The Traditions of the Writing Process
Phillip Arrington
Eastern Michigan University

Whether writing should be studied and taught as a "process" or a "product" has become the central issue in our efforts to formulate a "new rhetoric" for the classroom. But stating the issue in these terms, as Louise Whetheree Phelps notes, leads to "conceptual problems" of no small importance (12). It looks as though "process" and "product" are antithetical when in fact they aren't. And Phelps urges writing teachers and composition theorists to adopt a more "critical attitude" toward such opposition (12). How might we adopt this "attitude"? We can start by acknowledging, as Phelps does not, that the "conceptual problems" which he identifies have a history, as do all ideas of this magnitude. Some writers—C. H. Knoblauch and Richard Young notably—have tried to make some historical sense of how the process-product antithesis developed. They have identified three separate intellectual traditions for our current interest in the writing process: classical rhetoric, skeptical empiricism, and romanticism. Yet they haven't explored the subtle ways in which the root-metaphors of each of these traditions overlap; how, as rival ideas, one defines itself against its predecessor, a predecessor usually viewed as having become obsessed with the "product" side of the antithesis to the neglect of the "living" dimension of the writing act.

Consciously or unconsciously, writing teachers today still live with and within these rival traditions. They shape our theories about language and writing, our research methods, even our textbooks. In more indirect ways, allegiance to one tradition or another sets instructor against instructor, often splitting individual English departments into those who teach writing by emphasizing grammatical correctness and essay structure, and those who teach writing by emphasizing the student writer's personal discovery of meaning throughout the writing process. One faction pins its hopes on teaching students how to produce written texts which follow the conventions of standard English. The other tries to help students use language as a way of making meaning for themselves and others. Neither faction wholly ignores the concerns of the other, of course. And some of us try to straddle the antithesis, claiming that writing is both a process leading to products. But this neutrality provides little comfort. "Process" and "product" are not neutral terms. They subsume complex sets of assumptions about what knowledge is, how we achieve it, and how that knowledge should manifest itself in writing. Nothing less is at stake here than a theory of learning and, consequently, a theory of mind.

If we accept Knoblauch's account, our current "process" model for writing began with an epistemological breakthrough in the seventeenth century, grounded in the work of Francis Bacon and René Descartes (11). Following Wilbur Samuel Howell, Knoblauch argues that with that breakthrough came a new way of discovering and organizing knowledge about the world. To the newly emerging empirical sciences, knowing was a process. Unlike the epistemology of antiquity, upon which classical rhetoric was based, empiricism was dynamic, not "static," doomed only to repeat what was already known. Because he depended on the previously established "topoi" to invent, Aristotle's rhetoric assumed that "coherence" in Nature and in discourse was "something made [a product], not something found [a process of inquiry]" (Knoblauch 12).
not Nature, becomes the object of your study. And from this reversal we derive the introspective psychology of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume — all those who will, through the inventive genius of analogy, explain the mind in terms used to describe the physical laws of Nature. A part of Nature, the mind could be examined like any other natural object or phenomenon. And if Nature operated according to certain laws and principles so too did the mind and, by extension, language. Consequently, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume identify those laws of "association" which combine our ideas into ever-more complex structures.

Aristotle had described these same principles centuries before, in his De Anima and his writings on memory. Hobbes repeats them in his Leviathan (1651). Ideas, simple or compound, are but faded sensory impressions made by qualities and features of bodies "without us . . . an object" (Philosophers 131). In both cases, we depend upon the imagination. When simply imagining a perceived object, we can find no difference between imagination, memory, and fancy (Philosophers 133). But once we start to combine these images according to our desires, our will, we take part in creating them. Hence, Hobbes and other eighteenth century thinkers discover for later romantics their key term, the "creative imagination" of poets, philosophers, scientists.

Thus in Hobbes' "compound" imagination (Philosophers 134) lies the source of both associationist psychology and romantic esthetics. For Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and others, our mental universe depends upon the products in and of Nature, the physical universe. But the ways we combine our images remain a dynamic process. We add or subtract these images. Or we associate one with another if they're alike, different, or contiguous with each other. The exact number and precise names of the associations vary from one psychologist to the next. What doesn't vary is the root-metaphor guiding the empirical approach to mind: To describe mental acts as physical events, the Inside as the Outside, the Invisible through the Visible.

For the associationists, we perceive the world and "click-tick," we get an idea from it. "Click-tick" again and we remember it. "Click-tick-tick," and we associate them, according to our will. Even so, Scottish common sense philosophers like Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart objected that associationists left the human soul out of their account. Was there no self to govern these associations? Against Locke and Hume, Reid and Stewart argued that our human "faculties" — reason, imagination, understanding, and emotions — controlled our precepts and their combinations. They insisted, as romantics like Coleridge would later, on the necessity of a morally responsible human agent. To them, the associationists had become too enamoured with the explanatory power of their machine metaphor; and too literal in its application. They made mind in the image of their Newtonian motions and commotions. For Reid and Stewart, to look at human thought in this way had the stink of tragedy about it. It left out too much, it reduced too frequently pesky complications.

Nevertheless, the image persisted. Associational psychology reigned. Despite itself, it renew interest in the imagination's role in thinking and subsequently colors literary and rhetorical theory during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, as we shall see, composition textbooks of that period. Take, for example, the idea of invention. If thinking was a matter of mechanics, so too was a writer's or poet's ability to discover ideas and make new images. In his Essay on Genius (1774), the most complete work on "the psychology of the invention process" for its time (Abrams 157), Alexander Gerard explains how Homer creates his Chimera by combining images he already knew in a "compound" image (101-02). A rhetor invents in a similar fashion. Even though sympathetic to the "faculty" theory of mind, George Campbell follows the associationists, making memory the seat of invention. In The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1776), Campbell repeats Hobbes and Locke in explaining that a rhetor's ideas are but "prints" of sensations, which the rhetor merely collects or re-collects to find his material (185).

Even more influential for modern rhetorics, Alexander Bain, following his precursor Campbell, bases his English Composition and Rhetoric (1866) on the mechanics of association. A psychologist first and foremost, Bain composed this work to meet the needs of those in the natural sciences who needed rhetorical instruction which went beyond persuasion (Harned 42). He derives his five modes of discourse — Description, Narration, Exposition, Persuasion, and Poetry — from the associationist principles of similarity, contiguity, and contrast (Harned 42-45). Each principle served as the psychological basis for one or more discourse schemes. Spatial contiguity, for example, governs description; spatial and temporal contiguity, narration; and similarity, scientific exposition (Harned 45-46). But Bain doesn't stop there. These same associations underlie such stylistic figures as metaphor, allegory, metonymy, synecdoche, and antithesis (Harned 45). And similarity was for Bain, as for Aristotle, the most important association since, as an inventive device, it is the common ground on which the poet, with his metaphors, and the scientist, with his inferences, stand (Composition 22).

Bain thus uses the laws of association to unite invention, arrangement, and style. And Bain's discourse modes remain with us still — either as models for paragraph or entire essay structures or as invention strategies. However, because the associationists stressed the importance of memory to thought, composition textbooks of the period all too often concentrated on students' recitation of grammar rules, on their parsing sentences, and on the mastering of a correct, logical style (Woods 22-28). Then as now, writing, and its teaching, was reducible to a set of rules, to be memorized and practiced. This 'covert addiction to correctness and style;' as William F. Woods phrased it (25), appears long before romanticism gains momentum in England. And it reveals more than the period's simple obsession with the written product (Young "Paradigms," 31).

What has happened, and why? In one sense, nothing very extraordinary. From its beginnings, classical rhetoric emphasized the importance of grammatical correctness. It either assumed this ability or, as in Quintilian, made it an explicit part of rhetorical training. But the virtue of correct style was one of many. Mastering style, to classical rhetors, also meant mastering the tropes and figures of style. After the reforms of Peter Ramus and his disciple Omer Talon, however, much of rhetoric — invention and arrangement, for example — now fell under the heading of logic. By the eighteenth century, style also became subject to logical analysis. In fact, a clear, correct, logical style was exactly what the Age of Reason demanded. Students should study word order, clause order, and write clear, direct sentences. This grammar study would reinforce, strengthen a student's innate capacity to make associations between ideas; it would prepare that student for the longer, more complex associations written essays required. And although some of the more poetic (i.e., "illogical") figures of style — metaphor, antithesis, and hyperbaton, for example — remained valuable from a rationalist's or an empiricist's viewpoint, "clearness, correctness, and preciseness" were the watchwords of many eighteenth century rhetorics and composition texts (Scaglione 199).
To many teachers even now, these watchwords are still crucial. They suggest a profound connection between a student's ability to think—or to think as we want the student to think—and the ability to express the thought. One ability mirrored the other. Thought had a "grammar," especially clear, logical thought. Teachers who believe this axiom today can find their position nicely justified in Hugh Blair's very popular and influential Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1783). Like many rhetoricians of his day, and ours, Blair dismissed invention as a legitimate part of rhetorical training. Why? Because "knowledge and sciences must furnish the materials that form the body and substance of any valuable composition" (52). Rhetoric simply added the necessary "polish" (42). In Blair's mind, that polishing should be the explicit object of writing instruction. Students would learn how to write with "taste," and "taste" reduced to "Delicacy and Correctness" (42).

We see, then, how a mechanistic description of thinking fits comfortably with the stress on the written product's stylistic qualities, its "correctness." And we see how it also can justify teachers who leave invention and arrangement to other disciplines or, in other cases, how it transforms invention according to the interests and methods of empiricism. In her recent study of invention in nineteenth century rhetorics, Sharon Crowley makes precisely the same point. Crowley challenges Richard Young's claim that romanticism ignored invention and the composing process ("Paradigms" 31). True, most rhetoricians conceded, with Blair, that students couldn't be taught to write like the literary "geniuses" of the past. But that didn't mean invention wasn't taught. Having studied such writers as John Franklin Genung, Barrett Wendell, and Samuel Newman, Crowley identifies three "stages" of invention in their textbooks (51-60).

First, students drew from their own knowledge, memories, and experiences as they exercised their "natural ability to grasp facts and ideas in a certain combination" that would have "significance" and would "exert power on others" (Genung 221, emphasis mine). "Natural" and "combinations" betray Genung's reliance on both Blair and the associationists. But students could also increase their mental agility through reading and "habits of investigation and reflection" (Newman 14). Or they could, like Bacon and Descartes, closely observe the world around them and assume "the attitude of constant interrogation" (Genung 227).

Finally, reflection, observation, and reading completed, they could arrange what they had collected according to a method, a plan—usually an outline, though by no means an outline so rigid that deviation from it became impossible.

This "discovery process," Crowley concludes, has an "empirical cast" about it (52). Why shouldn't it? This is where Bacon's empiricism and Descartes' rationalism have led rhetoric. On the other hand, there is little here which Aristotle, Cicero, or Quintilian had not already recommended. For all its polemics against the past, against rhetoric, the empirical tradition and classical rhetoric can't help folding back upon each other. They join hands in the writing classrooms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. So an "empirical" invention process combines with a "rationalist" grammar and style. There's method in both, process in both—albeit a mechanical method, a mechanical process. And just as Aristotle wanted to reduce the successful rhetorical act to a "method," to classify the causes of elocution (Rhetoric 1.1, 1354a), and to discern the forms of discourse which embodied mental processes, so too does the mechanics of thinking manifest itself in the stylistic surface. For Blair, students must master grammar and stylistic taste, for in that way they are taught "to think as well as to speak accurately" (33).

But to equate style and grammar with thought and invention is the necessary first step toward the "organic" theory of composing so vigorously advocated by the romantics. We have already noted how the associationists renew interest in the imagination, the key term in romantic esthetics. Yet, if we took the romantics at face value, they would have us believe that empirical psychology—particularly the associationists—is part of William Blake's Satanic "mills" of Reason. All three—empiricism, associational psychology, and Cartesian rationalism—could be made into different versions of the mimetic theory of art, a theory which had out worn its usefulness. Ideas were not, they argued, imperfect copies of sensory impressions. If imitation was part of composing, it took place within the writer. The writer, not Nature, became the "productive principle" (Todorov 153), re-enacting the creative process in Nature with each composition.

Friedrich Schelling and A. W. Schlegel see thinking as a "living" process, for the mind more resembles the plant or an animal than it does a machine. Schelling finds proof for his analogy in the composed product itself. Just as a biologist studies "the construction, the internal disposition, the relations and entanglements of a plant...or any organic being," Schelling advises, so should we be even more eager to study those "same entanglements and relations" in works of art, where they are "so much more highly organized and bound up in themselves" (Todorov 169).

Schelling's analogy is not just a stylistic flourish. Romantics would draw their terms from an alternative science, biology. If the a priori methods of physics and mathematics dominated the intellectual climate of the eighteenth century, the a posteriori methods of biology would dominate the century to follow (Foucault 246). Unlike physics, mathematics, or mechanics, biology tried to describe how organic forms grew, how they changed over time. Time is the crucial concept. Now nature could be studied historically. But this meant that the old categories of matter and motion would be replaced by the natural "event" as the basic unit of scientific inquiry (Whitehead 103).

Emulating biologists, romantics made the artistic act the basic unit of critical inquiry. A writer's idea "grows" as the text unfolds, like a plant, a flower. Both are enactments of the writer's own discovery process. As early as 1774, we find Gerard, otherwise a Lockean, comparing the process of invention to the growth of a plant. The whole is initially confused, entangled, embedded in a "germ" or "seed" (Gerard 60-64). But Gerard is no romantic. He can only suggest in 1774 what only a few years later becomes a central idea for a romantic theory of art. Taking his cue from biology, Schlegel can now attack the mechanistic basis of "atomic criticism (by analogy with atomic physics)." "Atomic criticism," Schlegel argued, could only see composition as a "mosaic...the laborious assembly of dead particles;" it was blind to the "organic" way each "particular exists only through the intermediary of the whole" (Todorov 179).

Yet, in spite of such attacks, romantics were indebted to empirical psychology for their key term, the imagination. Coleridge, for example, vigorous critic of the associationists that he is, can't deny altogether the sensory basis of ideas. "Sensation," he admits, "is but vision nascent, not the cause of intelligence [as Locke or Hume might have it] but intelligence itself revealed as an earlier power in the process of self-construction." (155). "The process of self-construction:" This phrase sums up what romantics felt thinking and composing were all about. The associationists had made the mistake of identifying too closely memory and imagination. As a result, they failed to notice what Cole-
In 1941,
Scott, Foresman English texts were the best you could buy.

They still are.

For freshman composition

Writing
Second Edition
Elizabeth Cowan Neeld
Available Now, ©1986, 656 pp., illus., hardbnd., with Instructor's Manual.
Also available in a softbound Brief Edition, excluding Handbook.

Short English Handbook
Third Edition
David E. Fear / Gerald J. Schiffhorst

Real Writing
Argumentation, Reflection, Information
Second Edition
Walter H. Beale
Available Now, ©1986, 400 pp., illus., softbnd., with Instructor's Manual.

The Writer's Craft
A Process Reader
Sheena Gillopie / Robert Singleton / Robert Becker

Writing Research Papers
1986 Special Printing with New MLA Style Update
Fourth Edition
James D. Lester

For developmental writing

Process and Practice
A Guide to Basic Writing
Philip Eggers

Reviewing Basic Grammar
Second Edition
Robert E. Yarber

Basic Process Writing
A Computer-Assisted Instruction
Louis C. Marchesano

SuperVocabulary Builder
A Strategies Approach
Rose Wassman / Gail Benchener

For English as a Second Language

Basic Composition for ESL
An ExpositoryWorkbook
Second Edition
Jann Huizenga / Courtenay Meade Snellings / Gladys Berro Francis

For further information write Meredith Hellestrae, Department SA-FEN 1900 East Lake Avenue Glenview, Illinois 60025

Scott, Foresman and Company

Forty-five years of dependability —
Foundation: Building Sentence and Paragraph Skills, Second Edition
Thomas R. Neuberger
About 400 pages • paper • Instructor's Support Package
GPA: Grade Performance Analyzer • Just published
Neuberger's Foundation—a skill-based approach to the grammar and mechanics of sentence writing—now adds basic material on paragraph development. The Second Edition also features an easier-to-use organization, adds sentence combining exercises, includes more specific end-of-chapter writing assignments, and contains answers to half of the exercise questions in the back of the text. As in the highly successful previous edition, an abundance of exercises and worked-out examples promotes understanding of basic concepts.

The World of Words:
Vocabulary for College Students
Margaret Ann Richel, Northeastern Illinois University
About 320 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
Just published
Richel's text increases interest in vocabulary, builds knowledge of words that appear frequently in college reading, and promotes mastery of three vocabulary-building strategies: using the dictionary, context clues, and word elements. Thematically organized chapters present lists of words to learn, while varied exercises allow ample practice in word use and in using strategies.

Special features—including "Did You Know?" sections—link vocabulary development to the student's everyday world and provide background knowledge for further college reading. Extended passages containing words from the vocabulary lists deal with high-interest topics such as sports and advertising.

College Spelling Skills
James F. Shepherd, Queensborough Community College
About 300 perforated pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
Just published
Shepherd's text concentrates on mastering words frequently misspelled by college students. Explanations are clear and easy to understand. Exercises teach the skills explained in the text by requiring students to spell and to proofread.

Shepherd presents a diagnostic test that pinpoints student strengths and weaknesses; in addition, each chapter containing a word list offers both a pre-test and a post-test. Students receive guidance in how to use the Key to Common Spellings—printed on the inside front cover—to locate in dictionaries the correct spellings of words spelled differently from the way they sound. Instruction in the dictionary method of pronunciation, supplementary word lists, and a complete answer key are also provided.

Into Writing:
From Speaking, Thinking, and Reading
Lewis A. Meyers, Hunter College,
City University of New York
330 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
Just published
Meyers' rhetoric/grammar/reader takes an innovative and sympathetic approach to the problems encountered by inexperienced writers. Meyers first shows students how writing differs from speaking and why they need to master a new set of conventions and symbols to meet readers' needs. The text then covers the writing process in detail and the fundamentals of grammar. In the final section, Meyers guides students through the readings by interjecting questions and comments that emphasize important points and provide the basis for writing assignments.

Roughdrafts: The Process of Writing
Alice Heim Calderonello and Bruce Lee Edwards, Jr.
Both of Bowling Green State University
About 576 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
Just published
Roughdrafts focuses on how revision governs the writing process from first to last. Part One introduces basic terminology, strategies, and components of the writing process, emphasizing recursiveness and individuality. Part Two presents five modes of essays—illustrating them with professional models and student works-in-process.

Part Three is devoted to proofreading and editing, with special attention to sentence structure, word choice, and grammar/usage/mechanics. With this text, Calderonello and Edwards successfully integrate current research with practical, accessible discussions and writing exercises.

Contemporary Composition, Fourth Edition
Maxine Hairston, University of Texas at Austin
About 672 pages • cloth • Instructor's Manual
GPA: Grade Performance Analyzer • Just published

Contemporary Composition, Short Edition
About 576 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual
GPA: Grade Performance Analyzer • Just published
Same text as above but omits the "Handbook of Grammar" section

The Fourth Edition of Hairston's highly successful text (formerly titled A Contemporary Rhetoric) comes in two formats: hardcover with a greatly expanded handbook of grammar and softcover without the handbook.

Features new to the Fourth Edition include a separate chapter on revision, a section on Toulmin argument, an expanded chapter on the research paper containing a new model paper that illustrates the new MLA documentation, new writing assignments, and fresh writing examples—from both students and professional writers.
The Dolphin Reader
Douglas Hunt, University of Missouri
About 1,200 pages • paper • Instructor's Guide
Just published
Hunt's new thematic reader contains a thought-provoking collection of more than 100 essays and 13 short stories by leading prose stylists. The readings are organized in 12 units that reflect essential human concerns, including "Art and Sport," "Outsiders," "Progress," "Community."
Each unit is carefully constructed to present full-fledged "conversations" among divergent voices. All units end with suggested writing topics and a reflective essay discussing the interrelationships among the readings.

Practical English Handbook, Seventh Edition
Floyd C. Watkins and William B. Dillingham
Both of Emory University
About 400 pages • paper • Instructor’s Annotated Edition • Diagnostic Test • Computerized Diagnostic Test • Reference Chart • Practical English Workbook, Third Edition, with Instructor’s Manual • GPA: Grade Performance Analyzer • Just published
Now in the Seventh Edition, the Practical English Handbook continues to set the standard for practicality, brevity, and authority.
Added to this edition are the 1984 MLA documentation style, a new student essay in successive drafts, expanded material on writing paragraphs, a new section on using the dictionary, and a short story by Saki accompanied by a sample essay that illustrates writing about literature.

Practical English Workbook, Third Edition
Floyd C. Watkins and William B. Dillingham
John T. Hiers, Valdosta State College
About 300 perforated pages • paper • Instructor's Manual • Just published

Form and Style: Theses, Reports, Term Papers
Seventh Edition
William Giles Campbell
Stephen Vaughan Ballou
Carole Slade, Columbia University
About 224 pages • spiralbound • Just published
Form and Style presents all the processes and principles for writing research papers, including practical typing instructions. The Seventh Edition conforms to recent recommendations of The Chicago Manual of Style and the Modern Language Association.

Reflections: A Thematic Reader
William Barnwell and Julie Price
Both of University of New Orleans
489 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual • 1985

Thinking Critically
John Chaffee, LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York
468 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual • 1985

Creative and Critical Thinking
Second Edition
W. Edgar Moore, Emeritus, University of Florida
Hugh J. McCann and Janet McCann
Both of Texas A&M University
502 pages • cloth • Instructor's Manual • 1985

The Riverside Reader
Volume 1, Second Edition
Joseph Trimmer, Ball State University
Maxine Hairston, University of Texas at Austin
576 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual • 1985

The Riverside Reader, Volume 2
Joseph Trimmer and Maxine Hairston
523 pages • paper • Instructor’s Manual with Test Items • 1983

English MicroLab
Arthur H. Bell and Sharon R. Anderson
Both of University of Southern California
Fifteen disks • Instructor’s Manual • User’s Guide
Individual Progress Chart • Group Progress Record • 1985

Patterns Plus:
A Short Prose Reader with Argumentation
Mary Lou Conlin, Cuyahoga Community College
409 pages • paper • Instructor's Manual • 1985

The Proficient Reader
Ira D. Epstein and Ernest Blair Nieratka
Both of LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York
484 perforated pages • paper • Instructor’s Manual Support Package • 1985

Signals: A Grammar and Guide for Writers
Evelyn Farbman, Greater Hartford and Middlesex Community Colleges
475 perforated pages • paper • Instructor’s Manual with Tests • 1985

Contexts: Writing and Reading
Jeanette Harris, Texas Tech University
Ann Moseley, East Texas State University
391 pages • spiralbound • Instructor’s Manual • 1985

Reading Skills Handbook, Third Edition
Harvey S. Wiener, LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York
Charles Bazerman, Baruch College, City University of New York
425 perforated pages • paper • Instructor’s Manual Test Package • 1985

Evergreen: A Guide to Writing
Second Edition
Susan Fawcett
Alvin Sandberg, Bronx Community College
414 pages • spiralbound • Instructor’s Manual
Instructor’s Package • 1984

For adoption consideration, request examination copies from your regional Houghton Mifflin office.

Houghton Mifflin Company
13400 Midway Rd., Dallas, TX 75244-5165
1901 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva, IL 60134
985 Lenox Dr., Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
777 California Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94304
Winners of the 1982, 1983 and 1984 Mina P. Shaughnessy Medal of the Modern Language Association, awarded for “an outstanding research publication . . . in teaching English language and literature”

1982

Beat Not the Poor Desk  Writing: What to Teach, How to Teach it, and Why
MARIE PONSOT and ROSEMARY DEEN
Queens College of the City University of New York

1983

The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning, and Thinking
JANET EMIG, Rutgers University
Edited by Dixie Goswami and Maureen Butler

1984 (Shared)

Courses for Change in Writing: A Selection from the NEH/Iowa Institute
Edited by CARL H. KLAUS and NANCY JONES, The University of Iowa

New Books for Teachers
Directions and Misdirections in English Evaluation
edited by PETER J. A. EVANS
Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts
Theory and Method for a Reading and Writing Course
DAVID BARTHOLOMAE and ANTHONY PETROSKY
Fair Dinkum Teaching and Learning
Reflections on Literacy and Power
GARTH BOOMER
Language, Schooling, and Society
edited by STEPHEN TCHUDI for the International Federation for the Teaching of English
Only Connect
Uniting Reading and Writing
edited by THOMAS NEWKIRK
The Spitting Image
Reflections on Language, Education, and Social Class
GARTH BOOMER and DALE SPENDER
Teaching the Universe of Discourse
JAMES MOFFETT
Writing Across the Disciplines
Research into Practice
ART YOUNG and TOBY FULWILER
Writing On-Line
Using Computers in the Teaching of Writing
edited by JAMES L. COLLINS and ELIZABETH A. SOMMERS

New Student Texts
Active Voices IV
JAMES MOFFETT
The Common Sense
What to Write, How to Write It, and Why
ROSEMARY DEEN and MARIE PONSOT
Connections
Writing, Reading, and Thinking
ROBERT DIYANNI
How Tall Is This Ghost, John?*
DAVID MALICK
Introduction to Myth (2nd Edition)
PETER STILLMAN
Introduction to the Poem (3rd Edition)
ROBERT BOYNTON and MAYNARD MACK
Introduction to the Short Story (3rd Edition)
ROBERT BOYNTON and MAYNARD MACK
The Right Handbook
PAT BELANOFF, BETSY RORSCHACH, and MIA RAKIJAS
Telling Writing (4th Edition)
KEN MACRORIE
Writing for Many Roles
MIMI SCHWARTZ (with chapters by DONALD MURRAY, MARY ANN WATERS, VALARIE ARMS, and TOBY FULWILER)

Visit Booth 276

These and 33 other books on teaching writing and literature (some from Canada, England, and Australia) are described in detail in our catalog, along with 25 student texts. Write or call for a copy.
ridge felt was crucial: The “vital” power connecting sensation and memory with reason. So Coleridge concludes that “the rules of the imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production” (218), and not the more mechanical rules of memory, or Fancy, which Locke had called the “laws” of association.

But an organic theory of writing creates a problem in the classroom. Admittedly, Coleridge has in mind “artistic” composition when he speaks of the imagination’s “rules.” And the organic model prevents us from separating what is said from how it is said, since thought and expression, invention and style, take place simultaneously during any composing act. This equation is by no means original with romanticism. Blair had said much the same thing about this relationship in the eighteenth century. Classical rhetoric, too, had stressed the organic link between what is said and how. Nevertheless, romantics gave the idea new stress. Genung, for example, identifies style with thought (15). From this identification, it’s but a short step to the equating of invention, style, and arrangement. Like many romantic critics, Alphonso Newcomer describes composition as “an organism.” Each part must serve itself and other parts, adapting to each other, growing out of each other, to form and “serve the whole.” Newcomer calls this organic activity “the process of organization” (23). Campbell had made the same point about compositions a century before Newcomer: Each part, whatever its specific aim, had to advance the “chief intent of the whole” (145). But Newcomer writes for teachers and students of composition, not the rhetor or the poet. To him, even student themes were—or should be—seen as organic wholes, just as the most creative works of art were.

All told, in Newcomer, Campbell, Schelling, and Coleridge we find textbook writer, rhetorical theorist, and literary critics agreed on two points: Their desire for describing either knowing or writing as a series of mechanical recipes and their belief that form, however large or small, grew out of function. Such a consensus had its effects. Through the 1890’s, textbooks and teaching journals were full of talk about organic forms, and the need for students to exercise “self-expression” (Woods 28). In this romantic climate of instruction, students would write out of their own interests, become actively involved in their own learning by means of writing; and this “experience-based pedagogy,” quite alive and well today, continued to develop alongside its rival, the “memory-based pedagogy” of associational psychology, transformed in our own time into behaviorism (Woods 38–39).

But these two pedagogies, and the intellectual traditions underlying them, share as much as they contend. In one sense, what they share is their contentiousness. First, empiricism, then romanticism, claim to rescue the vital process of knowing and composing. Both claim “experience” as the point of origin for the thinking process they describe. Memory and imagination remain ambiguous partners in this process. After all, memory had been the restricting faculty for classical antiquity. The rhetor relied on the *topoi* to find arguments, prove cases, and gain power. Empirics would displace that power. They would claim that only through actively exploring the worlds outside and in could we better understand them. But whichever we choose, Nature or Mind, we find the ancient *topoi*, first in the guise of Bacon’s “Tables of Discovery,” later in the laws of association proposed by empirical psychologists (Bloom 389). But these “Tables,” these laws—they deny the imaginative process romantic praise, a process the laws were intended to explain—albeit, mechanically.

Each tradition seeks to give us a model for the mind, for knowing, learning, and, finally, for language. Language, of course, remained a problem. It encompassed any effort at description. It’s an ancient problem, of course, whether language shapes our perceptions of the world or the world, language. Depending on how we solve this problem, we become materialists or idealists. Sometimes we are both. Yet there’s no denying the importance of the problem for a writing teacher today. Nor is there any point in denying that the question itself predisposes us to one solution or the other. In answering it, we shouldn’t forget that “in the dialectic between nature and the socially constructed world” of which language is the primary instrument “the human organism itself is transformed. In this same dialectic man produces reality and thereby produces himself” (Berger and Luckmann 183).

Within this broad dialectic, writing can be made in the image of speech, as classical rhetoric would have it. Or it can be made in the image of a machine, as one school or empiricism made it. Another school, biology, enables romantic theorists to counter by making it in the image of an organism. Each image tells us not only about writing, not only about how an age saw writing; each image also tells us about ourselves, our values. Despite all of our best efforts to the contrary, or maybe because of them, metaphorical explanations have a way of defining our realities. In some instances, they become our realities. Time and custom can make lies of us all.

It is a lie to speak, then, as if one tradition justifies the writing process and another the product. These terms are protean. So quickly do they change into one other, we can’t tell the dancer from the dance. Yet so often we teach, do research, and argue as if we could. So we study and teach writing as a product, as if language were so much matter to be found and snapped together, in ever-increasingly complex forms. Never mind how the matter is found, or how the matter shapes the manner. And never mind that such shaping requires trial and error and continual revising. Or we can study and teach writing as a “process of self-construction,” as a brilliant unfolding and growth of the writer’s most precious, secret self, and all the factors which shaped that self. Never mind that the writer’s self needs the forms and conventions of discourse, of language, to make that self luminous as well as understandable. And never mind that such forms and conventions are not the creations of the self to be expressed but exist, and have always existed, as the prior knowledge of the writer, the shared rules by which interest are found and formed.

Neither of these caricatures derives from a full understanding of the dialectical process I have been outlining. We can’t really speak about the “new classicists” and the “new romanticists” in composition theory without distorting the interdependence of the ideas from which these labels derive (Young “Concepts,” 132). Our intellectual heritage simply doesn’t support such easy dualities. Nor does it support a clear-cut case of intellectual evo-

There’s too much qusting, too much shifting back and forth, from one stance to another, earlier stance, disguised as the “latest” truth. Imagine, rather, this heritage as the heated conversation you overhear from the next room. One party gets the upper-hand only to find that his argument is but the start of its own reversal, and the stating of another position which, in turn, gives rise to another reversal.

Our teaching and our theoretical speculations need to take place with this continuous conversation ringing in our heads. If for no other reason, the wrangle might keep us from letting one voice drown out another or from permitting competition to obscure cooperation. We have always had this dialogue. We need
it still. The quarrels are ours as much as they were Aristotle's,
Bacon's, or Coleridge's. For that reason, our "conceptual prob-
lems," as Phelps calls them, have resonance because they have a
past which shapes the present, and because that past is not simply
made of composition textbooks or teaching recipes. It is a
past full of unacknowledged philosophical complexities and
the dialogue these complexities inspire. If we miss the value of
this dialogue, if we ignore it, preferring always the latest "practical"
tips on how to teach the thesis statement or invention, then I
fear we shall fall short of what Coleridge thought was the highest
level of our "inner sense" as human beings: To attain "a notion of
[our] notions" so that we may reflect "on [our] own reflections"
(143).

Notes
1See Bate, Abrams, and Engell on the complex relationships
between eighteenth-century discussions of the imagination and
those of nineteenth-century romanticism.
2See Harned, Conners, and Rodgers.

Works Consulted
Aristotle. The Rhetoric of Aristotle. Trans. Lane Cooper. Enge-
———. De Memoria et Reminiscencia. The Parva Natur-
Bacon, Francis. The Advancement of Learning. The Philo-
———. Novum Organum. The English Philosophers from Bacon to
Bain, Alexander. English Composition and Rhetoric. New York,
1868.
Bate, W. Jackson. The Burden of the Past and the English Poet.
Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. The Social Construc-
Burke, Kenneth. A Rhetoric of Motives. 1950. Berkeley: U of Cal-
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Biographia Literaria. Ed. George Wat-
Conners, Robert J. "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Dis-
course." College Composition and Communication 32 (1981): 444-
55.
Crowley, Sharon. "Invention in Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric:" Collge
Descartes, René. Philosophical Essays: Discourse on Method; Medita-
tions; Rules for the Direction of the Mind. Trans. Laurence J.
Engell, James. The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanti-
Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the
Gengen, John Franklin. The Practical Elements of Rhetoric. Bos-
ton, 1885.
Golden, James L., and Edward P. J. Corbett, ed. The Rhetoric of
Harned, Jon. "The Intellectual Background of Alexander Bain's
'Modes of Discourse.'" College Composition and Communication
Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan. The English Philosophers from Bacon
Howell, Wilbur Samuel. Eighteenth-Century British Logic and
Hume, David. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. The
New York: Random, 1939.
Kennedy, George A. Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secu-
lar Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times. Chapel Hill: U of
Knoebel, C. H. "Modern Composition Theory and the Rhetor-
Locke, John. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. The
New York: Random, 1939.
Newcomer, Alphonso G. Elements of Rhetoric: A Course in Plain
Prose Composition. New York, 1898.
Newman, Samuel Philip. A Practical System of Rhetoric. Portland,
1827.
Phelps, Louise Wetherbee. "Dialectics of Coherence: Toward an
Reid, Thomas. An Inquiry Into the Human Mind on the Principles
of Common Sense. Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays. Ed. Keith
Lehns and Ronald E. Beanblossom. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill,
1975.
Rodgers, Paul C., Jr. "Alexander Bain and the Rise of the
Organic Paragraph." Quarterly Journal of Speech 51 (1965): 399-
408.
Scaglione, Aldo. The Classical Theory of Composition from Its Origi-
Ass to the Present: A Historical Survey. Chapel Hill: U of
Stewart, Dugald. Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.
London, 1792.
Woods, William F. "Nineteenth-Century Psychology and the
Teaching of Writing." College Composition and Communication
Young, Richard E. "Concepts of Art and the Teaching of Writing.
"The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing." Ed. James J.
———. "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical
Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell. Urbana: NCTE, 1978,
29-47.