cal suggestions will not find much of interest since this collection is clearly more oriented towards an audience interested in identity theory. Also, there are a few shortcomings. First, despite the fact that the collection does examine identity issues across different institutional contexts, the coverage of different contexts is limited as the vast majority of chapters and narratives are focused on US academic institutions. When international student voices are included, their narratives focus heavily on negotiating identities in US academia. Second, as is typical with composition studies research, the research methodologies in this collection are all qualitative and generally case-study based. By including other types of methodologies, such as critical discourse analysis or survey-based quantitative research, the insights provided by the presented data could be expanded.

Despite these shortcomings, Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing makes a timely and valuable contribution to the current discourses on the identity issues surrounding L2 writers. From Cox’s chapter focused on workplace writing to Vandrick’s unique discussion about social privilege among L2 writers, the chapters in this collection explore issues of identity from diverse perspectives, ensuring that there will be something of interest for a wide variety of researchers.

El Paso, TX


Reviewed by John W. Pell, Elon University

In the humanities, paperback re-issues are reserved for works that have significantly altered disciplinary conversations. Southern Illinois University Press’ 2010 re-issue of Sharon Crowley’s The Methodical Memory is no exception. Twenty years after its original publication Crowley’s historiographic critique of current-traditional rhetoric still stands as a high-water mark in Rhetoric and Composition’s theoretical development. Crowley’s text continues to remind the discipline of the pitfalls of theoretical and pedagogical apathy—the tendency, often as a result of institutional and political pressures, to avoid making critiques of “effective” (read: data generating) pedagogical practices and methods. The current economic climate continues to place pressure on universities in general, and writing programs in particular, to both cut program costs (primarily through the practice of hiring contingent faculty and increasing the number of available seats in each writing section) and to carry out endless assessments that demonstrate the effectiveness of a particular writing curriculum.
Economic problems only exacerbate an already cynical academic environment. With recent “studies” like Richard Aurn’s and Josipa Roksa’s *Academically Adrift* suggesting that higher education no longer delivers on its educational promises, many writing programs find themselves working under the dictum “do more with less.” This confluence of pressures creates hesitancy on the part of vulnerable WPAs and writing faculty to question the proverbial wisdom that encourages a greater reliance on technologies, standardized assessment, and distance learning. These current challenges are precisely why Crowley’s work remains important some two decades later. *As The Methodical Memory* makes clear, scholars and teachers of writing need to remain vigilant and reflexive, continually challenging, as Crowley encourages, those notions that begin to appear “natural, self-evident, and universal” (xi).

As a teacher of writing, I am awed by the continued relevance of Crowley’s central argument for Rhetoric and Composition studies in the twenty-first century. Specifically, Crowley’s rereading of Rhetoric and Composition’s early theoretical and pedagogical tradition anticipates the current renaissance within the discipline in which scholars are reexamining archival materials to add depth and nuance to writing studies colorful history. Moreover, the critical vocabulary and methodology Crowley employs in her critique of current-traditional rhetoric and its technologies, namely the five-paragraph theme, provides a useful model for contemporary scholars exploring the benefits and limitations of contemporary writing technologies, especially social media that elicit new forms of student interaction. It would be reductive, however, to suggest that Crowley’s text is worthy of study simply for its enduring utility. Rather, *The Methodical Memory* marks an interesting moment in the history of Rhetoric and Composition scholarship, and as such offers scholars within our field insight into our disciplinary memory.

As Robert J. Connors notes, Crowley’s text is “the first work of revisionist history to appear in composition studies with a deeply conservative agenda” (Connors). Crowley clearly articulates her “conservative agenda” in the preface when she argues that despite current-traditional rhetoric’s “theoretical backwardness” and “pedagogical limitations,” it still heavily influences the direction of composition studies. This influence, Crowley argues, stems in part from the perception that current-traditional rhetoric somehow breaks from the heavy-handiness of classical rhetorical approaches to writing and allows authors a greater sense of autonomy and freedom. Crowley, therefore, offers an alternative explanation of current-traditional rhetoric’s ascension, focusing primarily on the contrast between the current-traditional view of invention and classical rhetoric’s view of invention, a critique that ultimately recasts classical rhetoric in a more favorable light.

Crowley provides an unapologetically contrarian and post-structuralist reading of composition’s historical development from the eighteenth century to the late 1980s. Rather than viewing current-traditional rhetoric as a textbook manufactured pseudo-discipline inspired by the academy’s
growing desire for assessment data, Crowley argues that current-traditional rhetoric can be traced back to the work of early compositionists like George Campbell and Hugh Blair, thinkers often hailed for their progressive views on individuality and authorship. In sharp contrast to many of her contemporaries, specifically writers like Peter Elbow and Linda Flowers, Crowley’s contends that writer-centered pedagogies often obscure the limitations of viewing the text as an accurate representation of the authorial mind. Using the canon of invention as a framing device with which to view the historical development of Rhetoric and Composition studies, the first three chapters of Crowley’s text provide a concentrated and byzantine textual analysis that demonstrates how modern rhetorical study broke from the classical notion of invention. Instead of viewing rhetorical invention as a public endeavor that begins with recognizing commonplace and communal needs, current-traditional rhetoric views invention as the “introspective review of [the author’s] thought processes” (16).

Crowley concludes her deconstruction of key composition texts of the last two centuries by illustrating how invention, when conceived as a private, authorial exercise, provides the fertile soil necessary for the growth of writing practices that emphasize form over content. Regardless of its supposed “democratic impetus,” current-traditional rhetoric’s favorite forms, like the five-paragraph theme, ultimately appropriate a writer’s agency. Writing instruction in the current-traditional model, Crowley asserts, becomes less about helping student-writers develop responses to discursive exigencies and more about helping students master particular kinds of skills and models. That is, current-traditional rhetoric, with its emphasis on form and decorum, provided instructors, teaching assistants, and adjunct-faculty with content that they could teach. In the end, Crowley acquiesces to the unsavory reality that a more robust theory of invention cannot address, in any direct fashion, problems associated with contingent labor and institutional politics. However, teachers of writing that embrace classical rhetoric, which emphasizes the inventive capacity of rhetoric to create identifications across difference, illustrate for students how writing contributes to democracy and change.

While there are certainly strains of current-traditional rhetoric still at work within the academy, it seems safe to generalize that in the twenty-years following the publication of the first edition of The Methodical Memory, Rhetoric and Composition scholars—thanks in part to the “social-turn” in writing studies—have moved away from the arhetorical and asocial notion that writing, specifically writing constrained by particular forms and styles, offers unmediated access to an author’s thinking. That being said, the critical methodology Crowley employs throughout her study of current-traditional rhetoric still serves as a useful model for scholars within the field looking to revise the historical narratives informing our discipline’s troubled identity. Works like David Gold’s Rhetoric at the Margins (2008), Byron Hawk’s A Counter-History of Composition (2007), and Kelly Ritter’s Before Shaughnessy (2009) are all recent texts in the theoretical tradition of Crowley,
with each providing revisionist readings of received composition history through thoughtful analysis of archival records and popular pedagogical and theoretical texts.

While certainly an example of erudite scholarship, *The Methodical Memory* continues to have import because of the critical stance Crowley takes toward the pervasive pedagogical practices of her day. In the final chapter Crowley reminds her readers, “People need rhetoric precisely because they disagree” (167). That is, differing circumstances, backgrounds, and aspirations inform an individual’s rhetorical choices, and rhetoric allows interlocutors to effectively assess these differences in order to solve the discursive exigencies that arise in life. Throughout her monograph, Crowley returns to the familiar refrain: current-traditional rhetoric, with its emphasis on form and style, attempts to artificially elide interlocutors’ differences by subjugating agency to the authority of institutionally authorized forms, like the five-paragraph theme. In short, writers’ differences are tempered, middle-class normativity is enforced, and all under the auspice of invention and authorial autonomy.

Crowley’s critique of current-traditional rhetoric is strikingly similar to the concerns of philosopher and “father of virtual technology” Jaron Lanier. In his essay *You are not a Gadget*, Lanier finds the uncritical embrace of social media disconcerting. The lack of critical reflection Crowley saw in Rhetoric and Composition’s adoption of current-traditional writing practices, Lanier finds in the technologists and software designers that have ignored the deeper philosophical questions needing to be asked about the use of social media, which Lanier contends, “chop up a network of individuals so finely that you end up with mush” (17). Like the five-paragraph theme, social media provide a framework through which authorship and subjectivity are institutionally and socially recognized. The frameworks of social media, Lanier argues, are necessarily limiting and stifle invention, dissent, and authentic collaboration. And, as many teachers of writing are well aware, there is a substantial push from administrators, politicians, and publishers to integrate “technology” into the teaching of writing. While these external forces often cite popular appeal and ease of use as reasons why writing programs should embrace the latest technologies, there is little discussion concerning how these technologies might, to borrow a phrase from Lanier, “lock-in” rhetorical pedagogies that recast the problems Crowley saw in current-traditional rhetoric textbooks into problems of writing technologies and social media.

As writing programs continue to confront the funding challenges of the current recession and respond to the bureaucratic pressures that want to streamline course offerings through online and distance-learning programs, I can’t help but think that teachers of writing might benefit from borrowing Crowley’s critical stance toward practices that value form and ease of use over the intellectually rigorous study of invention as social, rhetorical, and civically-informed. In the end, *The Methodical Memory* marks an important moment in the development of Rhetoric and Composition studies, and if
Memory serves us, might continue to provide teachers of writing with a methodology and vocabulary for examining the current role of invention in an age of Facebook and distance learning.

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Works Cited


Reviewed by Tara Lockhart, San Francisco State University

In A Taste for Language, James Ray Watkins, Jr. challenges the traditional view of English studies as bifurcated along disciplinary lines by focusing on one particular narrative: his father's attempts to gain and use language, literacy, and both material and cultural capital to enable class mobility. What enabled his father's transition from working class to middle class, Watkins argues, was the complex accumulation of the often competing values and modes of composition and literary instruction. Watkins, following Bourdieu, delineates these competing epistemologies as the “popular ethos” and the “formalist aesthetic,” respectively. He argues that combining these ways of knowing—pairing pragmatism with aesthetics, skill with sensibility (or taste)—can help students to gain the cultural capital that promotes class mobility (5). Moreover, it is this combination that Watkins hopes will allow us to achieve two larger goals: first, to refigure English studies so that it more responsibly acknowledges (instead of ignores) our students’ relationship to class and, second, to correct our own inequitable labor practices.

The form of Watkins’s monograph is central to its methodology. Using the few remaining documents and texts from his father’s educational and professional lives, Watkins unfolds his literacy biography as a way of materializing what was at stake for many students mid-century—particularly those returning from the war, as his father did, or gaining access to the university for the first time via open admissions—and what continues to be at stake for many students today: coming to college in order to be able to live a life that is more prosperous than the previous generation. Watkins weaves the details of his father’s journey, including the effects it had on his own educational choices, alongside a class-based analysis of education, textbooks, disciplinary divisions, and the relation of class to culture throughout the first two chapters, “My Father’s Education” and “English Studies, Rhetoric, and Writing.” By focusing on the multigenerational role of class movement