

BOOK REVIEWS

Rescuing the Subject: A Critical Introduction to Rhetoric and the Writer—Susan Miller; Southern Illinois University Press; 1989; 200 pp. ISBN 0-8093-1501-7.

The subject Miller is intent on rescuing is the history of writing, particularly as that history has developed over time to establish the two traditions of rhetoric and writing. Miller's interest is similar to Stephen North's in *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field* in detailing the ways in which composition has evolved as a subset of rhetoric and now must re-think and reformulate composition's relationship to rhetoric and the broader issues of literacy education. Miller's approach is to show how "actual acts of writing comment on both rhetoric and composition." Toward this end, Miller proceeds on the assumption that "contemporary composition study is the necessary cultural outcome of changing conditions for producing discourse."

By focusing upon "the writer in the process of writing," Miller is able to analyze the distinctions between the historical traditions of orality and of written discourse, emphasizing the relationship of written discourse to the conventions and axiological assumptions of historical eras. Miller's ability to range across historical traditions and to address contemporary issues through an analysis of the individual writer in the contemporary era provides for an intriguing and creative way of looking at the dimensions and implications of the composing process.

Literary Nonfiction: Theory, Criticism, Pedagogy—ed. Chris Anderson; Southern Illinois University Press; 1989; 337 pp. ISBN 0-8093-1405-3.

An interesting and eclectic collection of essays on the issue of defining nonfictional prose. Essays focus on individual authors such as Richard Selzer, George Orwell, John McPhee, Joan Didion, Loren Eiseley, and Annie Dillard, as well as the broader philosophical problems presented by efforts to define and evaluate nonfictional prose. A second set of essays moves toward definitions of individual forms of nonfictional prose, while a third develops implications for pedagogy.

Richard Selzer and the Rhetoric of Surgery—Charles M. Anderson; Southern Illinois University Press; 1989; 128 pp. ISBN 0-8093-1502-5.

Anderson uses the rhetorical triad of invention, arrangement, and style to investigate Selzer's nonfictional prose essays on the art of surgery. Specifically, Anderson analyzes the concept of metaphor as a structuring element in Selzer's prose, thus placing Selzer within the larger literary and philosophical debates of the postmodern era. Anderson's goal, insightfully well-achieved, is to "enter medicine's rhetorical situation through a singularly individual artistic consciousness that denies, dismisses, and violates the constraints of familiar categories of medical discourse in favor of the most intensely literary vision and language possible."

The Culture and Politics of Literacy—W. Ross Winterowd; Oxford University Press; 1989; 226 pp. ISBN 0-19-505708-2.

With the recent publications of Bloom's and Hirsch's books on literacy and the attendant controversy these works generated, one might suspect the value of (and the need for) another work on the same topic, but Winterowd's book effectively makes its own case for its existence as a well-reasoned and balanced counter to the conservatism and elitism of both Bloom's and Hirsch's perspectives. Starting from the premise that "reading and writing have profound consequences for the individual and society," Winterowd argues for the view that "literacy is always grounded in a social context." Winterowd's concern is to argue that definitions of what constitutes literacy and who shall be defined as having it are always shaped by socio-cultural considerations that transcend one's ability to take an absolutist stand. Cultural hegemony is not the ideal toward which definitions of literacy and literacy instruction should be aimed. As Winterowd claims, "Literacy is a relative term. Its meaning depends on individual needs and values and the norms and expectations of the social group of which the individual is a part."

Winterowd has produced an exceptionally balanced discussion of literacy in the contemporary era, not side-stepping the larger and more trenchant issues of the politics involved in defining literacy. His discussion of the implications of his findings to pedagogy and to the evaluation of writing programs is illuminating and of great value in the current dialogue about educational aims.

Developing Successful College Writing Programs—Edward M. White; Jossey-Bass Publishers; 1989; 232 pp. ISBN 1-55542-131-8.

White's focus is upon explaining "how to develop and administer a comprehensive college writing program to help improve student writing, promote critical thinking, and strengthen the overall collegiate curriculum." White also evaluates current approaches to administering writing programs, such as writing across the curriculum programs, writing centers, and interdisciplinary approaches to writing instruction. He emphasizes ways to certify writing instructors and evaluate them in the key areas of teaching ability, professional growth, and college service.

White is currently Professor of English at California State University, San Bernardino and was formerly director of the California State University Freshman English Equivalency Examination and coordinator of that nineteen-campus system's writing improvement program, so he knows of what he speaks and his recommendations have the ring of practical authority to them. White's responses to the organizational challenges inherent in establishing and administering writing programs are incisive, succinct, and seem of immense practical value. The information and important advice he provides would prove beneficial to college administrators, deans, English department chairs, writing program directors, and writing instructors.

Expecting the Unexpected: Teaching Myself—and Others—to Read and Write—Donald M. Murray; Heinemann Educational Books: 1989; 276 pp. ISBN 0-86709-243-2.

Murray's emphasis is upon the unexpected since he believes that "surprise should be encouraged and cultivated in the writing classroom." Composition instructors achieve this end, Murray argues, "by respecting individual diversity of vision, connection, thought, and voice, by revealing there are few rights and wrongs but many ever-changing options, and by making clear that if we are to survive as individuals and as a society we need to rid ourselves of our learned fear of surprise and embrace the unexpected in our classrooms, on our pages, and in our lives."

Murray's call is for a movement away from hidebound views of the one and only way to teach writing toward a pedagogy that embraces a number of perspectives while still allowing for the phenomenological element of self-initiated discovery, or surprise. Without this component, pedagogy becomes stale and lifeless and ultimately ineffective because it fails to tap into the creativity of either the teacher or the student writer.

There is a dimension of "Zen and the Art of Writing About Oneself" to Murray's work, but he never fails to be challenging and to raise serious issues about what composition instructors hope to achieve with their classes. His style is highly accessible, and his approach to both pedagogy and the writing of this book is highly creative. Murray represents, once more, a unique voice commenting upon composition instruction and the value of expressive writing. This work should provide both theoretical and pedagogical sustenance for writing instructors.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The *Journal of Teaching Writing*, now in its eighth year of publication, is a refereed journal for classroom teachers and researchers whose interest or emphasis is the teaching of writing. Appearing semiannually, in late spring and fall, *JTW* offers insightful articles on the theory, practice, and teaching of writing throughout the curriculum—from preschool to the university, from the science class to the literature class. Each issue covers a range of topics, from composition theory and discourse analysis to curriculum development and innovative teaching techniques, and includes articles by such well known authorities as Kenneth Bruffee, Nancy Sommers, John Stewig, Vera Milz, Elaine Maimon, Harvey Wiener, Marilyn Sternglass, Helen Schwartz, Richard Gebhardt, and others. The Editorial Board encourages submission of articles from educators on all levels and in all disciplines. Individual subscriptions are \$8.00 a year (two issues) and institutional subscriptions are \$15.00 (ISSN 0735-1259). All inquiries should be addressed to *JTW*, IUPUI, 425 University Boulevard, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

BOOK AWARD

The *Journal of Advanced Composition* announces the **W. Ross Winterowd Award** for the most outstanding book published each year in composition theory. The award will be presented each year at the CCCC Convention during the meeting of the Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition. The first award will be presented in Chicago in 1990 for the best book published in 1989. Send nominations to Gary A. Olson, Editor; *Journal of Advanced Composition*; Department of English; University of South Florida; Tampa, FL 33620-5550.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Journal of Advanced Composition* invites submissions for a special issue, "Gender, Culture, Ideology," to be published in the summer of 1990. The editor is particularly interested in essays exploring the role of gender in writing and in the composition classroom; ideology in the classroom; composition scholarship and the discipline of English; and, generally, any discussion of social/political concerns relevant to composition theory and the teaching of writing, especially on the advanced level.

Please send manuscripts by February 1, 1990 to Professor Evelyn Ashton-Jones; JAC Guest Editor; Department of English; University of Idaho; Moscow, ID 83843. Special consideration will be given to manuscripts submitted by January 1, 1990.

CONFERENCE

On October 5th and 6th, 1990, the University of Louisville will present a professional writing conference, co-sponsored by its Department of English through a Bonnie Endowment and its School of Business. The theme for this conference is "Business Communication: Within and Across Organizations."

Those interested in learning more about speakers, paper submissions, or costs should contact:

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Dr. Geoffrey Cross
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