked to recount their experiences in high school and college writing classes and to assess the types of writing teachers and writing philosophies they had encountered. We noted, in reading over our students' papers, the fervor with which a substantial number of students discussed the cognitive heuristics of the classicists as stilted and antithetical to the creative process and the equal fervor with which a large number of students criticized the "inner-worlds-to-outer worlds approach" (Judy 49) of the romantics as being largely solipsistic and irrelevant to the types of writing they would be expected to do in academic and professional settings.

The perceptivity of our students' complaints and the depth of their feelings about the uses of language they should be taught and the types of writing they should be encouraged to create prompted us, through extensive discussions, to reconsider our views in depth and to seek ways to counter our students' objections to the philosophies and pedagogies in which we so strongly believed. Our friendly discussions grew gradually into a philosophical debate, and, since the classicist tradition has had the predominant influence in academics, the first salvos upon it, in our debate, were fired by the romantic:

BD: You classicists, neo- and otherwise, tend to put a high premium upon forms and techniques in writing.

CM: Yes, because we believe there is a relationship between the forms writing takes and the cognitive processes involved in forming or inventing writing initially.

BD: Since the emergence of Kant's view of cognition has largely displaced the classical Aristotelian and Lockean view that higher cognitive functions are built up from rudimentary sense impressions, don't you feel that your view of cognition is somewhat dated? It was, afterall, an old, and classical, world view that told us that reality existed outside the consciousness of individual perceivers; a more contemporary vision regards reality as something that is constructed by its perceivers, a reality constructed through rhetoric. If one's sense of reality is individually constructed, are there universal "thought forms" or cognitive processes that can be delineated and taught through the heuristics you propose?

CM: Kant's view did displace an association model of cognition and thus a particular sense of the universality of thought processes, but Kant's view also allowed for a newer and clearer