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A case history approach to composition studies: Edward P. J. Corbett and Janet Emig

Nelms, Ralph Gerald, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990

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A CASE HISTORY APPROACH TO COMPOSITION STUDIES:
EDWARD P. J. CORBETT AND JANET EMIG

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By
Ralph Gerald Nelms, B.A., M.F.A.

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To Marcia, To My Father, and in Memory of My Mother
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The last forty years have seen dramatic growth in the study of writing and writing instruction in the United States. Composition has emerged from a freshman course that only a few cared much about to become one of the fastest growing fields of study in the university curriculum. During these years, teachers and scholars in this field have witnessed the development of theoretical frameworks for composing, the proliferation of research and research methods in the study of writing, and an increase in attention to pedagogical techniques. The number of journals devoted to the field at the college level has increased from one (College Composition and Communication, first published in 1950) to more than five, with ten or more others devoted to the study of composing at various educational levels or to composition in association with rhetoric. Yet this period per se has been largely neglected by historians, who have focused their collective attention mostly on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century developments in composition instruction.

In this dissertation, I focus attention on the post-war period of composition research and teaching. My project, however, is not to chart the large trends and movements within that field of study. Instead, I have chosen to illuminate aspects of the post-war period in composition by providing case
histories of two major figures in this field: Edward P. J. Corbett and Janet Emig. The aim of this dissertation is thus twofold: to illuminate the history of composition studies from 1950 to the present and to introduce the field to the case history approach. Case histories involve a triangulation of documentary analysis, oral history interviews, and a focus on individuals. Through such a triangulation of methods, the historian can generate historical analogues to ethnographic "thick descriptions"--that is, detailed accounts of the history of composition studies within the rich context of individuals who have lived it. This approach saves the historian from the too sweeping, too easy generalizations of traditional historiography with its wider focus and its exclusive emphasis on documentary evidence. For not only have traditional composition histories slighted the post-World War II period, but they have relied heavily upon textbooks as a source for historical data. This reliance on documentary evidence--and a particularly limited kind of documentary evidence, too--has led to an overly simplistic picture of the history of composition studies.

In his review of James Berlin's *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth Century American Colleges*, Robert Connors characterizes Berlin's survey of developments in nineteenth-century writing instruction as a war:

> After having done in the noble if slightly misguided classical rhetorical tradition, the mechanistic eighteenth-century theories reign absolute from 1800 through 1860, then gradually transform into the tenets of current-traditional rhetoric as written composition replaces oratory in colleges. A few brave Romantics try to stand up to this juggernaut but are either ignored or crushed. The century ends in darkness, with the current-traditionalists in charge, and we await the advent of the New Rhetoric. (Connors 248)
This agonistic characterization of composition education and scholarship dominates descriptions of twentieth-century composition theory and instruction as well. Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985* is the most obvious example, but others include works by Connors and myself and especially by those who have sought to apply Thomas Kuhn's notion of "paradigm shift" to developments in composition studies, notably Maxine Hairston and Richard Young. Kuhn's own notion of how such a shift occurs invites this metaphor of heroes and villains. According to Kuhn, the shifts don't occur until enough people experience a crisis of faith in the old intellectual commitments. Paradigm shifts involve "breakdowns" and "disruptions"; they are "revolutions."

According to received traditional history, pre-World War II writing instruction and theory were dominated by what Daniel Fogarty and Richard Young refer to as the "current-traditional" rhetoric or paradigm. Under that system, say critics, the composed product is emphasized rather than the composing process; discourse is reduced to description, narration, exposition, and argumentation; discovery of the substance of rhetorical communication (invention) is considered outside the province of composition study; usage and style become the primary pedagogical concerns; topics for compositions are typically assigned; there is no discussion of drafting and little, if any, of revision; "themes" are turned in weekly; evaluations of writing typically focus on grammatical and mechanical correctness; sometimes even neatness counts. In addition, the current-traditional emphasis on a mechanically produced discourse product, allied with an emphasis on the study and teaching of literature,
narrowly defined as poetry, fiction, and drama, successfully discouraged productive research in the field.

Sometime during the 1950's, however, according to Berlin and others, the story begins to transform from tragedy to romance. For, since World War II, the field of composition has experienced dramatic changes: among others, the rise of the so-called "process approach" to composition theory and pedagogy; the revival of classical rhetoric and its application to writing theory and instruction; greater acceptance of, increased use of, and more rigorous standards for empirical research; the application of diverse research methodologies; research in the cognitive development of writers and the various cognitive functions involved in writing processes, and the rise of a view of rhetoric as epistemic and of a view of discourse as constitutive of reality. These developments, moreover, have continuously been characterized as responses to the villainous current-traditional paradigm.

For those committed to these new developments in composition studies, the agonistic "plot" described above contains much that is attractive, for it names our enemy and thus allows for greater definition of its "opposite." But, as Kenneth Burke says, a way of seeing is also inevitably a way of not seeing. Thus, evidence is accumulating that suggests such a heroes-and-villains "plot" is overstated. The "current-traditional paradigm" is not some monolithic theoretical system but a collection of pedagogical notions, not necessarily held by even a majority of teachers *en masse* but loosely associated by necessity in the face of difficult teaching circumstances. These circumstances include increasing enrollments without corresponding increases in the number of teachers and the
assignments of instructors to teach composition who would rather be teaching something else, usually novels, plays, and poems. The need and desire for quick and easy evaluation and writing assessment make fertile ground for current-traditional pedagogical emphases.

That the enemy may not be as monolithic as previously thought, that it may instead be a number of small terrorist pedagogies banding together in various groupings in various classes, depending on need and desire, is not to say, of course, that the threat to composition instruction and theory is no less real. Certainly, current-traditional attitudes toward writing played a major role in the rise of an anti-composition bias during the post-war period. George Wykoff reports a particularly virulent example of this bias revealed in a speech given by "an Ivy League professor of English" at the 1949 meeting in Buffalo of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Wykoff reports him as saying that, "as for the grubbers who read themes and teach composition, they are not worth our attention" (Bird 42-43). Nor was composition instruction characterized in any better terms by I. A. Richards, who wrote in 1936 that rhetoric had degenerated into "the dreariest and least profitable part of the waste that the unfortunate travel through Freshman English!" (3).

The reasons for creating an "enemy" out of current-traditional notions about composition pedagogy are probably many; not the least of them are rhetorical and psychological ones. But I want also to suggest a methodological cause for our thinking in terms of the above "plot." That plot line derives much support from our reliance upon textbooks as the major source for our historical data and our neglect of other, more reliable sources of information, especially, I
will argue, oral interviews. Composition textbooks have been notoriously conservative in their pedagogical and theoretical approaches, but, as Kuhn has suggested, textbooks are used in every discipline to teach the accepted paradigm (43); they rarely reflect progressive forces in a field of study. The question for researchers in composition is how much textbooks actually reflect (or themselves affect) classroom practices and composition theories. Even as late as 1978, in an analysis of thirty-four college-level composition textbooks whose sales exceeded 100,000 copies, Donald Stewart found only seven that "contained any appreciable awareness of [recent research]" in writing instruction (185). Such a situation certainly does not reflect the vast increase in and contributions of post-war composition research and scholarship. It may be argued that these conservative textbooks reflect the conservatism of the majority of composition teachers. But if so, then why, as Jasper Neel has pointed out, do many of the authors of these same obviously conservative texts and their publishers' representatives claim that they are "process-oriented" (x)?

It may be true, as Connors has pointed out in "Textbooks and the Evolution of the Discipline," that textbooks have been the major shaping influence on composition studies during the twentieth century, but that argument is circular: If we believe that current-traditional rhetoric has dominated writing instruction and theory, composition textbooks will be seen as the dominant medium for the promulgation of that rhetoric; if we believe that textbooks are the major shaping devices of the field, then that shaping must be toward current-traditional rhetoric, since composition textbooks emphasize those features.
A comparison of two books by "arch-current-traditionalist" Adams Sherman Hill suggests the limitations of textbooks as an exclusive source of historical evidence. In his 1953 dissertation, "Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900," an early and now celebrated history that set the standard for the histories of composition studies that followed, Albert Kitzhaber characterizes Hill as "traditional" and generally unimaginative and his tone as "dogmatic" (102). Historians since Kitzhaber have said the same things about Hill. William F. Woods, in the headnote abstract of his "The Reform Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Composition Teaching," claims that Hill's courses at Harvard provided the typical current-traditional menu of "correctness, clarity, stylistic refinements, and organization" (377). And Donald Stewart claims that Hill "was obsessed with . . . mechanical matters" ("Some History Lessons for Composition Teachers" 17; see also Connors, "The Rhetoric of Explanation: Explanatory Rhetoric from 1850 to the Present" 56).

Such descriptions clearly fit the implied author of Hill's textbooks, particularly *The Principles of Rhetoric, and Their Applications* (1878, rev. 1895). The authorial voice, however, is very different in Hill's book *Our English* (1890), which is not a textbook but a collection of essays on composition pedagogy and public usage of the language in newspapers, novels, sermons, and everyday communication. The tone of *Our English*, while sure of itself and prescriptive, is not dogmatic at all, and much of the substance, despite the sexist language typical of the period, is progressive and imaginative, not "traditional" in the pejorative sense in which that word is often used in composition studies.
In *Our English*, Hill criticizes teachers who "act as if they thought it more important that a boy should spell and punctuate correctly than that he should write an essay which it is a pleasure to read" (8-9). Hill's attitude toward grammar instruction is clearly laid out: "Above all, the time and the energies of the young should not be wasted upon formal grammar" (20); "how many precious hours are wasted on mere parsing, as if it were not more important for a child to understand a given sentence as a whole than to know that this word . . . is a noun, that word a preposition, that one an adverb of manner,--or whatever it may be called in the treatise in vogue at the moment" (22). For Hill, the responsibility of the writing teacher is to capture students' interest, "to stimulate their minds" (88-89, 93), a notion that foreshadows such concepts as Frank Smith's "engagement" and the invitational education movement. To that end, Hill argues for a recognition of changes in students' cognitive development, "the maturing faculties of students" (90), for allowing students to choose their own subjects to write on (97), and generally, for making composition a positive experience. The effects, Hill contends, will be salutary. If the teacher can interest students enough in their writing, "he will succeed, not only in giving to it continuity and individuality not otherwise to be attained, but also in diminishing the number of errors and defects" (94). Hill takes a very progressive view of error. He writes, "Those [errors] that remain should be dealt with firmly but considerately" (94). The teacher should refrain from marking every error on a piece of writing, which "is almost as bad as to make no corrections at all" (58). Instead, the teacher should encourage the student to revise the essay (58-59). Hill even suggests using what amounts to a portfolio approach (59).
In these essays, moreover, Hill deals with the question of what the main concern of English instruction should be: whether philology, literature, or composition. While each ought to be taught, he argues, clearly composition has priority over the others:

Among those subjects the art of composition should surely be included, rather than philology or literary history, or even literature except so far as it serves to stimulate the powers of production, and to turn them in the right direction. (82)

Hill concludes:

The primary object, then, of placing English upon a better basis in the schools, and of giving more time and intelligence to it there, is to enable boys and girls to express themselves in pure and effective language: not merely that they may avoid gross mistakes in grammar and ambiguous or obscure expressions, not merely that they may state facts or opinions in words that can be understood by one who takes pains to understand them; but that, in the course of time, they may tell a story or frame an argument so well that he who runs will stop to read it, and that they may be able, the best of them at least, not only to instruct men, but also to please them in the highest sense, and to move them to noble ends. (70-71)

While I do not want to claim too much progressiveness for this book, its contemporary-sounding ideas do problematize for us the received view of its author as the officious, unimaginative founding father of the current-traditional paradigm. Kitzhaber is not, of course, entirely wrong in what he says about Hill; his description of Hill’s famous textbook supports a view of Hill as dogmatic and traditional. But given the different ethos of Our English, I believe that we ought to wonder which Adams Sherman Hill is more widely representative of attitudes toward composition instruction.

If we broaden our scope further to include journal articles on composition, then the complete dominance of a current-traditional paradigm--
and the agonistic metaphor often used to describe our relationship to it--
becomes even more questionable. In her study of articles in the *English Journal*
from 1912 to 1960, Kimberly Town discovered "a persistent awareness of writing
as a 'process'" (3-4). She concludes, "Evidence from the *English Journal* suggests
that even our most current composition theories about the composing process
have existed since the turn of the century" (77).

Such findings do not, of course, negate the idea that current-traditional
pedagogical notions dominated writing classrooms throughout most of the
twentieth-century. After all, the *English Journal* is and was dedicated to the
teaching of English at the secondary school level; college composition, taught
generally by graduate student teaching assistants and low-paid, often part-time
instructors, might well have differed significantly from that taught in high
schools. And certainly, not all, perhaps not even a majority, of high school
English teachers read that journal.

Connors speculates that the character of composition textbooks is shaped
by "the preferences of the teachers cast up by the culture, meeting their
perceived needs and recreating these and other needs in later teachers shaped
by the texts" ("Textbooks" 178). While Connors may be overstating their
influence, textbooks do merit our attention as indicators of the pedagogy and
theory of a period. But, as the example of A. S. Hill suggests, we need to be
careful about the strength of the claims we make for their influence. Donald
Stewart's findings probably do reflect publishers' perceptions of their audience,
but whether they reflect what actually goes on in the classroom is open to
question. Any claim that textbooks are the major shaping influence on
composition studies assumes a stronger connection between the printed words and classroom activities than we as teachers may want to make. I believe that many of us can cite cases where a teacher's classroom activities do not correspond in tone or in substance to the pedagogical ideology reflected in the textbook used. An equally sound hypothesis, one that the subjects of this study's case histories and others have mentioned, is the notion that students follow in their own teachers' footsteps when they begin to teach themselves. The idea that somehow textbooks not only reflect a teacher's ideology but actually shape that ideology is clearly a questionable claim at best.

The problem for the historian is methodological. One must somehow decide which sources of conflicting data in this case—textbooks or monographs and/or journal articles—are the more reliable. Naturally, it is not entirely an either/or proposition. Town found articles in the English Journal that most of us would probably term "current-traditional," and she did not find a "systematic progression or any growth or burgeoning of the concept" of writing as a process during the 48 years of the Journal she examined (73). Yet something caused dissatisfaction with composition instruction, a dissatisfaction that seems to have become widespread during the 1950s. The question remains problematic, however, as long as historians continue to look only at published documents.

What has been left out of the mix of historical evidence in previous discussions of current-traditional rhetoric has been oral data, either in the form of personal memoirs or oral interviews. For Kitzhaber, only what was written about Adams Sherman Hill had historical currency. Kitzhaber writes, "It is difficult to find out much about Hill . . . . Except for occasional passing
references, none of the men directly associated with him seems to have written about him..." (98, my emphasis). Yet Hill's teaching was not unmemorable; after all, Kitzhaber himself describes and quotes several published reminiscences by colleague LeBaron Briggs and by Briggs' biographer, Rollo Walter Brown. For many historians, of course, the issue of developing and using oral sources is moot; there are no oral sources available. Yet, the difference in time between the historian and the period under study has to approach a century before the possibility of collecting oral data becomes really remote. And even after a century, historians may still find records of oral exchanges in memoirs and notes of organizations' proceedings. Oral data about Hill probably were available when Kitzhaber was writing his history; they needed only to be found and recorded. Information from those who knew Hill directly or those who knew from others about how he conducted his own writing classes and about the writing of *The Principles of Rhetoric, and Their Application* might well have provided information that would illuminate our problematized view of the period said to be dominated by current-traditional pedagogy. Kitzhaber, however, relied almost entirely upon Hill's published documents, especially his textbooks.

Albert Kitzhaber was working under assumptions about historical research that tended to narrow his vision about what constituted evidence. But he was writing at a time when oral history had not yet become popular. The Columbia University oral history project, run by Allan Nevins, and generally considered the beginning of the revival of the use of oral evidence in historiography had only begun five years before Kitzhaber's dissertation was
completed. We cannot have expected him to think of using interviews to collect data.

Such is not the case, however, with Stephen North’s *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* (1987). While not a history *per se*, North’s book does provide historical discussions. North describes the field of composition studies through a taxonomy of research methods adopted by those claiming to be members of the discipline. He claims that his own methodology is ethnographic, although he does not use that term; instead, he calls his method "anthropological," and he describes it as involving "participant-observation" (5-6). In reality, North relies entirely upon analyses of documentary data. In some cases, he does an exemplary job of such analysis, but scholars knowledgeable about various methodologies would not call this "participant-observation" or "anthropological;" it is certainly not "ethnographic."

While documentary analysis does work well for North much of the time, his failure to follow through on his claim to do ethnography is striking, especially in the case of Stephen Witte’s "Topical Analysis and Revision: An Exploratory Study." North uses Witte’s essay as an example of what he calls "inter-modal accumulation" (339)—that is, a collection of conclusions from research in a variety of methodologies that is then used, often in literature reviews, to support a generalization typically about a topic, since, as North notes, inquiry in modern composition has organized itself "along topical lines" (e.g., invention, the composing process, revision, sentence combining, responding, and basic writing), topics that reflect a concern for pedagogy and practice. North claims that while these topics have provided "a sense of shared mission," the other effect of this
pattern has been to disguise methodological differences (338-339). North argues that different methods produce different kinds of knowledge, different reliabilities, and different conclusiveness. The problem, North argues, comes when someone tries to summarize the conclusions of all the research done on a topic; then, he says, things get "terribly sticky" (339). North sees Witte's review of the literature on revision in this essay as an example of such "stickiness."

North notes that Witte does not present a complete review, though he admits that Witte is not obliged to do so. Still, North discounts the notion that Witte's review is "strictly ceremonial" or conventional and therefore unimportant: "The seriousness of his tone, the careful documentation, and the essay's reception [winning the Richard Braddock Award] indicate otherwise" (340). North argues that the conclusions of each item cited by Witte, taken separately or together, do not support Witte's claim that, quoting North's summary of Witte, "recent research' has established that revision is a recursive process performed differently by different groups of writers, and rendered explicable by classification systems" (North 341).

Whether North's analysis of the published article is correct is not important to this study. What is important is the fact that the original version of "Topical Structure and Revision" contained a significant amount of discussion on previous revision research, more than a simple summary. The original version's lengthy analyses of previous research and scholarship on revision were cut from later versions and transformed into citations supporting Witte's generalization about previous revision research.
In a telephone interview, Stephen Witte recalled "at least three major revisions" of the article for CCC. Editor Richard Larson, faced with an essay he felt was too lengthy for publication, negotiated with Witte for cuts in it. The review of the literature, of course, was the part most easily collapsed. Thus, in a real sense, material circumstances inhibited the publication of this essay in its most complete form. Since Witte no longer has the original version of the article and remembers only the gist of what he said, it is probably impossible to know whether the original essay provided greater justification for his conclusions. The important point is that knowing Stephen Witte originally discussed these cited studies in greater detail, not just in a generalized summary, brings into question North's claim that Witte's essay exemplifies the way composition researchers overgeneralize previous research when they accumulate it in publications and presentations as the basis for their own research.

Most of us are so used to assuming the reliability of documentary evidence that we fail to question those historians and scholars who depend upon it entirely. Yet, we can see that North's explication of Witte's text cannot claim as much validity as he implies that it should. The point is not that the essay in published form should not be explicated as North has done; the point is that North's method of analysis fails to account for rhetorical circumstances that make this essay a possibly inadequate example of one of North's major assertions, assertions that transcend textual analysis. After all, North claims to be describing the field methodologically—that is, in process as well as through its products. An ethnographer, following North's professed "anthropological" methodology, would have contacted Witte and perhaps the CCC editor at the
time, Richard Larson, and may well have ultimately decided on a less
problematic example, if not on a reformulation of the whole assertion itself. As
it stands, North’s example does not entirely support his point, since Witte’s
summary was accomplished as an afterthought to the original composition and
was caused by the exigencies of publication.

Kitzhaber’s unqualified characterization of A. S. Hill and North’s
questionable use of Witte’s "Topical Structure and Revision" article suggest the
inadequacy of relying exclusively on documentary data, but the faults are greater
than simply isolated incidents of incomplete knowledge. Relying entirely upon
the written record has led composition historians to make sweeping
generalizations about the progress of writing instruction, generalizations that
tend to oversimplify many individuals’ roles in the history of the field. Berlin’s
Rhetoric and Reality is a case in point. I assume that Berlin’s research involved a
study of much more written data than he cites in his book, but his taxonomy of
the field of composition, a taxonomy he uses to structure his history, appears
based on a highly selective list of published documents and what would appear
to be a superficial reading of some of them. Yet it is hard to see how Berlin’s
book could have turned out otherwise. The very nature of his project, a
complete history of twentieth-century thought about writing instruction in less
than 200 pages, demands a focusing thesis and a minimum of diversity. Oral
history interviews and close readings of published and unpublished materials
would tend to undermine his classification, as those I conducted for this
dissertation do. In oral history interviews, he could not control his informants’
responses, yet such page limitations do not allow the historian to report
complicated developments in any one individual's thinking. Such a history as Berlin has written demands neat divisions and broad generalizations, minimizing diversity and ignoring loose ends.

The field of composition, however, represents the convergence of diverse and interdisciplinary interests: writing pedagogy, the relationship of that pedagogy to politics and society, composing processes (both composing behaviors and the cognitive processes that produce such behaviors), the nature of written discourse, literacy, the relationship of writing to learning, the relationship between reading (and literature) and writing and between writing and speech, the nature and history of rhetoric, stylistics, professional issues such as the status of writing teachers, and the methodologies used to study all these matters. A history of the field could never fully describe developments of all these various concerns. Yet, to narrow the field and ignore any of these matters can result in a misleading picture of composition studies. Individuals involved in this discipline often do not pursue these interests separately. Diverse pursuits, in fact, can appear in a single work, and, more importantly, can inform each other, as happens in the case histories reported in Chapters III and IV of this dissertation. Neat divisions of composition studies just do not exist.

The case history, relying on oral history interviews as well as documentary analyses, forces the historian to give up full control of the historiographical process, to examine more closely the particulars of the subject's thought and career in order to find viable, if limited, generalizations, and to relinquish notions of thematic unity, since an individual's life and thought never form a thematic whole; the case historian must expect loose ends. In return, though, the
case history approach allows the historian to capture the multiplexity of the subject's experience—that is, the seemingly simultaneous experiencing of complex human transactions. Thus this apparently narrow focus allows the composition historian to cross a number of otherwise restricted boundaries, boundaries that composition scholars and researchers cross naturally and often.

Chapter II of this dissertation is devoted to a full discussion of the case history methodology and its implications. I present a detailed discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of this methodology, focusing primarily on oral history, since it is probably the most unfamiliar to my readers. In Chapters III and IV, I present historical analyses of the work of two major figures in composition studies: Edward P. J. Corbett and Janet Emig. Each has been described by composition historians as representing very different, sometimes opposing segments of the field. Part of my project has been to test such generalizations made about them and about the branches of composition studies they are said to represent. I believe that these case histories capture the complexity of their thought and experience in ways that bring over neat classifications into question. A history of post-war writing research and instruction ought to be a priority for composition historians, for never has there been such interest and so much diverse intellectual activity in the study and teaching of writing as in the period since 1950. Chapters III and IV are also meant to demonstrate what can be accomplished through the use of case history methodology. I have not relied, however, on an artificially equal balance of written and oral evidence throughout these studies. Therefore, some sections within these chapters may rely more heavily on one kind of evidence than on the
other. Nevertheless, the writing of these histories has been preceded by both extensive interviews and close readings of my subjects' compositions, both published and unpublished. I have sought to make these case histories not simply elaborations of each subject's *curriculum vitae*. Instead, they portray Corbett and Emig as both shapers of the field of composition and conduits to the ideological assumptions that have informed and are informing the field. In Chapter V, I attempt a brief synthesis of the knowledge I have gained through my study.

Chronicling recent history allows the historian the opportunity to collect information directly from contributors to that history, those who have helped to define the field. Although David Bartholomae and Andrea Lunsford have proposed a full-scale oral history project for composition studies, as yet no organization has funded such a project, and little oral data have been used by previous composition historians. By focusing on two individual scholars who have helped to shape the field of modern composition and who can provide direct commentary on that shaping, I hope to acquire a richer knowledge of their contributions to the development of this discipline without sacrificing consideration of the breadth of their works and the diversity of their thought.
CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

This study combines what is typically considered the traditional research method of historiography, documentary analysis, and the more recently revived method of oral history interviews. Oral evidence has for several reasons been generally neglected in composition historiography. Most composition scholars and researchers are first trained in the criticism of literary texts in English departments, and there has scarcely been an academic field of study more tied to documentary analysis and less interested in oral interviews than literary studies. And literary historians have not been alone in this regard. Even when oral history did gain some acceptance in its most recent revival in the 1960's, it still remained—and remains today—controversial. Generally speaking, historians of many disciplines privilege written over oral evidence. But, as I demonstrated in Chapter I, it is plain that the exclusive reliance upon documentary evidence can result in a reductiveness that fails to provide adequate accounts of historical developments. In this chapter, I argue for a more comprehensive historiography, one that seeks out evidence no matter what its nature or source may be.
Previous Histories

Despite the dramatic changes in composition studies that have occurred since World War II, no in-depth study of this period has been attempted—and such work that has been done has relied almost exclusively on written, published documents. The documentary approach, of course, has brought important insights, and it has allowed us a general picture of the history of twentieth-century composition theory and pedagogy. But that picture has inevitably lacked detail.

Arthur Applebee's *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: a History* (1974) charts the history of teaching "English" from the colonial period through the 1960s. Applebee admits that he is dealing in "broad strokes rather than fine details" in charting "trends and movements" in English education (x). He also emphasizes the teaching of literature more than that of composition, basing this emphasis on the assumption that instruction in literature has "taken up the largest proportion of the teacher's time, energy, and enthusiasm" (x). In addition, as far as I can tell, he has relied entirely upon published documents for his data.

Two historical works focus narrowly on two organizations that have played significant roles in the development of composition studies as a discipline: the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and its affiliate, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Nancy Bird provides a study of the first twenty-six years of CCCC in her dissertation, "The Conference on College Composition and Communication: A Historical
Study of Its Continuing Education and Professionalization Activities, 1949-1975" (1977), and J. N. Hook documents the history of NCTE in *A Long Way Together: A Personal View of NCTE’s First Sixty-Seven Years* (1979). Both studies do rely on more than published documents. In addition to the programs of the annual CCCC meeting and issues of its journal, *College Composition and Communication* (CCC), Bird also conducted interviews, both in person and over the telephone with those involved. Her work remains an early precursor to this study, but her focus was not on historiography and her use of oral interviews failed to make any impression on the field or to take hold as a historiographical method. Her concerns also appear to have been simply with gathering factual information, not with motivations or developments in scholarly thought. Hook, the first executive secretary of NCTE, relied heavily on his own experience: his own observations, his own memories, and his conversations with other participants in the history of that organization. But again, the focus is not on how these methods of gathering data can improve historiography and his reliance on them had little effect on the field. Both studies deal only cursorily with developments in composition theory, research, and pedagogy.

James Berlin has produced two important histories of writing instruction in the United States, one on the nineteenth century and the other on the twentieth. Chapters 5 through 8 of *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985* represent the most widely read history of post-war composition studies. For those chapters, Berlin relies entirely upon published documents, mainly books and journal articles, and moreover, he has selected to
cite only those documents that support his advocacy of a particular type of "epistemic" rhetoric. Berlin's classification of the field is meant to highlight his own thesis about the ideological superiority of one kind of rhetoric. He portrays the history of twentieth century composition theory as a slow progression out of a kind of dark ages, climaxing with the emergence of what he calls "social-epistemic rhetoric." Although Michael Leff has described a continuum of "senses" in which rhetoric can be taken as epistemic, Berlin's epistemic category consists solely of the strongest claim for rhetoric as epistemic, the claim that knowledge is itself rhetorical. Berlin, moreover, provides a narrowly linguistic definition of rhetoric; by "rhetoric," he means verbal communication, "spoken and written texts" (1). He does not include any kind of non-verbal rhetoric, and so, he excludes many non-linguistic forms of expression from epistemology. For Berlin, all elements of communication are "linguistically conditioned," and all knowledge is "dialectical, the result of a relationship involving the interaction of opposing elements"--that is, agonistically generated (166). That being the case, the only acceptable rhetorical theory informing writing instruction is his favored "social-epistemic rhetoric." Other rhetorics thus are marginalized, except, of course, when they anticipate the privileged theory.

Berlin suggests, for instance, that the classical rhetoric movement within composition studies is important primarily because it facilitates support for a view of rhetoric as epistemic. He sees this movement as a step in the progression toward social-epistemic rhetoric. But he carefully chooses those works on classical rhetoric that can be seen as "taking positions which move in
the direction of considering [Aristotle's] rhetoric to be ... epistemic" (185). As interviews with Edward P. J. Corbett and analyses of his works reveal, however, classical rhetoric does not represent simply a development in the rise of social-epistemic rhetoric; an element of socially constructed epistemology has been inherent in classical rhetoric from its earliest expression. Nevertheless, Berlin is correct; classical rhetorical theory does not embrace the strong claims for a verbal epistemology that his social-epistemic rhetoric does.

We should also note that Berlin's taxonomy is finally unrealistic, because the criteria behind his categories don't allow for overlap. Individuals whose work reflects different ideologies leave themselves open to the criticism of inconsistency and contradiction (see "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class"). And, of course, inconsistency cannot be tolerated in a history as sweeping and thesis-driven as Rhetoric and Reality. Berlin sacrifices an examination of individual contributions to the history of composition studies in favor of a broad theoretical framework that sometimes necessarily--and sometimes not so necessarily--ignores data. For the individual diversity and dissonances that go to make up composition as a field of study represent significant historical data. A basic assumption of this dissertation is that the historian's selection and assembling of history ought to do justice to as much of the data as possible, even at the expense of clean categories and neatly dramatic climaxes.

I could continue reviewing the work of various historians in composition studies--works by Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, S. Michael Halloran, Nan
Johnson, Andrea Lunsford, Donald Stewart, William Woods, and others—but the results remain the same. These historians of composition studies have made important contributions to our understanding of the history of our field, but even when writing about this most recent period, they have relied almost entirely upon documentary evidence, which has limited their vision.

Case History

In calling the following studies case histories, rather than an oral histories, I don't mean to distinguish them radically from the oral history movement itself. Instead, I wish to indicate that my project is simply a particular kind of oral history, one that involves the substantial use of oral evidence as well as documentary evidence and that focuses on separate individuals in a way similar to that of the case study.

The fact that there are various types of this kind of study explains in part the variety of definitions of oral history that have emerged. Some oral historians view what they do as simply archival, the collection and storage of historical data from oral sources (tapes and transcripts); what they do, they argue, involves little interpretation. Others, however, view oral history as a fully interpretive process; they interpret data as well as collect it. The case history obviously involves interpretation.

Another distinguishing feature of this dissertation is its focus on individuals. My collection of oral data has been limited for the most part to interviews with two major figures in the field of composition studies. In oral
history circles, such a focused history is referred to as an elite oral history. The
trend in oral history these days is toward the collection of data from larger, less
"elite" groups of individuals. Some important contributions have been made to
social history through the collection of this kind of oral evidence. And indeed,
the study of lesser known, less widely published individuals involved in
composition studies (teachers and former teachers, students, principals, college
administrators, editors, book representatives, and so on), I am convinced, would
prove enlightening and interesting. However, other important contributions
have been made by oral historians using the more "elite" approach.

Two particular oral histories focusing on a single individual are Peter
Friedlander's *The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936-1939* and Karen Fields'
*Lemon Swamp and Other Places: A Carolina Memoir*. Because Friedlander could
discover little documentary evidence on the history of the United Auto-Workers
union local that he wanted to study, he turned to Edmund Kord, president of the
local during most of its first eighteen years (Friedlander, "Theory, Method, and
Oral History" 131-32). Fields, on the other hand, turned to oral history for more
personal reasons. Instead of depending primarily upon already documented
evidence about the Black experience, Fields conducted extensive interviews with
her grandmother. Fields called the result "an oral history" but her "Gram"
called it "stories"; they compromised on "memoir" (Fields, "What One Cannot
Remember Mistakenly" 44).
The History of Oral History

The modern oral history movement can be said to have begun in 1938, when Allan Nevins, in the introduction to his *Gateway to History*, suggested that there should be "some organization which made a systematic attempt to obtain, from the lips and papers of living Americans who have led significant lives, a fuller record of their participation in the political, economic, and cultural life of the last sixty years" (Preface, 1962 edition, 8). Ten years later, Nevins launched the Oral History Project at Columbia University. Since that time, oral history has experienced growth in the sophistication of its methods, in its scope, and in theoretical discussions about its nature.

The use of oral sources for historical data is, however, as old as history itself. In pre-literate societies, as Paul Thompson notes, "all history was oral history" (23), and oral evidence remained equal to, if not privileged over, written evidence until about the late eighteenth century. As Thompson points out, "The first written histories probably go back 3,000 years"; and the first historians "set down existing oral traditions about the distant past and gradually also began to chronicle the present" (27). Early Western historians, then, relied heavily upon oral sources—and not only because fewer documentary sources existed. From rhetoricians of ancient Greece and Rome, we can get a sense of how such evidence was judged.

In the law courts and public assemblies of both ancient Greece and Rome, oratory, based on artistic argumentation that included logical, ethical, and emotional appeals, was privileged over the so-called "inartistic proofs,"
which included laws, contracts, oaths, and testimony given under torture, as well as the willing testimony of witnesses (Aristotle, I, 15). Oral and written "inartistic" evidence were generally considered the same thing by Greek rhetoricians. Aristotle includes under the category of "witnesses" those whose testimony is transmitted through a written record and those who testify orally in person (I, 15). Roman rhetoricians, on the other hand, separated written and oral evidence. In De Inventione (87 B.C.), Cicero raises the then common doubts about written documents (II, 116). A written document cannot be fully trusted, because it is often ambiguous and open to more than one interpretation and because it may not express the writer's full intent (II, 116-143). Quintilian (Institutio Oratoria, c. A.D. 95) goes further. Written testimony, he says, is susceptible to forgery (V, 5), and "a secret feeling is entertained unfavourable to all who offer evidence in writing, as no man gives it in that way unless of his own free-will, and thus shows that he is no friend to the party against whom he deposes" (V, 7, 1). That is, written testimony suggests a possible bias against the defendant, because it suggests that the accuser is afraid to confront the accused.

Even from an early date, Greek and Roman historians, like classical rhetoricians, concerned themselves with the validity of their evidence and the reliability of their sources. Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) cross-examined eyewitnesses; Lucian (third century A.D.) suggested that historians not simply take an informant's word for something but analyze his or her motives; and Herodian (also third century A.D.) "cites enough of his sources to suggest the order in which he rates them—antiquarian authorities, palace information,
letters, senate proceedings, and other witnesses" (Thompson 27-28). From these and other historians of ancient Greece and Rome and from historians of later periods, we can see that if oral evidence was not privileged over documentary evidence, it was certainly considered equal in standing. Bede in his *History of the English Church and People* (early eighth century) writes, "I am not dependent on any one author but on countless faithful witnesses who either know or remember the facts, apart from what I know myself" (quoted by Thompson 28).

Oral evidence derived from eyewitness accounts represented the primary historical data well into the eighteenth century. Bishop Burnet in his *History of His Own Time* (1724), for instance, clearly assumes printed sources to be inferior. He apologizes for his use of documentary evidence: "If at any time I say things that occur in any books, it is partly to keep the thread of the narration in an unentangled method" (quoted in Thompson 29). And even Voltaire, who decried belief in myths of oral tradition of the remote past, claimed that he had "not ventured to advance a single fact, without consulting eyewitnesses of undoubted veracity" (quoted in Thompson 29). When philosopher-historian William Robertson asked Samuel Johnson whether anyone could impartially provide an account of the 1745 rebellion, the last great revolt of the Scottish Highlands against English, James Boswell records that Johnson replied:

A man, by talking with those of different sides, who were actors in it, and putting down all that he hears, may in time collect the materials of a good narrative. You are to consider, all history was at first oral. *(Journal of the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson* 425-26; also quoted by Thompson 30)

Still, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reverence of documentary evidence and disregard for oral evidence took hold.
Thompson asserts that the reason for the change in the nature of historical scholarship can be seen in "the cumulative effects of two centuries of printing: the explosion in historical resources which was both quantitative and qualitative" (30). The tremendous growth in documents and libraries to house them offered the historian a wonderful "apparatus" for dispensing with fieldwork and relying entirely on documents (31).

Another, perhaps more important, factor in the rise of documentary historiography was the increasing popularity of science and spread of positivism. According to Ernst Breisach:

By 1880 the sciences enjoyed immense prestige. Many scholars were enthusiastic about the image of a nonmysterious world without essences and spiritual entities and about the scientific method as a way to certain and timeless truth. The public was impressed by science's offspring, technology, with its promises of more food, products, health, comfort, and mobility. Not surprisingly, scholars in all fields, including history, felt impelled to emulate so successful an endeavor and transfer its views and methods from the inquiry into nature to the inquiry into human phenomena. (269)

In conjunction with this rise of positivism, the social position of the historian was being transformed. As history, now perceived as a science, developed into an academic discipline, the historian came to be seen as a "professional," requiring professional training. Such training began in Berlin during the 1820's under the influence of Leopold von Ranke. Ranke's seminar became "the most influential training-ground in Europe" (Thompson 50), and as professional training of historians spread, Ranke's positivistic assumptions about history spread. Therefore, in 1898, in the beginning of their Introduction to the Study of History, Langlois and Seignobos could write with Rankean fervor, "The historian works
with documents . . . . There is no substitute for documents: no documents, no history" (quoted in Thompson 51).

Breisach, however, notes that the identification of historiography as science was never complete (288). Macaulay, for instance, used a variety of sources positivist historians would question, including traditional tales, published reminiscences, and oral anecdotes. He defended the reliability of such anecdotes, claiming that "there is doubtless a large mixture of fable [in them]; [but] they are not on that account unworthy of being recorded; for it is both an authentic and an important fact that such tales, whether false or true, were heard by our ancestors with eagerness and faith" (quoted by Thompson 31-31).

Novelists such as Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, George Moore, and Emile Zola, used oral interviews and other ethnographic techniques, such as participant observation, to collect data for their "historical" novels. The biographical memoir of the nineteenth century, exemplified by Richard Gough's *Human Nature Displayed in the History of Myddle* (1833) and J. G. Shaw's *History and Traditions of Darwen and its People* (1889), also kept the use of oral data alive during this period.

Probably the most important intellectual movement of the period that made extensive use of oral data was social history. Such historical research was new in eighteenth-century Britain. One of the earliest social histories was John Millar's *Origin of the Distinctions of Ranks* (1781), which anticipates Marx by connecting the stages in the master-servant relationship to economic changes and which includes one of the first explanations of sexual inequality. Important
advances in interview techniques were made by British journalist and social historian Henry Mayhew during the 1840's. Thompson points out that Mayhew "seems to have felt a respect for his informants that was very rare among investigators of his time. His comments show both emotional sympathy and a willingness to listen to their views. Indeed, his changing standpoint shows that he was genuinely prepared to be influenced by them" (39-40).

Especially with the rise in the socialist movement during the late nineteenth century, more and more social histories and social commentaries, many relying heavily upon oral data gathered through interviews and surveys, were written. However, it was two historians who pioneered oral history per se and set the precedent for the larger revival of that field a century later. Over about fifty years, beginning in the 1860's, American historian H. H. Bancroft, using six hundred assistants, amassed by his own calculations "two hundred volumes of original narratives from memory by as many early Californians, native and pioneer, written by themselves or taken down from their lips . . . " (Thompson 43). Bancroft's library helped to establish the University of California at Berkeley. More of a theorist than Bancroft, however, was French historian Jules Michelet. During his research for *Histoire de la Revolution Francaise* (1847), Michelet recognized the biases and limitations of official documents, which tended to preserve the political story from only one perspective. In a later essay, Michelet writes, "My inquiry among living documents taught me many things that are not in our statistics . . ." (quoted in Thompson 45).
While the use of oral sources continued in historical research, the use of documents, nevertheless, emerged as the primary means of developing historical evidence. William Robertson, whom we heard Samuel Johnson answer earlier, completely rejected all oral tradition of early Scottish history, referring to it as "the fabulous tales of... ignorant Chroniclers" (quoted in Thompson 48). The exclusive use of documentary evidence offered historians three advantages: (1) it provided a quantitative measure ("no documents, no history"); (2) it provided historiography with a stable, systematic, and easily teachable method of its own, a method not shared by journalists and social philosophers; and (3) it provided the pretense of objective neutrality, which of course for most historians of that period--and this, for that matter--is considered no pretense.

Two important developments in historiography since World War II have brought the positivist historian's exclusive reliance on documentary evidence into question. First, oral and visual technologies have to a certain extent (an extent much debated, of course) displaced the written document as the primary means of non-immediate communication. The telephone, the television, and the dictaphone are prime examples. Moreover, sophisticated oral communications methods (brainstorming sessions, seminars, symposia, panel discussions, and interviews) have been introduced into government, business, industry, and academia. And the documentary records of such communications are often not retained. The photocopier, the fax machine, and the computer modem have also problematized the perceived reliability of the document. Photocopies and faxed copies are not "originals." One can cut and paste parts of documents together,
photocopy the result, and produce what seems to be—and even becomes—one uniform document. And computerized telecommunication allows for the transferral of documents without the document, unless someone at one end or the other prints it.

More important than these new "technologies," however, is what Thompson calls the document's "lost innocence" (53). The objectivity of all historical evidence, documentary or otherwise, has been questioned. Hayden White sums up this attitude: "Theorists of historiography generally agree that historical narratives contain an irreducible and inexpungeable element of interpretation" (The Tropics of Discourse 51). Oral history theorist Gary Okihiro echoes White when he asserts that "historical explanations are really only propositions placed within a general interpretive framework postulated by the historian" (197). Lichtman and French define history itself from this qualified position, saying that it represents "reasoned argument about the past by which we seek the fullest possible understanding of actions, thoughts, and feelings" (xvii). History as "reasoned argument" suggests that history is rhetorical—that is, that the historian's reconstruction of the past has a purpose. As Lichtman and French observe:

The process of constructing arguments about the past, however, is fraught with difficulty since historical evidence is frequently biased, incomplete, or contradictory. Moreover, historians frequently deal with complex questions involving human motivation or cause-and-effect relationships; often there are no right or wrong answers to such questions. (xvii)

While the exclusive use of documentary evidence has certainly been brought into question, it would be incorrect to think that oral history has been
unquestionably embraced. Diana Gittens, writing in 1979, still perceives a widely accepted "deification of all that is quantitative" (83). Donald Swain, writing in 1965, voices an all too prevalent positivism when he asserts that "the best history is always solidly based on the written evidence" (63).

Reliability and Validity of Oral History

Criticism of oral history has focused on two areas: issues of reliability and validity and issues of representativeness. Questions about the reliability of an oral history interview center on problems of memory or recollection and on the controversial presence of the interviewer. While apologists for oral history have suggested a number of different defenses, they have failed to recognize that the rhetorical nature of all evidence provides the best explanation for the use of oral interviews.

Reliability and Recollection

William Moss's ironically titled essay "Oral History: An Appreciation" exemplifies the arguments questioning the reliability of oral history interviews. Moss offers a five-level hierarchy of source materials: "transactional records, selective records, recollections, reflections, and the analyses that are written by one's predecessors" (429). Distance of the source from the historical event, and thus the assumed proportionate amount of interpretation needed, represents the measure of each level's evidentiary value (429). Recollections are considered
less valuable than transactional and selective records (i.e., documentary evidence), because memory itself is selective, and "recollections are still further selective and selection is compounded to [at least] a second degree"--that is, "evidence has been refracted several times before [the historian] confronts it in an oral history recording" (431-32). However, if one studies more closely the nature of both oral and documentary evidence, one finds that neither can attain the "purity" that Moss suggests transactional records sometimes attain, and one finds that distance from the historical event is a questionable measure. A more effective measure of evidentiary value is an analysis of the rhetorical situation, especially the intent of those involved in data production. Moss' ranking of recollections below documentary evidence provides us a starting place for this discussion.

Psychologist Alan Baddeley suggests that two major factors involved in recollection problematize the oral history interview: forgetting and memory distortion. Baddeley concludes that decay over time does not in itself explain memory loss (16-17). In fact, as Cynthia Hay notes, recent studies "confirm that accuracy of recall initially declines rapidly, and then continues to decline, but more slowly, over time" (41). Baddeley contends that "interference" is a major cause of memory loss. The retention of that material can interfere with the retention of other material. In Edward P. J. Corbett case history, I suggest that his recollection and strong commitment to the 1963 CCCC meeting, the first such conference where rhetoric was clearly a major theme and which resulted in a special issue of CCC dedicated to reprinting several talks on rhetoric from that
conference, has naturally interfered with his recollection of discussions of rhetoric at earlier CCCC meetings and in earlier CCC issues. As this example indicates, interference and memory itself, for that matter, depend upon the person's degree of interest (Gittens 92; Thompson 113; Menninger 72). People remember things they find interesting or important—an equally, if not more mysterious process, of course.

This notion of interest as a factor in recollection agrees with the generally accepted view of the memory mechanism. Robert Menninger points out that the workings of such a mechanism are still unknown, but he does suggest "three essential criteria" for establishing memory: registration, retention, and recall. First, the memorable event must register with the individual: it must "establish a record of an experience in the central nervous system" (69). No one knows how such things happen, how memory is coded or where, but psychologists do claim that interest affects retention. Like registration, retention and recall are equally mysterious (70).

The function of the brain that we call long-term memory can be seen as part of the overall function of the preconscious: the ability of the mind to collect and classify elements in the constant stream of stimuli bombarding it (registration), to select elements to make available for conscious thought (retention), and to make such elements available during various types of mental processes: inspiration, problem-solving, recall, and so forth (recall). As Lawrence Kubie observes, "[T]he conscious component is only a weighted sample of the continuous stream of preconscious processing of data, a sample
which is given conscious symbolic representation" ("The Utilization of Preconscious Functions in Education" 95).

Everyone generally agrees that memory is reconstructive and not simply a storehouse of experience. But the point to be made here is not that forgetfulness can affect the oral history interview but that what the person remembers, what the preconscious makes available for conscious thought, is often what the person felt--and may still feel--was of interest. As phenomenologist Alfred Schutz writes:

Meaning does not lie in the experience. Rather, those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflectively. The meaning is the way in which the Ego regards its experience. The meaning lies in the attitude of the Ego toward that part of its stream of consciousness which has already flowed by it, toward its "elapsed duration." (69-70)

Thus, as Berger and Luckman in *The Social Construction of Reality* assert:

Only a small part of the totality of human experiences is retained in consciousness [or preconsciousness]. The experiences that are so retained become sedimented, that is, they congeal in recollection as recognizable and memorable entities. (67)

Because experiences can become sedimented in the memory, they become available to the historian as data.

The second factor in recollection that Baddeley discusses is that of memory distortion. Since memory is a reconstructive process, it can never be free of bias. "People tend to remember in terms of their previous assumptions and beliefs" (25), their prior expectations and emotional commitment to the material. The suggestion that such distortion brings oral history's reliability into question hides a distorting assumption itself: the notion that distance from an
event in time (what William Moss calls "abstraction") proportionately diminishes reliability. James Hoopes summarizes the idea this way:

[W]ritten records that date from the time of an event, though not less subjective, are at least less distorted by memory and therefore, some historians have argued, a better source of 'facts' than oral documents. (15)

Moss argues that intervening events can "induce [the subject] to diminish the importance of some evidence and perhaps to enhance beyond proper proportion the importance of other evidence" (431). Just as likely, of course, is the possibility that recollection, tempered by time, may in fact produce a less biased account and can even reveal a deception in a transactional record, or that intervening events can place the recalled experience into a more realistic perspective. After all, another name for recollection is the eulogistic term "hindsight."

Apologists have sought to defend the reliability of oral history in several ways. They have tried to shore up their own reliability by arguing for stricter procedures, recalling a more positivistic attitude toward history (Cutler passim; Louis Moss 159, 163-65; Neuenschwander 330-31)). It has been suggested that oral historians increase the numbers of their interviews and compare information: the more informants saying the same thing, the greater the likelihood that that thing is true. This I call "the statistical fallacy." Such logic assumes the existence of one absolute truth that is available to us, if we only compile enough numbers. But because historical data are generated rhetorically, different pieces of historical evidence will vary in rhetorical effect and thereby in evidentiary value. Agreement among informants may indicate
only the rhetorical strength or the popularity of some evidence, not necessarily
the "truth" of it. Rhetorically, increased numbers may lend greater authority, but
it is fallacious to claim that such authority represents "truth." The statistical
fallacy also assumes that collective experience is more important than individual
experience, and that particular assumption can lead the historian toward broader
and broader perspectives and away from the details that go to make up "thick
descriptions." As Hoopes points out, major advantages of oral history are its
ability to make the abstract more concrete, and to relate the abstract--trends and
movements in history--to the individual:

One great virtue of oral history is its focus on the individual and
consequently on personality. Sometimes culture and society are discussed
at such a high level of abstraction that we forget that only through the
behavior of individual personalities do the concepts of culture and society
have meaning. (Hoopes 34)

Moreover, not all experiences are comparable. Classification tends to
emphasize the sameness of experience and to smooth over the differences,
differences that may be important to historical explanation.

Apologists have also defended oral history by trying to deflect the object
of the interview away from historical fact. Hoopes, for instance, suggests that
oral history provides knowledge of the informant's inner feelings and
motivations. He writes:

Subjectivity, which, if distorted by memory, is a potential weakness of the
oral document, can also be its strength . . . . We are more likely to be
more spontaneous in talking about our feelings than in writing about
them, and many people speak to the oral historian with great candor and
courage" (17).
However, Cynthia Hay has found "that present memories of past attitudes and feelings are subject to distortion and schematization [just as memories of past events are], and that they do not provide direct access to past feelings and attitudes" (42-43). Oral historians, therefore, would do well not to limit themselves to asking questions about feelings and motivations alone.

Some oral historians have also claimed that memory itself is the object of oral history, or, as David Faris writes, "to view oral history not only as a quest for facts but also as an exploration of the nature of individual memory and historical consciousness" (172). Faris says that "interviews reveal how individuals attempt to understand and describe their pasts and suggest ways in which general culture encourages us to interpret experience" (172). Paul Thompson sums up the notion this way: "History, in short, is not just about events, or structures, or patterns of behavior, but also about how these are experienced and remembered in the imagination" (139).

Clearly, neither notion (that emotions and motivations or that memory itself is the object of oral history) proves to be necessarily wrong. But just as clearly, oral histories are not limited to these aims. To make strong claims for either as the only aim of oral history is unnecessarily reductive. Such claims assume that all memories are flawed, which is no less the case for documents, and such claims assume that "facts" (past events *per se*) are not available for recovery except in the most objective, context-stripped, laboratory-pure situations, a notion that is equally unacceptable. The latter view assumes that documentary data, unlike oral data, were somehow created objectively, when in
fact both oral and written evidence are equally "contaminated" with rhetorical purposes.

A more effective defense of the oral history interview as a source of historical data involves the recognition that, with regard to reliability, oral evidence is not fundamentally different from documentary evidence, that the evidentiary value of both depends upon an analysis of the specific rhetorical context, not upon some abstract hierarchy of historical source categories. Gary Okihiro observes that common human qualities inform all evidence, written and oral: "biases and prejudices, selective perceptions and memories, limited and incomplete observational powers; and fallible memories" (198). Moreover, Okihiro explains:

Historical documents are purposeful and . . . those purposes may determine, in a deliberate or unconscious way, the final shape of the document in which facts may be altered, emphases misplaced, or information suppressed. (198)

Paul Thompson, too, remarks on the problematic nature of documentary evidence:

These documents and records certainly do not come to be available to the historian by accident. There was a social purpose behind both their original creation and their subsequent preservation. (106-7)

And, Thompson continues, "[N]either oral nor written evidence can be said to be generally superior: it depends on the context" (110). Historical documents "are, in fact, parts of a human-communications system which consists of a network of elements within a pervasive environment over time" (198-99). James Hoopes notes that "when there is a conflict between written and oral documents, it is not
always the oral testimony that is unreliable" (10). In fact, as Diana Gittens asserts, all evidence, oral and written, consists of interpretive reconstruction:

...all historical research is essentially a process of reconstruction, greatly influenced by present day researchers' theoretical frameworks and preconceptions. The most quantitative kind of historical data was initially influenced by the definitions of those who designed it--and those definitions are not likely to concur with the definitions of those who in turn analyses and interpret it at a later date. (93)

Historian and theorist Hayden White has found that two very human needs explain the existence of interpretation: (1) the need for selection—that is, for the exclusion of some data: "there are always more facts in the record than the historian can possibly include in his narrative representation of a given segment of the historical process" (51); and (2) the need for "fiction"—that is, for inclusion, for "filling in the gaps" through inference, conjecture, and speculation; for inevitably, the data will be too sparse (51). White concludes:

A historical narrative is thus necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative. (51)

Put in these terms, the argument over the reliability of oral history can be seen as a corollary to the general debate going on over the nature of history itself, a debate whose central controversy concerns whether history is an objective science or a subjective literary artifact, an unfortunate binary opposition. White comes down on the side of history as an artistic endeavor, having more in common with fictional narratives than with scientific explanation. In "The Burden of History," he has shown how historians have attempted to have
it both ways, to have their craft be accepted by scientists as an art and by literary artists as a science, and thus, to avoid entirely the necessity of justifying themselves.

On the other hand, Louis Moss (not William Moss, cited earlier) in an "Overview" of oral history methodology, while claiming to promote oral history, in fact denigrates it by assuming a very traditional approach to historiography. Moss presumes that historical research can be made as objective and scientific as he believes all empirical research to be. He calls for corrections and improvements in research design that can somehow measure and limit bias. His approach presupposes that issues of reliability and validity have been effectively resolved in the sciences he seeks to model. Moss assumes that there is one true interpretation of historical data and that this interpretation is directly available to the historian who is willing to apply enough scientific rigor to find it. In fact, Moss places unnecessary constraints upon the interpretive power of the historian. Although at one point he does call the oral history interview "a social process" (167), he fails to recognize the rhetoric implicit in such a process—rhetoric that involves, as rhetoric always does, the contingent nature of knowledge, a contingency that no amount of methodological improvement can constrain.

David Faris has persuasively countered the binary opposition here by arguing that factual knowledge and rhetorical art share a "tensed unity" in historiography, and especially in oral history. Faris notes the two seemingly contradictory demands made on history by its readers: that it be both factual and
artistic. Looking deeper into what the two demands actually mean, Faris argues that factuality involves not some reflection of an absolute truth but a sense of continuity with lived experience, while artistry involves a complexity or unpredictability. History, then, in both its functions, as representation of fact or true events and as artistic endeavor, is rhetorical, for in both functions it must persuade us by shaping the data so that it captures a sense of truth: objective truth shaped subjectively, if you will. The two demands play off one another. No matter how true, a too obvious shaping of the narrative will suggest falsehood; and yet, too little shaping, no matter how true, will be equally unacceptable, if not unreadable. Looked at from a rhetorical perspective, questions of reliability, associated with the logos or the logical appeal of the historical argument, translate into questions of credibility, associated with the ethos or the ethical appeal of the historian.

Reliability and Interviewer Presence

In addition to the "internal" distortions of memory, oral history has come under attack also because of the involvement of an interviewer with the inherent possibility of interviewer bias. As Alice Hoffman summarizes it, the presence of the interviewer "obviously colors the results in somewhat unpredictable ways," which, she claims, must be seen as a disadvantage of oral history (27). As noted above, such bias is part and parcel of the rhetoric of historiography. Hayden White concludes, "[T]here is no such thing as a single correct view of any object under study but . . . there are many correct views, each requiring its own style of
representation" (The Tropics of Discourse 47). The interviewer plays an unavoidable role in the reconstructive process. As noted above, memory itself is reconstructive—that is, recollection involves the imaginative structuring of history. The oral history interview compounds such reconstruction through the collaborative efforts of the inevitably biased interviewer. "To be sure [this new kind of historical document]," as Saul Benison says, "has been created by the participant in past events; it is also, however, the creation of the historian-interviewer who has led the person interviewed to examine relationships he [or she] might otherwise have passed over or deemed unimportant" (73).

Elliot Mishler has explored this destabilizing aspect of interviewing in his book Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative. He agrees with Benison that "the discourse of the interview is jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent" (52). Interviewers reformulate questions; respondents "frame answers in terms of their reciprocal understanding as meanings emerge during the course of an interview" (52). Interviews often develop "through mutual reformulation and specification of questions, by which [interviewer and informant] take on particular and context-bound shades of meaning" (53). Such a view of how meaning emerges from the historical data contradicts not only the traditional view of historiography but also the traditional view of interviews. Mishler writes:

Rather than serving as a stimulus having a predetermined and presumably shared meaning and intended to elicit a response, a question may more usefully be thought of as part of a circular process through which its meaning and that of its answer are created in the discourse
between interviewer and respondent as they try to make continuing sense of what they are saying to each other. (53-54)

The assumption behind this rhetorical conception of the interview is not that historical discourse can somehow mirror historical "truth" (the experience as it emerged in a "historical" present) but that historical discourse, whether singularly or plurally developed, can somehow capture the sense of that historical "truth."

If we accept the rhetorical view of historiography in general and oral history in particular that I am promoting, then the historian as interviewer must be seen as participating in the rhetorical act of "invention." Aristotle defined invention as the discovery of the available means of persuasion. In composition studies, invention often includes the discovery of subject matter for discourse. In historiography, we may think of invention as the twofold operation of discovering data and then of translating that data into persuasive evidence.

As Karen Burke LeFevre has noted, invention has been traditionally thought of as "the private act of an individual writer" (1), as "the unfolding of the individual's ideas, feelings, personality, patterns, or voice, all of which are seen as existing independently of others" (12). This traditional notion of invention, however, has come to be seen as inadequate in two respects: it "promotes an oversimplified view of what an individual is" (26), and "it is not sufficiently comprehensive to account for what happens when writers invent" (23). These same inadequacies can be seen in the traditional concept of the historian that is implied in the criticisms of the interviewer/informant collaboration of the oral history interview. Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede point out in their book
Singular Texts/Plural Authors that "researchers in psychology are challenging traditional psychological theories that posit the self as autonomous and independent" (131-32). Indeed, Edward Sampson has offered, as a rival to the traditional "self-contained" individualism, an "ensembled individualism" where the self/other boundary is more fluid, where the self is conceived in terms that tend to include rather than exclude others.

This social constructionist view of historical invention suggests again that written and oral historical evidence are not in opposition. After all, if we accept the notion of the self as "socially influenced, even socially constituted" (LeFevre 232), then all historical evidence can be seen as plurally constructed, not just the oral history interview. Ronald Grele suggests exactly this sort of social invention when he writes, "People have always told their histories in conversation" (vii). All history is in a sense collaborative, even that developed in seeming isolation, for historians must always be in "conversation" with their sources. Moreover, the belief that a "collaboration" between the historian-interviewer and the informant must necessarily result in "impure," unreliable evidence suggests that some sources of historical data can be uncontaminated by any polluting human context, a notion devised by traditional historians to present their scholarly activity as scientific, as measured by an obsolete nineteenth-century definition of science (see White, The Tropics of Discourse).

In fact, the interviewer/informant collaboration can be characterized in very different, more eulogistic terms. The give-and-take negotiations of meaning in the oral history interview require a greater impartiality on the part of the
historian-interviewer, a greater willingness to test and reformulate hypotheses and to allow the negotiations with the interviewee to confirm or reject these hypotheses. Generalizations are constantly tested during oral history interviews and final generalizations sometimes deferred until the interviewing is well over, if then.

Representativeness in the Case History

Trevor Lummis has asserted, "If oral evidence is to move from a form of biography to an historical account, it must proceed from an individual to a social experience" (113). But critics have argued that data gathered through interviews provide little basis for scientific generalization. Such criticism is especially brought against the case history, which tends to focus on individual experiences rather than collective ones: how can we generalize from a single case? The answer is that the case historian does not make such generalizations—at least, not in the way that we normally take the word "generalization" to mean.

In the previous discussion of reliability, I questioned the suggestion that a larger database of interviews would make for a better history in part on the grounds that collection of larger numbers of interviews would tend to broaden the focus of history and that one of the great strengths of oral history lies in its ability to produce the historical equivalent of ethnographic "thick descriptions," detailed accounts of historical developments within the rich context of individuals who live such developments. In making such an argument, I was remarking on the internal mechanisms of a historical account and was
approaching oral history through an analysis of the process of its production. In discussing the problem of representativeness, however, we approach oral history through an analysis of the product and how it should be evaluated, separate from the production process. In this case, I am seeking to illuminate its external mechanisms, the effect upon the reader of a historical account. We need to understand this difference in order to understand how oral case histories can be generalized.

Robert Yin, in his book on case study research, notes that "scientific facts are rarely based on single experiments; they are usually based on a multiple set of experiments, which have replicated the same phenomena under different conditions" (21). Yin goes on to argue that this way of looking at research should be applied to case studies. Moreover, the scientific community does not question the publication of results of single experiments, though conclusions based on single experiments are often highly tentative. For the scientific community, the data per se warrants publication whether or not conclusions can be drawn. Members of that community do not expect the same kind of generalizability from their research as do members of the communities of the social sciences and the humanities. Yin claims that "case studies [and I would add, case histories], like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (21). Several oral historians have suggested the use of "quota sampling" as a way of attaining representativeness (Gittens 84-85). But the case history does not represent a sampling; the case historian, like the case study researcher, seeks "to expand and
generalize theories . . . and not to enumerate frequencies . . . " (21). This
generalization to theory may be understood as Yin's "analytic generalization,' in
which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare
[the results of the study]" (38), or it may also be understood as generalization
that actually originates with the study, not simply as confirmation of "a previously
developed theory" (Yin 21). The difference is not so much one of kind as one of
degree.

As noted earlier, the historian inevitably approaches data collection with
certain biases, biases that can be expressed as theoretical propositions if
consciously and systematically pondered. The question is not whether historians
approach data with such biases or theoretical propositions. And the question is
not that of the degree of emotional commitment historians have for their
"theory." (The difference between a hypothesis and a thesis may be thought of as
simply the degree to which a historian--or any researcher--is willing to give up a
previously held commitment in the face of contrary data.) The point is that data
are not always easily manipulated, that data carry their own "biases"; they place
their own constraints on the historian's interpretations. Thus, we could, as
historians and the public sometimes do, claim that historical data carry their own
latent theory or theories--as long as we remember that we are speaking
metaphorically and about only a portion of the process of historical
interpretation, which also requires adjustments of the historian and the reader.
Historians may approach historical data seeking to fit them into theories that
historians bring with them to their analyses, or historians may approach
historical data seeking simply to develop a theory from them, to develop whatever reality they can from them. These two extremes of the interpretive continuum are probably not descriptive of approaches the majority of historians make to data. Most historians undoubtedly approach history both manipulating data to fit theory and modifying theory to fit data.

The case history, then, does not require that the historian try to derive some statistical generalization from the data collected. The case historian tests and generalizes hypotheses based on the data and makes no claim that any informant's experience is statistically representative unless that experience can somehow be compared with other data in a way that indicates it might have some statistical representativeness. But statistical generalization is not the aim of a case history, although historians have no way to stop individual readers from finding much that is similar to their own experiences and unscientifically generalizing from such comparisons.

While the scientific community does not expect representativeness of its experiments, it does expect replicability, the notion that other researchers who adopt similar techniques will discover the same phenomena. But Mishler argues that no study is truly replicable, and especially not those that deal with human subjects and those that use qualitative or naturalistic methods (see "Meaning in Context: Is There Any Other Kind?"). Absolute replicability would require the use of identical subjects, materials, evaluative instruments, and so forth, an impossibility in virtually all research, qualitative and quantitative. While not absolutely replicable, oral history interviews can be reperformed with the same
informants, or similar questions may be asked of other informants and the responses compared, or the original responses may be reinterpreted. The latter two alternatives are not technically replication, but the point is, of course, that researchers do not simply perform some validating operation for its own sake; they rely on whatever operations can enhance the validity of their conclusions.

In fact, however, the "eliteness" of an informant of a case history brings its own significance to that history. Because the subject of such history—in the case of this dissertation, the two major figures in composition studies—is prominent in the area under examination, understanding the development of the subject's thought and behavior can be seen as being important in itself. Viewed from this perspective, of course, representativeness and replication become moot issues.

How to read case histories might be better understood through an example. Lummis has suggested that the historian "draw on a number of interviews" in order to "provide some basis for cross-reference" (113). He assumes that the experiences of informants are going to be similar. The underlying assumption of such a suggestion is that conformity to the status quo of the majority is preferable and is what history entirely consists of. That being the case, the historian would want to approach Janet Emig's discussion of sexism in English departments with a thesis already developed. To evaluate her case, then, the historian would need to compare it with the cases of other female English graduate students and instructors of the same time. I have no criticism of such a procedure. But what if Janet Emig's experience was unique? What if the recorded experiences of other women of the period revealed less sexism on
the part of their departments? Doubtful propositions at best, I think, but the point, I hope, is clear: No matter how many contrary experiences historians accumulate, they would not negate Janet Emig's experience. And they would throw suspicion on her testimony only if we allowed ourselves to believe that English departments behaved the same everywhere and that individuals within one English department behaved consistently the same toward every woman all the time. And even then, the historian would be faced with the enormous authority projected in Emig's ethos.

What makes Emig's experience with sexism important is not its representative quality alone. Her experience is interesting, because it suggests how capable of inequality English departments—or any such institutional division—are, when administered and dominated by a homogeneous group. Thus, if we did not approach Emig's experience with a hypothesis or theory about sexism in English departments previous to the interviews, we should certainly come away with one.

Yet, her experience is also important for more individual reasons. Historians can easily focus their attention on that part of Emig's experience that is generalizable, but hers was also an individual drama, to which she responded individually. As Hoopes has suggested, history can focus on three different influences (33): society (the relationships among people); culture ("intellectual influences... that enable us to see some possible avenues of behavior and blind us to others"); and personality ("the individual response to cultural and social influences"). As one of the major figures of our discipline, Janet Emig's thought,
as well as that of Edward Corbett and many others, is of particular interest to us as a response to social and cultural influences. Understanding that response beyond whatever representativeness it might reveal is a worthwhile endeavor in and of itself.

Summary

Previous histories of composition studies have relied almost exclusively on documentary analysis as the source for their data, and I have observed how such an exclusive dependence on documents can result in erroneous conclusions. These works also either attended narrowly to the histories of two professional organizations or sought to describe broad trends and movements in the field over long periods of time. Case histories differ from these more traditional histories (a) in their use of oral interviews as well as documentary analyses as sources of historical data and (b) in their focus on individuals.

Ironically, oral data have a longer history of respectability and use in historical research than written documents, but the rise of positivism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the privileging of documents and the notion that historical research and writing could be objectively performed. Only in the past twenty years or so have positivistic notions of history been widely questioned. Current historiography holds that historical research is never "pure," that historical interpretations are always "tainted" rhetorically. The notion that historians can uncover absolute truths and present them objectively is obsolete. Researchers in many different fields, in addition to history, maintain that there is
no such thing as an objective truth, or if there is, it is not directly observable or attainable. They contend that all research involves interpretation and that all interpretation is inevitably biased by a number of factors, including the values and beliefs of researchers themselves. History consists of a "tensed unity" of factuality and artistry or rhetoric; it may be the reporting of truth, but that truth is perforce shaped subjectively.

Much criticism of case history and of a reliance on oral evidence derives from outdated, positivistic assumptions about the nature of history, the nature of memory, and the nature of the interview. Critics have charged that human memory either can be distorted or is inherently faulty and biased. Thus, they argue, case history and a reliance on oral interviews must be seen as inherently inferior to traditional history and a reliance on documentary analyses. But these critics have failed to recognize the rhetorical nature of all historical evidence. No piece of evidence is produced in a context-stripped, unbiased environment. All history, that reconstructed through documentary analyses or that reconstructed through memory, involves selections of what to emphasize and what to de-emphasize, what to include and what to ignore. The evidentiary value of any piece of data depends upon an analysis of its rhetorical context, not upon its form.

Critics have also charged that the presence of the interviewer inevitably influences the information gotten from an informant. Again, however, such biasing of data does not make them different in value from data derived from documents. Interviews by nature involve a process of "mutual reformulation and
specification," as Mishler has demonstrated (Research Interviewing 53). The fact that both interviewer and informant collaborate in the reconstruction of meaning rather than each working alone --historians with their documents, subjects with their memoirs--does not mean that the information derived from interviews is any less "true." Case historians bring to their interviews knowledge about historical events under examination from a wide range of previously tapped sources (e.g., preparatory reading and previous interviews). Informants provide knowledge from their own personal experiences and from their own tapping of other sources. A singularly authored memoir is no less reconstructive or interpretive than the collaborative effort of the oral history interview, especially if we accept the conclusions of an increasing number of researchers in psychology about the socially constructed nature of the individual self. The interviewer/informant negotiations of meaning, in fact, tend to inhibit the premature commitment to a favored interpretation by historians. The nature of case history--the interviews and the close readings of documents--subjects the historian to a constant testing of hypotheses and a closer and closer examination of the data than required by traditional history.

Case history also suffers the same criticism leveled at case study research: that information provided by the study of one case cannot be generalized. Critics claim that the experiences of one person cannot provide data that will tell us anything about a majority of people. But critics here have too narrowly and reductively defined the possibilities of generalization. Case history is generalizable in two ways. It provides evidence that may be combined with
evidence from other case histories to make generalizations. And it provides
information from which the historian may construct hypotheses—that is, tentative
generalizations—or that may confirm or contradict previously held
generalizations.

Case histories provide us with three general kinds of knowledge: "factual"
information; knowledge about motivations, feelings, opinions, and values of
informants and perhaps their speculations about thoughts and emotions of
others; and historical interpretation. The most distinguishing feature of the case
history is the wealth of details about the informant's thought and experiences
gained through the interviews in conjunction with the close reading of the
informant's documents. Case histories seek to provide histories that are "thick"
with detail and interpretation, "constructions of other people's constructions of
what they and their compatriots are up to" (Geertz 9). Case historians, as
anthropologist Clifford Geertz says of ethnographers, confront "a multiplicity of
complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted
into one another" (10). Traditional historians face the same multiplicity of
structures, of course; the difference is that, contrary to what positivists contend, a
multiplicity of documents can be more easily manipulated than people; the
responses of documentary data to the historians' inquiries are more easily
biased, for documents are more easily explained or simply ignored. They never
answer unless addressed; the historian never has to fear that documentary data
may not cooperate. If Adams Sherman Hill's Our English contradicts the
received view of him, historians can simply disregard it or at least smooth over
the contradictions. But I wonder, would informant A. S. Hill be quite so easily pigeonholed? And if historians attempted a full description of the intracacies of Hill's thought, could they so easily neglect the documentary contradictions?

**Methodological Procedures of This Study**

In the following case histories of Edward P. J. Corbett and Janet Emig, I have relied on three general kinds of data: documentary analyses of both published and unpublished pieces of writing from my subjects; information derived from extensive oral history interviews; and my own knowledge of my subjects and the field of composition studies. For practical reasons of time and space, I limited my documentary sources for the most part to articles and talks, although I could have sought access to course syllabi, correspondence, and so forth. For these same practical reasons, I limited my oral data to interviews with my subjects. Again, I could have interviewed their colleagues, their present and former students, and so on.

My procedures were much the same for each subject. I requested their curriculum vitae. I studied it carefully and requested particular talks each subject has given. I also asked them to provide me with works they felt were important in order to understand their thought and career. In preparation for my interviews with each subject, I closely read as much of their work as I could, amounting to most published articles and the unpublished works provided. I also read widely in issues that related to their works, including but not limited to reviews of their books.
The oral history interviews were conducted alone with each subject. The bulk of Corbett's interviews amounted to about thirteen hours of meetings held over nine days in early October, 1989. I also conducted two telephone interviews with Professor Corbett in July, 1990, following my interviews with Professor Emig. These interviews were spent clarifying information, but I also sought to understand more fully his possible epistemology, to compare it with Emig's. My interviews with Professor Corbett took place in his office at Ohio State University and typically lasted between sixty and ninety minutes each.

Most of my interviews with Professor Emig took place in a rented house on Sanibel Island, Florida, while she was on sabbatical. Because she had graciously invited me to stay there with her, we were able to conduct longer interviews at a time than those I did with Professor Corbett. Our conversations "off the record" also fed into the next sessions discussions, although I have quoted only what taped and only that which Professor Emig authorized. Two of our interviews were conducted in automobiles travelling. The first interview I had with her was held on October 27, 1989, on the road between Columbus, Ohio, and Cincinnati and lasted approximately ninety minutes. The other "road" interview was held as we drove from Sanibel Island to Naples, Florida, and lasted about an hour. These personal interviews amounted to about ten hours of discussion and most were conducted over three days in early May, 1990. I also conducted one telephone interview with Professor Emig in July, 1990, to clarify some information.
I did not approach each subject with the same sets of questions. I sought instead to allow the questions to emerge from my reading of their works and their cv's and from our discussions during the interviews. With each subject, however, my interests did tend toward two areas, as should become clear in reading their case histories. I was interested in their early lives and educations and in the progress of their professional careers, and I wanted to understand the development of their intellectual commitments as evidenced in their published and unpublished discourse. In the latter regard, then, my interviews were in part discourse-based.

In these case studies of Edward P. J. Corbett and Janet Emig, I have sought to do what Geertz says ethnographers do: "contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render" (10). The willingness of my two subjects to collaborate with me in these ventures, along with their general amiability, allowed me the opportunity to explore with them various permutations in the emergence of composition studies as an academic discipline over the last forty years. This is not to say, however, that they always responded as I hoped or expected. At times, these case histories become more contrivings to grasp than actual renderings. The reader can expect loose ends everywhere. But that is how it is with people; the texts of their lives, their thinking and their careers, cannot be grasped as thematic unities; as close as our readings of them can get, we never seem able to get close enough.
In conversation, Edward Corbett repeats as if in refrain, "I have never been an innovator, never been a shaker and a mover." It is true that he has never developed an original theory of composition or an entirely original pedagogy of composition; his major project has been to revive and adapt an ancient tradition, new to writing instruction in the 1950's and 1960's, but original only in the sense that he put his own stamp on the adaptation. In his own teaching of writing, Corbett has relied heavily on some fairly traditional approaches; for example, while he encourages revision, he does not routinely read his students' early drafts (Interview, Oct. 4, 1989). He has taught writing mainly through the use of models, readings either from a collection, a "reader," in freshman classes or from papers turned in by the students themselves in more advanced composition courses (Interview, July 23, 1990). And to every class, Corbett hands out his "Dittoed Sheet of Fourteen Items," a list of fourteen stylistic and mechanical prescriptions, and he insists that these "conventions of form" be adhered to. The prescriptions on this sheet speak to every level of style from advice on inadequately developed sentences to an insistence that dashes on a typewriter be made with "two unspaced hyphens," not just one. In his professional endeavors, he has been equally conservative.
Of his administration of the freshman writing program at Ohio State
University, Corbett reports that he found the course so well designed that he
"was really more a caretaker," that he "just perpetuated" the course that was in
place when he arrived in 1966 (Interview, Oct. 3, 1989). And in his editorship of
his field's major journal, *College Composition and Communication* (CCC),
Corbett maintains, he made very few changes in the format and running of the
publication:

> Every administrative job that I have carried I have just been a caretaker.
> I've taken what I inherited and continued to do the kind of job I
> inherited. I think I did it very efficiently and promptly but with no
> particular distinction and no new directions. I think the only new thing
> that I introduced into the journal was the jour d'esprit section. (Interview,
> Oct. 11, 1989)

Yet, despite a lack of "innovation" and somewhat conservative
approaches to writing instruction, Edward Corbett has been an important force
in composition studies since the mid-1960's. Robert Connors calls him a "major
voice" (*Selected Essays* xi). And Connors is not alone in his recognition of
Corbett. Indeed, an entire session of the 1990 Conference of College
Composition and Communication in Chicago was devoted entirely to an
evaluation and celebration of his work and influence.

The inconsistency—that Corbett can be a "major voice" yet not an
innovator—is attributable to the close association of Corbett and classical
rhetoric, an association that Corbett himself seems to have assimilated and is
willing to accept when asked about it directly. But commentators on his
influence, even among his most ardent admirers, have tended to discuss
Corbett's application of classical rhetoric to writing instruction as if that ancient
rhetorical system were monolithic and Corbett's adaptation of it, a simple matter
of reporting its principles. Connors, Ede, and Lunsford note, "More than any other single figure, Mr. Corbett made classical rhetoric accessible and important to a whole generation of scholars and teachers" (Preface, Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse viii), and James Berlin refers to Corbett as "the most influential of the spokespersons for the return of classical rhetoric to the composition classroom" (Rhetoric and Reality 157).

No one can deny the validity of these generalizations, but their sweeping nature tends to gloss over important differences between Corbett's rhetoric and the classical system upon which it is based and to ignore the highly interpretive quality of Corbett's synthesis of Greek, Roman, eighteenth-century, and twentieth-century rhetorics. We misread Corbett if we look at his work simply as an overlay of the classical system onto modern writing instruction. Berlin's claim, for instance, that the revived classical rhetoric of Corbett is dominated by a commitment to logic ("Contemporary Composition" 49; Rhetoric and Reality 155) is oversimplified. It oversimplifies classical rhetoric, assuming that all classical systems are the same; and it oversimplifies Corbett's rhetoric, noting his bias for rationality, which he readily admits, but neglecting his recognition of the power of the emotional and especially the ethical appeals. As we will see, too, Berlin's claim that "Neo-Aristotelian" Corbett believes reality exists separately from the observer must be qualified, for while Corbett does believe in the possibility that truth is accessible, he does not necessarily see it as directly accessible without the use of language.

The problem again seems to involve too great a reliance on written documents and the sweeping nature of the generalizations. In Rhetoric and
Reality, Berlin cites only five of Corbett’s works in his history and supports his generalizations mainly with one work, "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," the one that is most obviously committed to rationality.

Ironically, this close association of Corbett with classical rhetoric in part has allowed Corbett to progress smoothly through the profession, while others lacking such an association have met with obstacles, as in the case of Janet Emig. Although generally unrecognized as having any importance in English studies, classical rhetoric has had close connections to poetics, providing it with a taxonomy of figurative language, for example. Thus, Corbett’s project, while perhaps not fully appreciated by colleagues in literary studies, at least was never held against him as an unworthy pursuit.

Educating a Classical Rhetorician and Teacher

Until high school, little in Corbett’s early life indicated a career in education or any association with the classics. He was born Edward Patrick Joseph Corbett in Jamestown, North Dakota, on October 29, 1919. His father, a son of Irish immigrants, worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad. When he was about seven, the family moved to Glendale, California, and then to Los Angeles, where his father delivered milk. He lived there two years before the Corbett parents separated and his father moved Corbett’s brother, two sisters, and him to Milwaukee. There, the children were raised by their paternal grandmother and their father. During the Depression, his father was frequently without a job, although he did work for the WPA for a period. The family was very poor, and
neither of his parents had more than a grade school education. That children of such parents might get anything more than a minimal education themselves seemed unlikely. When Corbett graduated from St. Rose's school in 1934, however, he received a scholarship to Marquette University High School. Corbett refers to this turn of events as "the great break of my entire life" (Oct. 2, 1989). "That made my world," he says.

Marquette University is a Jesuit-run institution, and Corbett's association with the Jesuits had two important benefits. The Jesuits are a teaching order, and their emphasis on education insured that the high school would provide quality instruction. Corbett remembers the school as "probably the best high school in the state" at the time, and it provided him with courses in Latin and Greek. Latin had been taught there since before Corbett's entrance, but apparently Greek was not offered until the school hired a PhD in Greek who had been teaching at St. Louis University but who preferred teaching at the secondary school level. Corbett says, "And he came and just turned us on" (Lunsford and Ede interview, May 1987). Corbett speaks of this break with great emotion and with a characteristic compassion for fellow human beings:

Four years of Latin and Greek just turned my life around—and why me, Lord? Why me, Lord?—that I got those kinds of breaks despite the fact that I was dirt poor. And my life could have been the very opposite. Why does it happen to certain people?"

Corbett graduated from high school in 1938, finishing four years of study in the Classics. He declined a scholarship to Marquette University in order to study for the priesthood at Venard College (now known as Maryknoll Apostolic College) in Clarke Summit, Pennsylvania. He completed the four years of
college that led to a degree in philosophy. His course of study at Maryknoll included more work in Latin. Corbett kept up with his Greek by reading a New Testament edition with Latin and Greek on facing pages. He still has the book in his office. For his fifth year, he was the Maryknoll novitiate in Bedford, Massachusetts. But in July of 1943, Corbett left the school and left his aspirations of being a priest behind. He offers little explanation for this decision other than saying that he felt he was not meant for the priesthood. Corbett has remained a devout Catholic. Clearly, the decision was a highly personal one; in many ways, one that needs little explanation.

That summer, he worked in the Schlitz Brewing Company ice-house in Milwaukee and then in November of 1943 was inducted into the Marines. His brother had gone into the Marines and been wounded at Saipan, and the inspiration of his brother motivated Corbett's enlistment. The seeming ease of Corbett's movement from novice priest to soldier suggests his ability to adapt to different situations and conscious hold he was taking on his own life's direction. Yet there was a element of luck involved that Corbett recognizes.

His experiences in the military provided indirect training for a career as a teacher and scholar interested in how people communicate, for after boot camp, he was selected for training as a Radar Technician. At Wright Junior College in Chicago and then at Ward Island, Corpus Christi, Texas, he underwent an accelerated course in mathematics, physics, and electronics. In his later career, Corbett would value the work of Marshall McLuhan and recognize the rhetorical nature of all communication, including electronic communication and mathematics.
Corbett was eventually shipped overseas in 1945 to Majuro Island, but he never saw combat. The military recalled his squadron to Pearl Harbor to prepare for an assault on the Japanese mainland, when in August of 1945, Japan surrendered. Corbett was reassigned and sent to Tsingtao in North China, and before his repatriation, he was appointed NCO in charge of the Communications Unit at Tsingtao. Corbett says of his experience in the military:

Although when we were in Majuro, we were daily sending out flights to bomb the Japanese, I never got involved in a bombardment or fire power. I was just very lucky, and then as a result of that, I got three years of the GI Bill which got me through graduate school. Again, there were the breaks" (Oct. 2, 1989).

Corbett's purpose in applying for graduate school was "to get into journalism, because of having read so many of the American writers like Sherwood Anderson and Hemingway, who were all in journalism" (Oct. 2, 1989). He explains:

What I really wanted to be was a writer of novels and short stories, and I thought that good training for a novelist would be journalism, because all these well-known writers came out of a background in journalism. (Oct. 2, 1989)

However, his reading during this time was also preparing him for a career in rhetoric. While in the South Pacific, before his reassignment to China, Corbett got hold of a copy of Mortimer Adler's *How To Read a Book*. During the war, cheaply made, so-called "armed forces editions" of books were provided to servicemen free of charge. Corbett recalls the profound effect this book had on him:

I read it and to my shock realized that for all my years of college and a good high school education, I really was a very poor reader. Reading that book and getting some directions on how to go about reading critically really revolutionized my life I think . . . . Rhetoric is in a sense a synthetic
art, putting something together, composing it, but this was rhetoric in reverse. Here is something that's put together very well; now how is it put together? Why is it put together in this way? So, I think that Adler was really giving me the key, the secret of studying discourse, the way he went about reading, and then, of course, I discovered rhetoric which is the art of putting it together, but I was being prepared for that by Adler's book.

(Oct. 2, 1989)

Fundamental elements of Corbett's thought are evident in this testimony, which we will see emerge in his later writing. These elements include a view of rhetoric as both analytical and generative and the connection between reading and writing. But there is nothing particularly classical in Adler's discussion or in Corbett's response. The question that Corbett asks himself are those of someone vitally interested in education, not necessarily in classical rhetoric per se. The importance of his discovery of Adler at this time in the mid-1940s was its emphasis on textuality. Corbett had not yet discovered rhetoric--not in his classical education at Marquette High School, not in his college and seminary education at Maryknoll.

Corbett began applying for graduate school while in China. He had married while stationed in Chicago, and so, naturally, he wanted to return there. Although the University of Chicago did not have a program in journalism, Corbett took the suggestion of one of its officials and entered the master's degree program in English. His graduate education at Chicago consisted entirely of literary study. He received his master's degree in English in June of 1948.

Before returning for a PhD, Corbett decided to teach for a couple of years. He was hired as an Instructor of English at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, in September, 1948. "I got bitten by the bug," he says. Corbett attributes the appeal of teaching for him partially to his own love of
drama. Although typically a shy person, Corbett acted in many plays, especially while teaching at Creighton. He had a number of leading and supporting roles at the Omaha Community Playhouse. He has played the parts of William Jennings Bryan in "Inherit the Wind," the common man in "A Man for all Seasons," and Tommy Turner, the English professor, in Thurber's "The Male Animal." Corbett senses the connection between teaching and theater, too:

I never had a course in how to teach a subject, and I never had an education course in how to teach . . . Yet, here's this interest that I manifest; I'm always looking for the ways in which to present this to an audience. (Oct. 2, 1989)

And soon, this interest in teaching took over. "I liked teaching and I forgot about journalism. So that again is how the wheels of fortune go" (Oct. 2, 1989).

Indeed, fortune did play an important role in his life during the two years before he returned for a PhD, for it was in the Creighton Library, during his second year there, while searching for a way to teach criticism of non-fiction prose, that Edward Corbett fortuitously discovered Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*. He has told the story many times:

[In my first year of teaching, I was saddled with four sections of freshman English and a section of English Survey. I can still recall my saying virtually the same thing four times a day and then the joy of going to my last class of the day, English Survey. It was like dying and going to heaven, because that was what I was trained by my graduate work to do--talk about literature. I had come out of the tradition that everybody in the postwar graduate schools came out of: the tradition of New Criticism, in which you did a close analysis of literary works. So when we came to the literary text, especially the poetry, I was able to analyze the poems backwards and forwards, and must have just bored those kids stiff! But in the same anthology, and in any anthology of literature, there are prose pieces, and I was frustrated there. What was I to do with these pieces? I did not know how to analyze them the way I analyzed a piece of poetry. So one day, just desperation made me go to the library to find something that would give me some help so that I could talk about the form, the structure, the organization of a piece of prose in the way
that I could do marvelously with poetry. I went to the library, and I happened to get into the section where there were some rhetoric books. Up on the shelf was this calfskin-covered book by Hugh Blair. On the spine it said *Lectures in Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,* and the "belles lettres" part intrigued me. I didn't know about the rhetoric part, but I brought the book down, and it happened to break open at one of Blair's four lectures in which he analyzed one of Addison's *Spectator* papers. I started to read it, and I was simply stunned. For the first time in my life, I saw someone talking sentence by sentence about the style of an essay. It was just fascinating. Nobody had ever done that. There were always general comments about style: the "mellifluous style" and the "staccato style." But nobody analyzed a piece of prose in this way. I stood there, and I read that essay, and I stood there, and I read the other three essays, and then I took the book home and read the whole thing. It was then that I discovered that Blair was at the end of a long tradition that I had to recover. ("Headnote to 'Hugh Blair as an Analyzer of English Prose Style,'" *Selected Essays,* 2-3)

If, from this day forward, Corbett didn't know the full shape of his calling, he at least had found a subject for a PhD dissertation: the recovery of the eighteenth-century Scottish rhetorician and critic Hugh Blair.

Blair was a well-known literary figure, preacher, and teacher of rhetoric in Edinburgh in the late eighteenth century, but he was best known in the twentieth century, up until Corbett's work on him, as a founder of the *Edinburgh Review* and as a promoter of James Macpherson's Ossian "translations" and of the poetry of Robert Burns. In 1759, he began a series of lectures on rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh. He delivered these lectures for twenty-four years as the first Regius Professor of Rhetoric at that university. So popular was Blair that unauthorized editions of his lectures, based on students' course notes, began to appear, and so, in 1783, he published his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.* Blair's lectures became enormously popular, being reprinted in over fifty editions before 1835, with complete editions of the work continuing to be published even as late as 1873. Blair's vision of rhetoric had a large influence on the earliest American rhetoric and composition textbooks of the nineteenth
the nineteenth century. But in order to fully understand Blair's rhetorical theory, one needs to understand the lengthy rhetorical tradition, at the end of which he appears. Corbett's recovery of Blair, then, necessitated a recovery of the tradition of classical rhetoric, codified in particular by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.

Corbett had planned since receiving his MA to return for a PhD; he had become interested in the literature of the eighteenth century and was especially fond of Samuel Johnson; but now he knew exactly the direction his PhD study would take and what the topic of his dissertation would be. He was accepted by the graduate schools at Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Loyola in Chicago. Loyola offered him a teaching fellowship which would allow him to supplement his subsistence allowance from the GI Bill, and so, in 1950, he began work on his PhD degree there. From 1950 to 1952, while taking courses, Corbett taught two courses each semester. During the academic year 1952-1953, he worked as a full-time instructor at Loyola and completed research on his dissertation. Creighton University offered him a job in the summer of 1953, and Corbett happily returned there. In 1954, he was made an Assistant Professor. He completed his doctoral dissertation, "Hugh Blair: a Study of His Rhetorical Theory," in 1956, and in 1957, Creighton made him an Associate Professor.

A Career in English

Tenure

After receiving his PhD in 1956, Corbett began to think about tenure at Creighton. He recalls:
[The pressure to publish] was not as strong as it was maybe at a public university and certainly was not anywhere near the pressures that are on young PhDs now . . . . I suppose I never had much anxiety, and my recollection is that there was no set time when you were going to come up for review . . . . My recollection is that we weren't on that kind of timetable. (Oct. 2, 1989)

As Corbett recalls, the department would put a faculty member up for tenure when it felt that the person had the credentials to warrant it.

But, of course, in those days, one of the things that helped is that the tremendous influx of students, especially as a result of the GI Bill, caused classrooms to just fill up, and universities were in a desperate need of teachers, so there wasn't as much hiring-and-firing as there is now. (Oct. 2, 1989)

Despite his few publications in professional journals during the 1950s, Corbett did publish a number of essays and reviews in popular and religious magazines and journals such as *The Nation, America, Commonweal, Benedictine Review*, and *Pastoral Life*. Corbett attributes his publications in what we might call "non-professional" magazines to his attempt at "working out that interest I originally had in journalism, in reaching an audience of a more general kind than the academic community" (Oct. 2, 1989). Some of the writing in the religious journals focused on "the sad state of sermon-giving" he found at Catholic churches. He called on seminaries to give more attention to homiletics. One of his most widely reprinted articles first appeared in *America* in 1961: "Raise High the Barriers, Censors," a defense against school censorship of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. In both these cases, two themes appear that characterize Corbett's career: his interest in rhetoric (not just the structure of a composition but its effect on an audience) and his interest in teaching.

Still, Corbett did begin to feel the need to accumulate some professional publications for tenure. His research for his dissertation directly provided
material for three works. His earliest professional publication was the literary-oriented "Hugh Blair's Three Critical Dissertations," published in *Notes and Queries* in 1954 before he had completed his dissertation. This article sought to determine if all three "dissertations" included in an 1806 edition of Ossian poems were authored by Blair. His next professional publication was "Hugh Blair as an Analyzer of English Prose Style," published in *College Composition and Communication (CCC)* in 1958. This essay derived directly from Corbett's dissertation and includes a description of Blair's method of stylistic analysis. Finally, "A Survey of Rhetoric" which appears at the end of each edition of his *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, first published in 1965, is taken directly from his dissertation.

Both themes mentioned above (his interests in rhetoric and in teaching) appear as early as the 1958 article on Blair's method of stylistic analysis and have continued to appear in his writing and talks throughout his career. In that early 1958 essay on Blair, we also find an implicit distinction between two aspects of rhetoric, a distinction that informs the whole of Corbett's work: that between rhetoric's generative function, associated with the process of writing, and its analytical function, associated with the reading of the product of that writing process (for instances, see "Theory and Practice of Imitation," "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline," and "Improvement in Reading Skills"). We might be tempted to associate rhetoric's generative aspect exclusively with pedagogy, but Corbett does not. He is ultimately concerned with how to teach both functions.

Clearly, Corbett could have limited his discussion in this early essay simply to the critical contributions of Blair's method of stylistic analysis and
submitted the piece to a journal dedicated to literary criticism. But "Hugh Blair as an Analyzer of English Prose Style" was published in *College Composition and Communication (CCC)* and is pedagogically-oriented. Corbett proposes that "modern teachers of English might find in texts like Blair's a good deal that is helpful to them in their own teaching" (*Selected Essays* 6), and he concludes:

If Blair's method proves to be inadequate for our purposes, it may serve at least to point the way to the development of an analytical technique that will supply a real need in our composition and literature classes. (*Selected Essays* 12-13)

*Teaching Composition and Literature*

In this essay, Corbett obviously finds no conflict between the two kinds of classes, composition and literature, or between the two rhetorical activities, composition and analysis. For him, at this time, English teachers naturally taught both, as he was doing at Creighton, teaching Freshman English (the composition of documents) and teaching the analysis of literary artifacts of various periods of English literature in upper-division courses. For Corbett, rhetoric informs both literature and composition. He sees the merging of rhetoric and poetic, what George Kennedy calls "letteraturizzazione," as somewhat "inevitable" (Oct. 10, 1989). Even about that most rhetorically resistant genre, lyric poetry, Corbett finds evidence of rhetorical play:

> We are very conscious, of course, of the voice behind us, and it's a voice that wants to express itself, seems to want to be overheard, to be read. But then what do we do? Is it just for the sake of the aesthetic pleasure that we have it? I go back to that metaphor that Shelley uses in "Defense of Poetry," when he talks about the nightingale singing in the woods, and the nightingale has no designs on us. It doesn't care whether we're listening or not . . . . I think there's one view of literature . . . . I think every poet would like to be read, but sometimes people write poems even though it is never going to be read by anybody, never going to be published . . . . But there have been rhetorical analyses even of that kind
of poetry, where it is viewed not just as expressive, but that it is an intent
to make us see the world as this person sees it and to respond to that
reality out there in the way that he sees it. (Oct. 10, 1989)

While Corbett takes this view of the nature of literature and composition, he has
since revised somewhat or elaborated on his view of mixing them pedagogically.
It is, of course, a sign of the times that more and more it is possible for a teacher
of writing not to teach literature. And in "Literature and Composition: Allies or
Rivals in the Classroom" (1983), Corbett concludes that the two usually should
not be taught in the same course, because of the temptation that literature
offers:

Since most [English] teachers are trained in the teaching of literature, it's
what they love, and it's what got most of us into this business in the first
place. We love literature, but literature can take over and become an
end in itself..... My point it that if literature is the primary kind of
reading that you do in a composition class, then it tends to distract the
class from the main purpose which is learning how to write. (Oct. 10,
1989)

Corbett felt so strongly about this that when the English department at Ohio
State, where he settled later, sought to establish in the 1970's a literature-based
freshman composition course in addition to the regular course, he fought
"vigorously" along side Frank O'Hare against the proposal, "because we knew
from our own experiences that it was a dangerous thing to do" (Oct. 10, 1989).
At the same time, Corbett has opposed the idea that the study of composition
should have its own department separate from that of English (Oct. 4, 1989).

Corbett senses strong ties between composition and literature, between
writing and reading, between process and product. We should remember that
Corbett's discovery of Blair in the Creighton Library was motivated by
pedagogical needs, the pedagogical needs of his literature survey class. Still, by
1958, Corbett had become director of Freshman English at Creighton; and with
his recovery of classical rhetoric for his dissertation, completed two years earlier, he had found his calling in the application of classical rhetoric to the study of modern composition. If this vision of himself was not fully evident in his publications yet, it soon would be.

*The Creighton Experience*

This overriding concern with teaching in his writing can be traced back to his having been "bitten by the bug" and probably back further to his satisfying educational experiences in high school and college. Good fortune also followed Corbett into his own teaching career. It is difficult to say how representative or unrepresentative his career at Creighton was, but it was quite obviously a happy one. There, he fell in with a group of young English faculty ("the bullpen") who like himself had come out of English programs dedicated to the study of literature but who also like himself had become interested in composition instruction:

> Four or five of us got really excited about teaching, and we were all in one bullpen office, so we could gab among ourselves . . . We kind of put our heads together and devised a better way to go about teaching composition. We got very interested in the stylistic part of it. (Oct. 2, 1989)

Corbett brought his knowledge of Blair and other rhetoricians to his teaching and to the bullpen discussions.

His experiences in the classroom became more and more positive as this career progressed and his use of rhetorically-informed pedagogy increased. He speaks especially highly of the honors classes he taught at Creighton. Most of the examples of schemes and tropes used in the first edition of *Classical Rhetoric*
for the Modern Student were found by these students for an exercise used in his classes. Such pleasurable teaching experiences, however, should not blind us to the overall dissatisfaction most teachers felt during the 1950s, a dissatisfaction Corbett remembers:

There was a groping on the part of composition teachers for some other way to teach what we were teaching, because we weren't satisfied with what we were doing, because we were flailing away and didn't have much direction . . . . (Oct. 2, 1989)

What teachers were doing at the time appears to have varied considerably. The received view of the composition teaching in the 1950s consists primarily of teaching correct grammar at any cost. It is true that the more conservative handbooks were the predominant textbooks in use; Creighton University used The Harper's Handbook. But as Robert Connors has pointed out, handbooks did become progressively less dogmatic and conservative as the fifties progressed ("Handbooks: History of a Genre," 95-96; "Mechanical Correctness as a Focus in Composition Instruction," 70-71). It is also true that virtually no attention was given to the overall process of drafting a piece of writing. And it is true that teachers of the period were generally overburdened with students and assignments. Corbett himself does not paint a pretty picture of teaching even in the more satisfactory program at Creighton. Training for composition teachers was virtually nonexistent in the late forties and early fifties. Assignments focused on drills in grammar or punctuation and on weekly themes. The topics for each theme was assigned on Monday and taken up on Friday.

Corbett admits:

I did god-awful things during the first couple of years with my students: diagraming sentences, for instance. And I just don't remember if I ever had [as a student] a freshman English course, so I didn't even have the
advantage of a writing course in college myself. And I was given a syllabus and told to "go, man"... I have often wished I could have those kids back now and give part of their tuition back. They got shortchanged. (Oct.2, 1989)

Teachers typically faced similar conditions. According to the report of the NCTE Committee on Selection, Retention and Advancement of the College Teacher of English, printed in *College English* in 1962, the college English teacher typically taught four composition courses per term. Classes usually ranged in size from 25 to 30 students. At Creighton, freshmen wrote twelve themes in a fifteen week semester. That amounts to 300 to 360 themes to grade per class or 1,200 to 1,400 themes each semester. Naturally, "there wasn’t much attention to what we would call ‘rhetoric.’ It was assign a topic and prep them for the assignment, and then take their themes and brutalize them with red marks. It was a very unenlightened way to teach composition" (Oct. 2, 1989). As the 1950s progressed greater responsibility by English departments was taken for training teaching assistants. Throughout the 1950s, discussions on particular training programs appeared in *CCC*. The training programs discussed there varied considerably, but rhetoric was mentioned as a component about as often as it was left out.

*The Ohio State Experience*

Edward Corbett’s move to Ohio State University to become the director of its Freshman English program reflects a certain amount of respectability achieved by the study of rhetoric, if not composition, by that time—at least in some circles. Al Kuhn, then chair of the English department at Ohio State, used Corbett’s new textbook, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, in the
graduate course for training teaching assistants. The book must have impressed him and others on Ohio State's English faculty, for when the department began looking for a replacement for its Director of Freshman English for its 1966-67 year, Corbett was contacted. He was not on the market for a job at the time, being content with his position at Creighton; it was Ohio State who approached him. He was hired as a full professor.

Corbett recalls his fear of moving "from a school where we had about 4000 total enrollment in the university" to a school that he estimates even then had an enrollment above 40,000. But the Freshman English program at Ohio State, organized by Ed Robbins, using graduate student teaching associates, was already well established—and apparently well accepted by the rest of the English faculty. Corbett recalls:

I was very surprised at the close relations. And Ed Robbins had a very well structured program that I inherited. For the first year, I just worked in what he had started. I remember those early TA's we had were very reliable people. I wish I could total up the number of our TA's who went on and almost immediately upon graduation became directors of Freshman English all over the country. I'll bet there were thirty or forty of them. And at that time, we didn't have a rhetoric program . . . . Simply the fact that they had come from a school that had gotten a reputation by that time of taking composition very, very seriously—and we had a highly structured program, closely supervised and guided—that reputation got around. So it was not something that we were doing for them; it was just that Ohio State had a reputation of very solid, well supervised, well structured, well thought-out program that they were naturals when they went on to their jobs. And many of those who weren't hired as directors, in a couple of years, became directors of Freshman English programs. (Oct. 3, 1989)

The Freshman Composition program at Ohio State involved a three-quarter sequence, which had been established before Corbett's arrival. A minimum of eight papers were required to be written by students each quarter. Students studied expository writing in the first quarter and argumentative/persuasive
writing in the second quarter. They continued both kinds of writing in the third quarter, but the writing was based on readings in literature. Corbett insists that the third course was not one in literature, but as he suggests in "Literature and Composition: Allies or Rivals in the Classroom?" (1983), the line between them is easily crossed. In that essay, Corbett warns against using literary texts in the writing classroom, because it is so dangerously easy for those trained in literature to allow analyses of the models to become the focus of the course. Corbett's concern is with insuring that the writing process be taught, not a study of products.

Although Corbett had been hired on the basis of his expertise in rhetoric and composition, during the first five to seven years, he reports, he taught mainly eighteenth-century literature courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. He did teach every Fall Quarter a course for new teaching associates called "Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric." But Corbett says that this course was "very thin," because he felt compelled to cover all three areas. So, he spent only about three weeks on rhetoric. New TAs were brought in two weeks before classes began for training through colloquiums. Then they attended "Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric" three days a week during their first quarter. Given the amount to be covered in such a short time, Corbett relied entirely upon lectures to teach the course. The TA's were given writing assignments in the three subject areas of the course, but Corbett does not recall what those assignments were (July 23, 1990).

Corbett's status in his department strikingly differs from the commonly held views of the status of composition scholars and teachers in English
departments. In fact, Corbett's situation at Ohio State from the beginning might well have been very rare. Yet it is important to record these differences. As Corbett himself points out, we do a disservice to both literary and composition scholars by simply setting them in opposition ("Literature and Composition" 184). Corbett's own teaching career has been a mixture of teaching literature, writing, and the study of rhetoric and writing.

**Intellectual Commitments**

**The Revival of Rhetoric**

Classical rhetoric did not suddenly appear in the early 1960's, an impression that broader views of composition history often foster. Instead, the history of classical rhetoric's revival in English parallels the growth of composition studies as a field of study. Several lines of thought, each developing gradually over the decade, merged in the early 1960's to form the revived classical rhetoric. All were responding to the growing dissatisfaction of composition teachers, a dissatisfaction with their own teaching and with their status in the profession. Corbett writes in "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" (1970):

> When our knowledge and teaching of semantics, grammar, and literary criticism grew more secure and sophisticated, we began to realize that our know-how about composition was embarrassingly inadequate. We spent a good deal of our time in the classroom trying to improve our students' skill in writing, but we were painfully aware that despite all our efforts, many of our students still performed dismally when they took pen in hand to compose a piece of connected discourse. (1)

This discontent led to numerous pedagogical suggestions and reports of experiments in the pages of *CCC* and *College English*, the two voices of the
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Many of these responses focused on different rhetorical elements: what Corbett would later label "rhetorical norms" or "rhetorical reference points," the canons of classical rhetoric, and particular rhetorical techniques, often derived directly from the classical system. Although increasingly the term "rhetoric" was heard, and even "classical rhetoric," no pedagogical system for the teaching of writing emerged during the 1950s. Several movements such as the communications course movement, structural and later transformational-generative linguistics, semantics showed promise of taking hold but never did. There were general reactions, such as that during the 1940's and 1950's against the "progressive education" curriculum based on the educational philosophy of John Dewey. Critics of this curriculum, such as Mortimer Adler, contended that the progressives had neglected intelligent reading at every level of education, and they sought to re-introduce "the Great Books" to the English curriculum (Applebee 186-88). Mostly, however, articles on writing in the journals printed reports of pedagogical techniques that had no theoretical grounding. John Gerber, one of the founding fathers of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 1949, has accused the CCCC's of the 1950s of a "fragmentation of thought . . . , our failure to place our activities in broad contexts" ("Loomings," 10). Ironically, some of these "fragmented" suggestions found more fertile soil in the 1960s and 1970s. Corbett, for instance, in a brief article called "Do It Yourself," printed in CCC in 1961, called on writing teachers to practice writing themselves, a notion that Donald Murray would later suggest
and popularize. It was a technique—allowing students to read and judge the writing of the teacher—that Corbett used in his own writing classes.

The reasons for this "fragmentation of thought" during the 1950s are probably many and complicated, but it does seem clear that the revival of rhetoric in composition studies played an important role in providing theoretical consolidation that for many teachers justified certain pedagogical notions and strongly supported an approach to the teaching of writing that emphasized the process of composing more than simply the product. That rhetoric provided such an important contribution is pointed out in an early (1965) essay by Virginia Burke. "Rhetoric is a magic word these days," she writes, but she worries that it may be simply a passing craze in the field of composition. She calls for a more concerted effort "to restore rhetoric as the informing discipline in the practice of composition at all levels" (3). And not just the "mystique" of the term alone, she says, but "we should aim at reinterpretation and reconstruction [of ancient rhetoric]" (3).

Corbett dates the revival of rhetoric in composition studies from 1963 (Interview, Oct. 2, 1989), and that year was clearly a watershed in the history of the field of composition. He notes especially the 1963 CCCC convention in Los Angeles, where a number of workshops carried the word "rhetoric" in their titles and several important papers relating rhetoric to composition were given, notably Wayne Booth's "The Rhetorical Stance," Francis Christensen's "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," and Corbett's "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (Corbett, "Where Are the Snows of Yesteryear?" 345-46; Amsler, 46-47; Interview, Oct. 2, 1989). Each of these essays, along with several
others, was reprinted by editor Ken Macrorie in the Fall 1963 issue of CCC. According to Corbett's study of Keith Erickson's bibliography of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, more articles and books on that classical text appeared in 1963 than in all previous years (Amsler, 47).

While 1963 appears to have been the year when the revival of rhetoric truly took hold, the revival itself did not occur suddenly. Understanding the gradual revival of classical rhetoric among writing teachers and scholars helps to place Corbett's work within the context of the need for theoretical anchorings and for synthesizing and translating classical theory in order to make it accessible to those teachers and scholars. Historians differ on why rhetoric declined as a discipline and about how "dead" rhetoric actually was before it was revived. Yet it is clear that rhetoric no longer held the prominent position in education that it had held in ancient Rome--or in eighteenth century Britain and America for that matter.

The roots of rhetoric's revival in English studies actually can be found in Speech Communication. Corbett has described these origins in his 1985 essay, "The Cornell School of Rhetoric." As scholars and teachers in Speech were separating themselves from NCTE and English departments to form their own professional organization and their own departments, Cornell University's Department of Public Speaking, commonly referred to now as the Cornell School of Rhetoric, was established. The names of the faculty and students associated with that department read like a list of Who's Who in early twentieth-century Speech Communication: James Winans, Lane Cooper, Alexander M. Drummond, Harry Caplan, Herbert A. Wichelns, Everett Lee Hunt, and Hoyt
Hudson. In 1920, Hunt and Drummond organized "the first significant graduate seminar in classical rhetoric offered at a major American university in the twentieth century" ("The Cornell School of Rhetoric" 296). That seminar remained highly influential, and its members went on to teach their own seminars in rhetoric at various colleges and universities throughout the country. The department at Cornell eventually "slipped into total eclipse," but by then, the study of classical rhetoric had an established place in graduate Speech curricula and scholarship ("The Cornell School of Rhetoric" 301). The connection with departments of English did not come until the late 1940's with the introduction of the "Communications" movement in general education. Communications courses consisted of instruction in reading, speaking, and sometimes even listening as well as writing. As such, they tended to be taught by both English and Speech teachers, and so, while such courses were not universally offered, there was some cross-fertilization between the two disciplines at a number of universities and within CCCC. The "Communication" part of the title of the Conference on College Composition and Communication and its journal, CCC, refers to this movement and these courses.

The other important link between English and Speech from the mid 1950's on was Edward Corbett himself. Although he recalls not attending his first Speech Communication Association convention until after he moved to Ohio State in the mid-1960's, Corbett continued to read regularly in the Speech journals. The origins of his relationship with Speech Communication lie in his dissertation research:
I've been a member of the Speech Communication Association as long as I've been a member of MLA [the Modern Language Association]. It's because during those years when I was writing my dissertation, from '53 to '56, I was finding more articles in the speech journals than in the English journals, and so, very early on, I became a member, and I was a regular reader of the journals. (Oct. 2, 1989)

Corbett has been one of the few in English to continue this association. When he finally did begin attending Speech Communication Association meetings, he was almost alone among scholars in English to do so:

I still recall how strange I felt going to a speech meeting . . . . How strange it was. What I felt was the feeling I had when I first started to attend MLA meetings when I was a graduate student. I'd get into an elevator with these famous people, read their badges, and feel like I ought to genuflect. (July 23, 1990)

From the mid-1960's on, in addition, he kept up an on-going correspondence with Everett Lee Hunt, until Hunt's death. And he has twice been an associate editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. He was also a founding member of the interdisciplinary Rhetoric Society of America. Corbett believes that Ross Winterowd, Richard Young, Janice Lauer (all from English), and Karl Wallace of Speech were among the other founders. He recalls the Society's founding:

My memory is that it grew out of a group of people interested in rhetoric who gathered at conventions like NCTE and MLA and CCCC. At first, it involved most of the people in English who were interested in rhetoric, but we also tried to connect up with Speech people . . . . In those early days, we weren't a focal part of the program. What we did was gather in smoke-filled hotel rooms. Just got together and talked, and it was quite exciting, because we had the feeling and the ferment that was arising . . . . We made it clear in our constitution that there should be a representative on the executive board of people from Speech, Philosophy, and English as well as representative graduate students, so that as far as rhetoric goes, it really is the most interdisciplinary of all the professional organizations. I would say the membership always runs somewhere between 600 and 800. If you look at the membership list, it's a Who's Who in rhetoric in this country. It involves people from English, Philosophy, Speech, sometimes History, Classics . . . . And of course, it's bibliographies are worth the price of admission. (Oct. 9, 1989)
Yet, despite these connections, Corbett no longer remains optimistic about increasing the connections. In conversation, he states:

In my opinion, the people in English are making more overtures towards people in Speech and reading more of their work than people in Speech are reading our work, coming to our meetings, and so forth. People in English have more often crossed the line.... That's a great disappointment to me. And except for the Rhetoric Society of America.... there hasn't been much rapprochement between the two groups. Of the two, the Speech people have been more snooty than the people in English. (July 23, 1990)

The reviving of classical rhetoric in composition studies occurred a little later. Still, at least as early as 1950, the fundamental elements of classical rhetoric, particularly purpose and audience awareness as guiding principles, were being discussed in CCC. In the report of the "Objectives and Organization of the Composition Course" CCC Workshop of 1950, it was reported that the participants agreed that one of the objectives of the course should be to teach the student to use a style "which achieves the desired result in the way most appropriate to the occasion"—that is, style should be subordinated to purpose and context. In a 1951 CCC's article, Erwin R. Steinberg argues that "writing is best taught functionally, as a means of communication" (12).

The recognition of rhetoric per se—and indeed classical rhetoric per se—as an important component in composition instruction can be detected in the 1953 College English article "Looking for an Argument" by Manuel Bilsky, McCrea Hazlett, Robert E. Streeter, and Richard M. Weaver. The authors of this article argue for the teaching of the topos, a part of the Aristotelian invention system, in Freshman Composition classes. In a 1954 CCC article, "Historical Developments of the Concept of Rhetoric Properties," J. E. Congleton called upon teachers to reclaim rhetorical history and apply the percepts of classical
rhetoric to their writing instruction. In 1954 also, Henry W. Sams argued that research in rhetoric ought to begin with "the recovery and understanding of old ways of thought and expression," particularly that of rhetoric systematized by Aristotle, Cicero, and St. Augustine. In 1955, Edward Stone related composition to "Rhetoric" with a capital "R," noting that "the study of Rhetoric goes back to the medieval trivium--surely a lineage above reproach . . . . Unfortunately," he continued, "we English professors perform our duties in complete unawareness or obliviousness or neglect of this fact" (91-92).

Beginning in 1956, discussions of rhetoric appeared increasingly in reports of CCCC workshops and panels. The discussion of rhetoric in the 1956 Workshop "Current Conceptions of the Language Arts: Rhetoric, Grammar, Logic" focused on Aristotle's definition of rhetoric and its association with persuasion, which the members, including Daniel Fogarty, Francis Christensen, Kellogg Hunt, and John Hodges, determined was considered a "dirty word" at the time, and so they sought alternative definitions (157-58). Virginia Burke has called 1958 "the beginning of our official rediscovery of rhetoric" because of at least three CCCC workshops that year dedicated explicitly to rhetorical concerns (4). She recalls in particular the workshop on "The Advanced Course in Expository Writing," but there were also workshops on "Rhetorical Invention" and "The Rhetoric of the Paragraph." The 1959 Workshop on "Logic in the Composition/Communication Course," however, produced one of the most explicit discussions of the elements of classical rhetoric yet, setting logic as a possible subject for Freshman English against rhetoric. The discussion focused on rhetoric's recognition of audience and context, "a situation which provides a
frame of reference greater than that of logical content" (169). The participants of the workshop apparently agreed that "other aspects of expression—the ethical, emotional, persuasive aspects—had as much or more to do with the order and pattern of expression as had logic"—echoing the three persuasive appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) originally described by Aristotle.

Despite these discussions of rhetoric during the 1950s, the historian cannot claim that rhetoric took hold or that more than a few scholars in English departments showed interest in classical rhetoric. Looking more closely at these texts, we find that definitions of what constituted rhetoric varied considerably and that attitudes toward rhetoric were often contradictory. In 1954, for instance, linguist W. Nelson Francis in an article in CCC asserted that rhetoric had returned to respectability. Some textbooks, he wrote, "flaunt the recently disreputable term in their titles, and dare to speak of ‘a re-emphasis upon this ancient and once pre-eminent art’" (156). Yet, less than six months later, Edward Stone admonished "we English professors" for a neglect of classical rhetoric (91-92). If discussions of invention are compared, I believe that we can get a definite sense of the fragmentation of rhetorical definitions. Bilsky, et al., defined invention in strikingly classical terms as we might expect, since they are arguing for instruction in the use of the classical topoi. They define this canon of rhetoric as "the discovery of relevant supporting material" (211). Barriss Mills, who never uses the word "rhetoric" but whose discussion clearly implies it, equates invention with the "selection and rejection of material in any communication" (20). For these writers and others I haven’t cited from this period, as for Corbett later, invention is more than simply finding a subject to
write about. That is not the case all the way across the board, however. The 1958 CCCC Workshop specifically dedicated to "Rhetorical Invention," for instance, has the subtitle "Finding Good Subject Matter for Student Compositions," and invention to its participants apparently had little or no relation to classical invention. And in the 1959 CCCC Panel "Form as Communication," Josephine Miles defines invention as "finding a topic to write about" (164).

The fragmentation evident here was exacerbated and probably partially explained by uncompromising allegiances to various pedagogical movements: the communications course movement; the movement to include more instruction in logic in Freshman English; and the linguistics movement, just to name a few. While these movements sought to provide some guidance, they were never adopted on a widespread basis. Communications courses proved difficult to administer, demanding the cooperation of several disciplines and often several departments. Logic as subject matter for a composition course seemed too narrow. Linguistics, at least as it was typically defined at the time, also did not cover enough territory to provide full guidance in composing written texts. As early as 1954, Francis was pointing out this limitation of linguistics. He argued that linguistics and rhetoric are complementary systems, linguistics concerned with phonetics up through syntax, and rhetoric concerned with diction up through full communication (157-158). What was needed was a theoretical framework for the teaching of composition, and classical rhetoric provided just such a framework.
A Basic Assumption: Rhetorical Skills Can Be Taught

In discussions below, the details of such a framework and Corbett’s adaptations of it in his writings and thought will be presented. Here, I want to note an important educational assumption underlying the Aristotelian rhetorical system, an assumption that Corbett has accepted and makes explicit in some of his discussions, but one that is rarely discussed in histories with broader perspectives.

The system of Aristotelian classical rhetoric works on the assumption that rhetorical skills can be taught through more or less formal ways. In several essays, Corbett describes the three general categories of classical pedagogy: *ars* (precepts); *imitatio* (imitation); and *exercitatio* (practice) ("Isocrates’ Legacy: The Humanistic Strand in Classical Rhetoric"; "The Classical Paideia in Ancient Greek and Roman Schools" 286-87). In an unpublished talk, "Classical Rhetoric: the Basic Issues" (1988), he notes that classical rhetoricians differed sharply over the type of pedagogy each emphasized: "... whereas Aristotle emphasized precepts over imitation, Isocrates emphasized imitation over precepts." But, Corbett points out, "Neither Aristotle nor Isocrates denied that practice confirmed and refined a skill." In "The Classical Paideia" essay (1985), Corbett relates these three categories of pedagogy to contemporary writing instruction:

It is possible to classify the three main styles of pedagogy in composition today by noting which of these three means receives the primary emphasis. In some writing classes, the teacher relies heavily on dispensing the principles and techniques provided by the rhetoric textbook. In other writing classes, the teacher relies mainly on an anthology of essays, which the students are expected to read and analyze and then imitate in the themes they are assigned to write. In other writing classes, primarily those of the workshop type, the teacher engages the students in lots of writing, sometimes structured but often freewheeling, as in the writing of journals. (286-87)
The notion of natural ability certainly was not ignored by classical rhetoricians; Cicero in *De Oratore* has his principle spokesperson, Crassus, say that "natural talent is the chief contributor to the virtue of oratory" (I. 113). Clearly, however, most classical rhetoricians believed that any inherent skills needed improvement through instruction of some kind; Crassus goes on to concede "that good abilities may through instruction become better" (I. 115). The question is not the role natural ability plays in composition skill but the effectiveness of composition teaching, and the classical rhetoricians seem to have spoken with one voice about such effectiveness, when they simply didn't assume its truth. Corbett makes the same assumption, but he has clearly thought about the alternative:

> Like a good many teachers who have had their share of teaching composition to reluctant students, you always ask yourself, "Am I spinning my wheels? Can this be taught at all?" I certainly down through the years have asked myself that question, and I think that when you hit the bottom line, I still think that it can be taught, and that I'm going to go ahead and try to teach it, because I think that if I didn't believe that, I couldn't go on [teaching]; it would seem to me that even going through the motions in the classroom with this would be a farce really. And I do believe very firmly that the ancients taught, that one learned a skill through the combination of precepts, imitation, and practice; so I do believe that something can be taught by dispensing principles. I suppose that's the philosophy behind my whole pedagogy: that indeed some of us do learn it simply by practice, some of us learn it primarily by observing others, and then some learn and certainly improve it by paying attention to precepts and then practicing it, observing that in others, and then practicing it. (Oct. 9, 1989)

Corbett's firm commitment to the notion that writing can be taught is of course very evident in the many pedagogical suggestions he puts forth in his textbooks and essays. Corbett also notes that there are few of these suggestions that are not based on his own practice. His own pedagogy is a mixture of precepts, imitation, and practice, but practice is generally limited to the assigning of papers. He does not read early drafts of student papers, and he does not use
of papers. He does not read early drafts of student papers, and he does not use the workshop or conferencing approaches very much in his writing courses, although Corbett expresses great respect for each of these practices:

I've respected that whole movement towards doing more with the process of writing, but maybe it's because I'm an old dog that it's hard to teach new tricks to, that I haven't done much about it. But I have done some of it. (Oct. 17, 1989)

His commitment to pedagogy is never more evident than in the one great regret he has about his professional career:

The one award I never won—and the one I'll probably finish my career without getting—is the Best Teaching Award. To me that's the highest accolade. I've won Distinguished Professor and Distinguished Researcher awards, but they don't mean nearly as much to me as winning Best Teacher Award, because that's what it's all about. And to think that our profession, at least on the college level, has put the emphasis on our publication record rather than our distinction as teachers is just criminal to me. (Oct. 2, 1989)

Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student

As the dissatisfaction with the varied pedagogical suggestions and the feelings of failure in the composition classroom seemed to build to a head in the late 1950s and early 1960s, more and more composition scholars seemed to take interest in classical rhetoric. Clearly, by 1965, when the first edition of Corbett's Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student was issued by Oxford, rhetoric, often equated exclusively with classical rhetoric, was as Corbett has said "a hot item" in composition studies ("Rhetoric and Teachers of English," 375). And his own involvement in rhetoric's revival was growing. In 1961, he co-chaired a CCCC Workshop entitled "Rhetoric—the Neglected Art of the C/C [Composition and Communications] Course." Connors refers to this workshop as the first "to bring
rhetorical principles to the fore as a programmatic move" (Selected Essays, xvii). Discussion focused on a variety of topics, including among others the definition of rhetoric and the setting up of courses to emphasize rhetorical principles as opposed to courses concerned primarily with grammar and mechanics or literature. In December of 1964, a three-day seminar on the history of rhetoric was held in Denver and was reported on by Robert Gorrell at the 1965 CCCC convention and in CCC in 1965. Corbett attended that meeting and recalls that also in attendance were Karl Wallace, among others from Speech Communication, as well as Albert Kitzhaber, Wayne Booth, and Richard Young from English studies. In conversation, Corbett describes the importance the conference had for him:

It gave me an opportunity to see some of the people who were now beginning to coalesce and do some strong work in rhetoric ... I would say that there were about twelve people, and they were all invited. We just sat around for three days, talking about rhetoric. Many of them came with handouts and things on the work that they were doing. It was a very exciting conference. (Oct. 3, 1989)

In addition, at the 1964 Modern Language Association convention in New York, a special invitational conference on Rhetoric and Literature was held. And in May of 1965, UCLA played host to a three-day symposium on the History and Significance of Rhetoric.

Still, before 1965, Corbett's contribution to the revival of rhetoric remained minimal. After its publication, however, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student became the focus of and impetus for the classical rhetoric movement in composition studies. But on the train ride to Washington, D. C., for the 1961 CCCC convention, Corbett first broached the subject of a textbook based entirely on classical rhetoric with Dudley Bailey of the University of
Nebraska. That he discussed his project with Bailey at that time was exceedingly appropriate (whether we attribute it again to good fortune or this time to Corbett's knowledge of his audience). Dudley Bailey was himself interested in classical rhetoric, as Corbett well knew. Bailey would go on himself to publish in 1964 an important essay on reviving and reinventing the topoi. His attitude toward classical rhetoric paralleled Corbett's. He was associated, moreover, with a department which was about to make a serious attempt at curriculum reform, a reform that would involve the revival of rhetorical principles and would involve Ed Corbett.

In the spring of 1961, perhaps even as Corbett and Bailey talked, members of the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English were readying a proposal to organize a Curriculum Study Committee. Members of the English faculty at the University of Nebraska, including Committee chair Paul Olson, took leading roles in the Committee's work. They obtained a $10,000 grant from the Woods Charitable Fund to conduct a workshop in August. The result of that workshop was a 400-page guide to curriculum planning, entitled *A Curriculum for English*, published by the University of Nebraska Press. Their guide aroused national interest, leading to the designation of the University of Nebraska as the first of the Cooperative Research Program Curriculum Development Centers in English. Beginning in 1963, the Nebraska Center held summer institutes to provide inservice training for state teachers. In 1965, the expanded National Defense Education Act provided federal funding for these summer institutes (Shugrue 52-57). From the beginning, Corbett was one of the regular guest speakers, along with Francis Christensen. And rhetoric was a major focus of
these institutes: "It was not grammar and diagramming sentences and so forth. It was really getting us into the rhetoric of it" (Oct. 2, 1989).

When *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* came out in 1965, the University of Nebraska adopted it as their Freshman textbook. It was one of the largest adoptions of the book, resulting in a sale of over 5000 copies. Corbett recalls, "I got lots of encouragement and support from the people at Nebraska" (Oct. 2, 1989). But interest in the book went well beyond the borders of Nebraska. Three major publishers (Prentice-Hall, Holt Rinehart, and Oxford) bid for the right to publish *Classical Rhetoric*. Kenny Withers, now director of Southern Illinois University Press, was the English editor at Holt, and Paul O'Connell, who later edited Frank D'Angelo's *Conceptual Rhetoric*, was the English editor at Prentice-Hall. O'Connell many years later told Corbett that he'd recognized, even in manuscript, that *Classical Rhetoric* was going to be influential. Corbett chose to go with Oxford for a variety of reasons, one of them being that both Holt and Prentice-Hall had published competing textbooks with classically rhetorical orientations that preceded Corbett's: Richard Weaver's *Composition: A Course in Writing and Rhetoric*, published by Holt as early as 1957; and Richard Hughes and P. Albert Duhamel's *Rhetoric: Principles and Usage*, published by Prentice-Hall in 1962. Corbett has worked with three editors at Oxford: George Allen on the first edition, John Wright on the second, and William Sissler on the third.

Corbett's composing practices are methodical and were so for *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. By the time of President John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, he "had established a regime of writing two pages a day"
on the book (Oct. 2, 1989). And he began at what he believed would be the
beginning, his survey of the history of rhetoric, which ended up as an appendix:

One of the things I had done in my dissertation on Hugh Blair was to
write a survey of rhetoric, just to bring it up to the point where it
introduced Blair. And so I think maybe the first thing I composed—and it
was to be the first chapter of the book—was that survey which is now in
the book. It’s a little longer than I ended up, but when the book was
finally published, they suggested that they could put that off to the back,
and if people wanted to read it, they could. It wasn’t a necessary part.
And then I substituted [for that survey] an introduction and generally
introduced classical rhetoric and some of the key terms and some of the
key figures. Then I organized it according to the three canons of rhetoric
that certainly still applied in the written [rhetoric]. This was always
intended as a text for students in writing as against those used in speech
classes. (Oct. 4, 1989)

Part of the significance of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student
resides in the fact that it is a textbook. Despite the reservations about the
influence of textbooks expressed in Chapter I, a lengthy monograph outlining the
principles and system of classical rhetoric for writing teachers probably would
not have had as much influence; what was needed was a book that would bridge
rhetorical theory and composing practice. What distinguishes Classical Rhetoric
from previous textbooks is both its comprehensiveness and its more or less clean
break with what has been called "current-traditional rhetoric." Corbett was very
conscious of both these features, especially the latter:

It just struck me that even the very popular and very highly used rhetoric
texts—at least as I viewed them—were quite different from classical
rhetoric. It was not that I found them less effective necessarily; there was
just a different approach. It just seemed to me that they presented a less
intellectually rich system. Theirs was more of what [George] Kennedy
calls how-to books rather than a theoretical approach . . . . (Oct. 4, 1989)

A comparison of the Weaver and Hughes/Duhamel textbooks provides some
insight into the evolution in the application of classical rhetoric to composition
during this period and the reasons for Classical Rhetoric’s continuing influence.
Weaver's Composition is less explicitly tied to classical rhetoric than the other two texts, despite Berlin's passing claim that it is "a textbook influenced by classical rhetoric" (Rhetoric and Reality 118). In fact, a strong residual "current-traditionalism" informs Weaver's text. Weaver gives considerably less space to invention than either Hughes and Duhamel or Corbett and considerably more space to stylistic and mechanical matters. Invention is associated with "Finding a Subject," "Limiting a Subject," "Principles of Ordering," and "The Outline." Weaver thus collapses invention and arrangement into sixteen pages, while "The Sentence," "The Paragraph," and "Diction" get 76 pages, not to mention the 66-page "Concise Handbook of Grammar and Usage." Weaver also devotes the second chapter of his book to the four modes of discourse. His debt to classical rhetoricians reveals itself mainly in his section on argumentation as a discursive mode, where he discusses the "Relation of Logic to Rhetoric" and "The Topics" (120-48).

Hughes and Duhamel's Rhetoric: Principles and Usage is considerably more connected to classical rhetoric. They assume Aristotle's definition of rhetoric, "translated as 'the art of discovering all the possible means of persuasion on any subject whatsoever'" (4). The organization of the text, however, combines the classical and the current-traditional. Their approach is not simply "Aristotelian," as Berlin claims (Rhetoric and Reality 156). And there are significant differences between this text and those of the major classical rhetoricians, differences that Corbett's text does not reflect. Hughes and Duhamel rearrange the traditional presentation of the canons, devoting the first four chapters to "Organization" (arrangement), the second five to "Invention,"
and the final three to "Style." Moreover, within the first two umbrella "parts," the authors devote the specific chapters to the four modes of discourse, with description, narration, and exposition located under "Organization," and the whole of the "Invention" part being devoted entirely to the invention of persuasive arguments.

Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, on the other hand, is organized entirely on classical models. After the "Introduction," the text is divided into the three canons Corbett felt applied to written composition: invention or "Discovery of Arguments," "Arrangement of Material," and "Style." Corbett also includes his famous brief history of rhetoric or "Survey of Rhetoric" at the end, along with a substantial bibliography, including primary sources. References to classical rhetoricians, notably Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Hugh Blair, appear throughout the work. And there is no mention of the modes of discourse. Following Aristotle, who is clearly the primary inspiration for the work, the chapter on invention dominates the book (239 pages in the first edition, compared to 150 devoted to style and 110 devoted to arrangement). The same dominance continues in the 1971 and 1990 editions of the book.

While *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* provided an important break with the "current-traditionalism" that haunted composition textbooks since the nineteenth century, we would be wrong to think that Corbett himself had entirely made that break. His residual traditionalism is most evident in his defense of the modes as a legitimate taxonomy of discourse. His *Little Rhetoric* (1977), *Little Rhetoric and Handbook* (1977, 1982), and *Little Rhetoric and Handbook with Readings* (1983) are more traditional textbooks in this regard.
Although they are arranged by canons like *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, the elements within each canon involve a mixture of the classical and the modern, and the terminology is non-classical. Invention or "Discovery of Arguments" becomes, for instance, two chapters, "Fixing on a Subject" and "Finding Something to Say." Corbett also provides a full discussion of each of the four modes of discourse, and we cannot attribute this inclusion of the modes to the publisher's insistence. On the contrary, Corbett finds that although the modes are certainly not a perfect taxonomy of discourse, they do retain descriptive value:

I guess the reason I used those was that I recognized that they were still the prevailing way in which various texts were organized, and it seemed to me that you could still apply principles of classical rhetoric in talking about any of those modes. And I think, somewhere, I made the point that every classification leaks. If you talk about Aristotle's deliberative oratory, judicial oratory, or epideictic oratory, that's another way of classifying discourse, but even there you get leakage. I suppose that one of the things that may be harder to find with the Alexander Bain modes are pure examples. They're usually blends. In an argumentative piece, there may be a piece of description; there may be a little anecdote which would be narration. It's a viable and useful [classification of discourse], especially if you make the points that none of these categories are pure and that all of these classification systems leak and blend into one another. But it is a way of organizing a pedagogy perhaps. And so, I think those modes, which are largely attributed to Alexander Bain, have gotten a rather bad press. But I don't think it's all that bad, and I don't see that some of the other systems are any better or that they have got a more realistic way of classifying discourses. (Oct. 3, 1989 and Oct. 4, 1989)

Another major difference between *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* and the *Little Rhetoric*, but one that does not suggest traditionalism, involves invention heuristics that Corbett includes in each book. In *Classical Rhetoric*, Corbett presents only those directly traceable to classical rhetoricians, notably the classical *topoi*, which will be discussed more fully below. In the *Little*
Rhetoric, he provides descriptions of a variety of heuristics, including classical topoi but also some modern ones such as the adaptation of Kenneth Burke’s "pentad."

Certainly, with the publication of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, if not before, Edward P. J. Corbett was an acknowledged leader of the movement to apply the principles of classical rhetoric to the teaching of writing. Between 1963 and 1975, he gave numerous talks and published at least ten papers promoting the use of principles derived from classical rhetoric in composition instruction: "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (1963); "Rhetoric and Teachers of English" (1965); "Rhetoric in the Senior High School" (with Ruth Anderson, 1966); "What Is Being Revived?" (1967); "A New Look at Old Rhetoric" (1967); "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" (1967-1968); "The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric" (1971); "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" (1972); and "Rhetoric, Whether Goest Thou?" (1975). He has continued to discuss the relevancy of the classical rhetorical system to composition, but typically not with the wide scope of these earlier works.

**Corbett's Rhetoric**

As I noted earlier, Corbett does not see himself as a theorist, and we should not expect to find a developing theory of rhetoric. He is first of all a teacher, but he is a teacher who discovered not just a tool but a whole toolbox full of pedagogical instruments that he has tried out and wants to show to other teachers. The evolution of his work involves the identification of and elaboration on how teachers can use these pedagogical devices. The rhetorical
system itself is presented as a kind of pedagogical device. Yet, contrary to conventional notions about Corbett, he is not dogmatically tied to the use of the classical system, as close readings of his works reveal.

*Expanding the Province of Rhetoric.* Corbett has from the very beginning warned his readers that classical rhetoric is not a panacea for writing instruction ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric," 20; "Rhetoric and Teachers of English," 376). In fact, Corbett has promoted the expansion of rhetoric's province beyond the traditional boundaries typically ascribed to the classical system, and he has promoted the development of a "new rhetoric," something long called for but as yet unrealized.

Generally speaking, Corbett adheres to the classical definitions of rhetoric put forth by Aristotle and then later by Cicero. But as his career progressed into the 1970s, his definitions began to take on some of the vocabulary of Kenneth Burke, defying the easy classifications we have often made about Corbett. In "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" (1972), an essay remarkable for its progressive-sounding vocabulary (rhetoric "empowers a person to interact with other human being through the expenditure of words . . . in a variety of media" [198]), Corbett defines rhetoric as "the use of verbal symbols, either spoken or written, for the purpose of informing or persuading or moving an audience" (194).

Even in his earliest discussion of how classical rhetoric can inform composition, "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (1963), Corbett sought to expand the province of rhetoric beyond the classical argumentative or persuasive
kinds of discourse. In that essay, he argues that the precepts of classical rhetoric are applicable to expository, poetic, and descriptive modes as well as the argumentative (20). In "A New Look at Old Rhetoric" (1967), Corbett speaks of classical rhetoric's "concentration on argumentative discourse" as a limitation, but that the "desire to extend the province of rhetoric is implicitly... in Cicero's notion of the tripartite function of rhetoric: to teach (docere), to please (delectare), and to incite (movere)." Corbett concludes again that classical rhetoric "is applicable to all forms of prose" (69-70). This expansion of rhetoric's province suggests again the limitations of our typical view of Corbett and of classical rhetoric. Berlin's association of classical rhetoric with logical reasoning simply does not hold up, if we accept, along with Cicero and Corbett and many others, that rhetoric can function to "please" an audience, which requires not only a logical appeal but also ethical and emotional appeals. In fact, often these other appeals will dominate when rhetoric functions in this way.

Corbett, as a matter of fact, sees the possible expansion of rhetoric in two directions: in terms of its genre or forms and toward a recognition of rhetoric as a fundamental and inescapable human behavior. Even in Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Corbett refuses to be limited to the boundaries established by most classical rhetoricians, although he feels he must acknowledge those boundaries. There, he defines rhetoric by genre as "the art or the discipline that deals with the use of discourse, either spoken or written, to inform or persuade or move an audience, whether that audience is make up of a single person or a group of persons" (3). Corbett notes that this broad definition allows us to include "every kind of verbal expression," but "rhetoricians customarily have
excluded from this province such informal modes of speech as 'small talk,' jokes, greetings . . ., exclamations . . ., gossip, simple explanations or directions" (3).

While classically-oriented rhetoricians might exclude such informal forms, Corbett would not. In "What Is Being Revived?" (1967), for instance, he locates forms of multi-media (notably television and film, brainstorming sessions, symposia, panel discussions, interviews) within rhetoric's scope. He writes:

The rhetorics of the past have all been concerned with the composition of a discursive, uninterrupted monologue. What we seem to need now is a rhetoric to guide us in forming the mosaic structure of so much of our policy-setting, information-dispensing, attitude-forming discourse today . . .--in short, a rhetoric of the stop-and-go, give-and-take dialogue, or should we say the "polylogue"? (59)

Corbett sees a great need for this sort of expansion of rhetorical genres, because more and more we have been developing these dialogue forms, and he feels a connection exists between them and classical rhetoric:

I suppose what a good deal of this was getting back to was the dialogue form, the Platonic dialogue . . ., where there isn't somebody holding forth for a stretch . . ., but there was give-and-take, question and answer, and statement and response, so that in a way it was getting back to the dialogue, and always, of course, it was in the oral medium . . . It gets us back not only to the dialogue, I suppose, but something about the debate tradition that have always been a part of the rhetorical. Cicero does his rhetorical textbooks in dialogue form, and it is thought that Aristotle's first attempt at writing rhetoric was done in the dialogue form, in a text that has since been lost. Maybe in a sense we're coming back full circle. But it came into prominence with the growth of the electronic media: the radio and the television. And so we not only have the debates like the Nixon-Kennedy debates, but we have the talk show . . . So, I suppose, you might say it revived a form that existed for a long time; there's a rhetoric to it" (Oct. 11, 1989).

In fact, Corbett says, "I've been one of those making the claim all along that advertisers are exemplars of very effective rhetoric" (Oct. 10, 1989). In the third edition of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (1990), the first extended
example of rhetorical activity that he provides is an advertisement for Smith Corona Corporation, followed by a lengthy rhetorical analysis of it (4-9). In his writing classes, Corbett will often use advertising as a way of introducing students to rhetoric:

Both in freshman level composition classes and in advanced composition, either I'll bring in a piece of advertising from a magazine and I'll xerox it, and everybody will get a copy of it, or I will delegate the students to find an example of what they consider to be questionable advertising—that is, [advertising] making claims that are exaggerated or deceptive . . . , and then give them certain ways of how to proceed in exposing this. They have to be sure themselves of the facts, be able to support their claims that there is deception here and to back it up. I have used that in my classroom. (Oct. 12, 1989)

Not only has Corbett sought to extend the boundaries of rhetoric verbally, then, he has also promoted the inclusion of non-verbal symbol systems. In "Rhetoric, Whether Goest Thou?" (1975), Corbett writes, "I see no reason why much of the new theory [that contemporary rhetoricians] have developed could not be applied to the study of films, cartoons, comic strips, records, and advertising" (27). He even mentions Frank D'Angelo's rhetoric of graffiti and classroom exercises in rhetorical analysis of campaign buttons, bumper stickers, and t-shirt art. Rhetoric may even be extended to cover nonvisual systems. In "Rhetoric in Search of a Past, Present, and Future" (1971), Corbett suggests that even music is rhetorical: "It is not just music with an accompaniment of words that appeals to [young people today]; pure instrumental music speaks to them, too." In fact, he writes, "I am beginning to wonder now whether music does not also carry some ideational and ethical content that helps to move, to influence, to shape those who listen avidly to it" (173). In conversation, Corbett contends:
Just the sound system, it seems to me, it's saying something to us, and I believe that music is not just the emotional effect. It certainly has an emotional effect on us. But it seems to me that even music, which used to be the farthest away from an imitative, a mimetic art, is saying something to us. I just think it works in a different way. McLuhan, for instance, says even... in the sound medium as against silent reading, that has a different impact on us. Hearing persuasive techniques, we respond in slightly different ways than we do when we read it. So when you get something like television where you get both icons and the sound, that combination exerts a different kind of response. (Oct. 10, 1989)

Ironically, Corbett notes, the source of nonverbal, perhaps even nonvisual, rhetoric can be found in Aristotle. Aristotle, we recall, defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (W. Rhys Roberts' translation, 24). In conversation, Corbett says:

One of the curious things about that definition... is that there's no mention that this is an art connected with the expenditure of words. Now, how I account for that partly is that Aristotle is obviously talking, at least at the time, with his students, and it was obvious that it was the verbal part [he had in mind] that he didn't have to mention it. But [Kenneth] Burke comes along, and he talks about symbol systems... So music, for instance, can be one of the symbols or icons of various kinds, or demonstrations, the clenched fist, for instance, can say something to an audience, and it's of course one of the things that Marshall McLuhan is talking about... We have been responding to different kinds of symbols as a way of forming our attitudes or shaping our attitudes or being prompted to action and so forth. So I still think that a good deal of the principles of classical rhetoric would still apply to some of these other symbol systems... (Oct. 10, 1989)

In another interview session, Corbett speaks of the responsibility of twentieth-century rhetoricians to recognize non-verbal rhetoric:

In fact, that's one of the things that made me excited about Kenneth Burke and about Marshall McLuhan is that they also investigated other symbol systems. I think that as a rhetorician and especially somebody interested in rhetoric that's going on in the twentieth century, where so much of our influence to do things are from symbol systems other than words... I think that I'd be very receptive to extending this, broadening the scope of rhetoric to include other symbol systems. (Oct. 12, 1989)

At this point, however, I need to qualify this picture of Corbett's enthusiasm for rhetorical forms not typically associated with classical rhetoric.
In "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist" (1969), in a briefer summary, "The Rhetoric of Protest" (1974), and again in the Preface to the third edition of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (1990), Corbett describes the rhetoric of political action that developed during the 1960s mainly in response to the war in Vietnam. The differences he sees between this rhetoric and classical rhetoric are made clear. The rhetoric of the protest movement represented a more physical, less verbal, more emotional, non-conciliatory, even abrasive and coercive, and a more gregarious or collaborative or group rhetoric, less concerned with reasonable discourse than was classical rhetoric. While Corbett admits this rhetoric "was frequently effective in producing reforms or influencing attitudes" (Classical Rhetoric vii), he makes his preference for the more logical, more conciliatory, discursive rhetoric clear ("Rhetoric of Open Hand, Rhetoric of the Closed Fist" 111; "Rhetoric of Protest" 4). While he sympathized with demonstrators on the campus of Ohio State University at the time, he did not agree with demonstrations that obstructed formal education:

One of the things that [the protestors] were doing, one of the things that I regretted about the movement was that they were blocking the doors to classroom buildings . . . . And the students and faculty who wanted to come in had to fight their way into the classrooms. And there was tear gas dropped in the buildings. We had to vacate buildings; there were false fire alarms and so forth. So for me, it was the most uncomfortable time I've ever spent on a college campus. (Oct. 9, 1989)

While Corbett sympathized with the demonstrators' complaints, his commitment to the effectiveness of reasoning did not allow him at that time to see an equal effectiveness in the rhetoric of demonstrations.

We cannot attribute Corbett's bias for classical rhetoric over this protest rhetoric to political conservatism. Both he and his late wife, "Charlie," were
active in the civil rights movement while at Creighton, even before the riots in Alabama. And during the protest demonstrations at Ohio State, Corbett volunteered for the Green Ribbon Committee, which circulated faculty members around campus to assure students and demonstrators that they were being heard. It seems more likely that Corbett's commitment to formal education outweighed his political disagreements. Corbett attributes his discursive bias to a temperament developed as a youth and through his training in English studies to focus on language:

As a person associated with literature and with language, of course, I am temperamentally more attuned to, I feel more adept at being able to make judgments about, the uses of language to [influence]. (Oct. 12, 1989)

Still, temperamentally biased toward the old rhetoric or not, Corbett argues that theoretically and pedagogically, non-verbal rhetoric cannot be ignored. He says:

I was nervous about these new strategies. The abrasiveness of this new kind of rhetoric. It was because it was strange, and it was different from the kind of conciliatory, calm appeal to people [I was used to]. But the more that I saw it, and the more that I came to respect what these people were fighting for and seeing that they had to resort to other tactics in order to gain their point, I began to see that, yes, I'm glad for us that we're investigating these other symbol systems that are used to effect change. (Oct. 12, 1989)

This recognition of non-verbal rhetoric as a valid rhetoric, perhaps even one connected practically and historically to Aristotle, suggests a second definition of rhetoric: rhetoric as fundamental human behavior. Corbett never discusses this issue in depth, but in several works he remarks that rhetoric is unavoidable. In Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, he writes:

Rhetoric...is an inescapable activity in our lives. Every day, we either use rhetoric or are exposed to it. Everyone living in community with other people is inevitably a rhetorician. A parent constantly uses rhetoric
on a child; a teacher, on his or her students; a salesperson, on customers; a supervisor, on workers. (1990, 29; earlier editions expressed the same idea: 1965, 30-31; 1971, 40-41)

In "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline," he explains that we cannot escape rhetoric, because as human beings, we use symbols "to transmit information to others, to change the attitudes of others, or to prompt others to some kind of action or behavior" (194-95).

There is a certain irony in discussing the expansion of rhetoric beyond its classical boundaries in association with Corbett. Even at the time, it appears that he was considered a spokesperson for the classical model, not a representative of what was called the "New Rhetoric." Historians nevertheless misrepresent Corbett if they go too far in either direction. His major project was to awaken his audience, mainly teachers and scholars in composition, to the principles of rhetoric. That he could see these principles at work beyond the boundaries typically given to classical rhetoric did not alter the efficacy of those principles--and the principles were the main contribution that classical rhetoric could make to composition theory and practice.

In discussing the definitions of rhetoric above, a further and much more controversial view of rhetoric is suggested, but it is one that Corbett cannot fully embrace. In "A New Look at Old Rhetoric" (1967), Corbett argues that any so-called "new rhetoric" will consist "only" of "extensions, modifications, refinements" of classical rhetoric. In "Rhetoric in Search of a Past, Present, and Future" (1971), addressed to an audience of rhetoricians from a variety of disciplines, Corbett willingly agrees with the notion of expanding the rhetorical province to include non-monologic, non-verbal activities, but he criticizes the other speakers for ignoring the relevance of classical rhetoric to analyses of
these activities. He writes, "I am simply amazed at how much that is proposed as new is just Aristotle in new trappings or new terminology" (169). A little later, he continues in the same vein:

"I am sure that logical appeals, emotional appeals, and ethical appeals play a part in this kind of stop-and-go discourse, as they did in the monologuist discourse that rhetoric has traditionally been concerned with." (172)

In conversation about the variety of new ways of communicating developed as a result of our new technologies, Corbett says, "I still think that a good deal of the principles of classical rhetoric would still apply to some of these other symbol systems" (Oct. 10, 1989). The basic principles of classical rhetoric are here being suggested as a meta-rhetorical framework for all rhetorical systems.

Corbett notes the lack of linearity in some of these new systems as a basic difference they have with the traditional written and oral discourse described by classical rhetoric. Corbett argues that the instantaneity of their reception suggests "a different kind of impact" from that of written and most oral discourse (Oct. 10, 1989). This difference in impact on an audience, however, still allows for similarities in the process of composing the message. Corbett's real hesitation concerning any claims of classical rhetoric as a meta-rhetoric derives from suggestions that the principles of classical rhetoric might be universal. Asked if he believed that there was such a thing as a universal rhetoric, a set of rhetorical principles that would inform all local rhetorical systems, Corbett said categorically that "it was not something that [he] subscribed to" (Oct. 9, 1989). As evidence, he cites rhetorical activity of non-Western cultures. The Old Testament, he notes, relied on the authority given by the Deity; the Deity "gave the force to the words, not the words that the
particular author put together or his ethos" (Oct. 9, 1989). In oriental cultures, Corbett continues, the "emotional appeal is looked down upon and is considered not worthy of dignity" (Oct. 9, 1989). Arab cultures on the other hand place greater emphasis on emotional appeals than on ethical appeals (Oct. 17, 1989). Ironically, of course, while discussing rhetorical systems that seem to bring into question the classical Western principles of rhetoric, we nevertheless relied upon the vocabulary and concepts of classical rhetoric. In the case of Old Testament rhetoric, it is a question of redefinition: the Old Testament ethos is not the same as the traditional classical ethos. In the case of oriental and Arab rhetorics, it is a question of emphasis: the orientals de-emphasize pathos, while Arab cultures emphasize it.

Classical Rhetoric's Contributions to Composition. The fact that Corbett and I found it difficult to discuss rhetoric without using the vocabulary of the classical discipline suggests perhaps classical rhetoric's most important contribution to composition studies. It provided composition scholars, researchers, and teachers with a way of talking systematically about the composing process. It allowed us ways of discussing various aspects of writing in unfragmented ways. In accessing a fully developed theory, the study of composition also gained academic or intellectual respectability within some English departments.

Edward Corbett typically thinks of classical rhetoric in terms of the contributions it can make to composition instruction. At Ohio State, Corbett instituted his graduate-level course in rhetoric in addition to teaching the
composition course for TA’s that he inherited from Al Kuhn and Ed Robbins. In his essays, Corbett frequently discusses different contributions. The overarching concept connecting Corbett’s varied approaches to the subject is the awareness that a knowledge of classical rhetoric brings of writing as communication based on principles, not just on arbitrary decisions. In several essays, Corbett refers to the choices available to the writer as "the key concept of rhetoric" ("Rhetoric of the Open Hand, Rhetoric of the Closed Fist" 107). In "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" (1967-1968, 1970) and in Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works (1969), Corbett defines rhetoric as "the art that guides judicious choices of available means to effect a purpose" ("Relevance" 5; Analyses 93-94). In order, of course, to make rhetorical choices, the writer has to become aware of the available alternatives, and that awareness, Corbett says, represents basically what a study of classical rhetoric can provide the writer. He writes:

One of the most valuable lessons that we teachers of composition can learn from the ancient rhetoricians [is that] we must make the writing of themes a much more self-conscious process than perhaps we have made it in the past. ("The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" 7)

What is important for Corbett, then, is the process of composing, and for him, classical rhetoric focuses on that process. In conversation, he insists, "It just seemed to me right from the beginning that I saw classical rhetoric as a rhetoric of process" (Oct. 11, 1989). He identifies Aristotle as the source of his process-orientation; he categorically asserts that "Aristotelian rhetoric was a process rhetoric rather than a product rhetoric" (Oct. 4, 1989). In "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" (1972) and again in the Introduction to The Rhetoric and Poetics of Aristotle (1984), Corbett points out that Aristotelian rhetoric was purely
generative, that Aristotle reserved his discussion of the analyses of "texts" for his
*Poetics.* In conversation, he explains:

> There's more concentration on product in the *Poetics* than there is in the *Rhetoric.* You'd think that there would be more of the process there, because that term *poetics* comes from the Greek word "to make"... but he derives his principle by looking at products and seeing how they're put together. You get very, very little of that in the *Rhetoric.* He never looks at a composed speech. He'll make references to some of the great orations, but there's no analysis of products, so there's no much talk about a product, however, as there is in the *Poetics.* (Oct. 10, 1989)

"Aristotle does not designate persuasion as the end or function of rhetoric," Corbett recalls for us; "rather, the function of rhetoric is to observe or discover the potentially persuasive arguments (*pisteis*) in a particular case" (xv).

There have been attempts, especially recently in Knoblauch and Brannon's *Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing* (1984), to characterize classical rhetoric as simply "product-oriented," purely analytical, concerned primarily with stylistics, even mechanics. Corbett's memory and even the most informal study of his essays on the contributions of classical rhetoric to composition instruction belie such a view. In fact, a study of early discussions of writing as a process suggest a much closer connection with rhetoric than we might think. What Barriss Mills means by "process" in his seminal essay "Writing as Process" (1953), for instance, is not only a recognition that the composing process is more important than the composed product but also a recognition of purpose as the determining feature of any writing students should do. And he distinctly relates purpose to the three major canons of classical rhetoric, although he never uses the classical vocabulary or refers to classical rhetoric *per se.* He writes, "Selection and rejection of material in any communication" (what
we would call invention), "arrangement or organization," and "expression" (meaning style)—all are "subservient to purpose."

In some later writings, beginning with Gordon Rohman and Albert Wlecke's *Pre-Writing: The Construction and Application of Models for Concept Formation in Writing* (1964) and Rohman's "Pre-Writing: The Stages of Discovery in the Writing Process" (1965), process came to be associated with self-expressionist ends, which in the late 1950s and in the 1960s seemed to many to be at odds with rhetorical ends of communication. Rohman and Wlecke promoted journal writing and meditation techniques. As early as 1963, Corbett writes that "the cult of self-expression" has not lived up to its promoters' promises. He associates the application of classical rhetoric to composition with a more disciplined approach ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 20). This same sentiment can be found in the Preface to *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (1965, vii; 1971, xi). Corbett has since that time come to terms with self-expressionist writing at least as a pedagogical tool, viewing it as an invention technique, writing as discovery (Oct. 3, 1989). In fact, Corbett expresses surprise that he would even mention self-expressionism in his early work; he associates it more with later writers such as Peter Elbow. But, as Berlin has pointed out, the self-expressive movement in composition instruction can be traced back at least to the early twentieth century and probably has its roots in the Romantic movement of nineteenth century. What was meant by self-expression in the early sixties was a bit different from that of the late sixties and early seventies and since. Later expressionists have developed a more sophisticated view of pedagogy, although one of its most well known heuristic techniques, freewriting,
can be traced back to the early work of Ken Macrorie and a 1962 essay by S. I. Hayakawa (Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality* 147). What these early expressionists mostly advocated were the creation of an atmosphere amenable to a view of writing as art and more personal experience writing, as opposed to the writing of informative and argumentative essays. Corbett's view then--and now--was that "the writing of self-expression may be a good place to begin, because it gets the gears going":

I think that's always been one of the virtues of that approach, that it gets people spilling out words, and just that expenditure of words and the gaining of the facility and the confidence to do that prepares you then to do something more structured and more purposeful and more objective maybe and a little less personal. (Oct. 4, 1989)

In reconciling the expressionist and the rhetorical approaches, Corbett tries to be conciliatory, but the hierarchy is clear.

Once having established the informing transactional principle (that rhetoric is systematic communication) and its pedagogical corollary (that teaching this system requires teaching communication as a process), Corbett then focuses on specific contributions that classical rhetoric can make to writing pedagogy. Given his pedagogical bias, we should not be surprised to find that Corbett approaches the application of classical rhetoric to composition instruction in terms of the contributions that it can make to teaching. Corbett defines these contributions in several different ways: in terms of rhetorical norms or criteria or reference points for the student to use in making rhetorical choices; and in terms of "techniques" or the theoretical system itself, which informs the writing process and a knowledge of which will guide rhetorical choices.
Rhetorical Norms or Reference Points. The distinction that Corbett makes between rhetorical canons and rhetorical norms is one that previous historians have failed to note; yet it is one that distinguishes Corbett from earlier classical rhetoricians. The latter do not classify the "norms" of their system; they usually take them for granted. By making such a classification, Corbett highlights these elements, and this highlighting is important because these norms represent choices writers make during their composing processes. Thus, by highlighting them, Corbett further supports a view of classical rhetoric as a process.

The earliest discussion of rhetorical norms or reference points occurs in "Rhetoric in the Senior High School," an essay Corbett co-authored with Ruth Anderson, a senior high school teacher, and published in a not widely distributed journal issued by the State of Nebraska Department of Education. The authors claim that rhetoric can provide "a set of norms or criteria" for the student to make "the best choices from available matter and form" (26). These rhetorical norms can be found in four "reference points": (1) "the subject matter about which [the writer] is writing;" (2) "the kind of discourse" involved, which is "allied" to the purpose of the piece (to inform, to persuade, to move, or to entertain; (3) "the audience to whom the discourse is directed;" and (4) "the competencies and personality of the speaker or writer" (27). In "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" (1967-68, 1970), Corbett relates these reference points directly to classical rhetoric. He writes:

Ancient rhetoric established a number of reference-points to help the speaker or writer make judicious choices among the available strategies... When an author was faced with making a selection from among two or more available means, he made his decision by relating the available means to one or more of these reference-points. (6-7)
Of these four norms, Corbett discusses subject matter the least, but in "Rhetoric in Senior High School," he does note the wide-ranging effects a writer's choice of subject matter can have on a piece of discourse. He writes:

[Co]nsideration of subject matter will determine how much [a writer] needs to inform himself [or herself] about the matter before he [or she] can begin to write; will force [the writer] to determine what his [or her] attitude toward the subject matter is; will help [the writer] set the tone of [the] discourse; and will force [the writer] to delimit the subject to fit the limitations of time or space set for him [or her]. (27)

In "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition," Corbett associates "subject matter" with "assignment," and then provides the writing teacher with a couple of suggestions, notably to try letting students choose their own subjects.

In his own classes, Corbett rarely specified a particular topic for his students' compositions: "Most of the time, I specified a kind of form. Then they could plug in a topic of their choosing" (July 23, 1990). Forms would include genres like a letter to the editor or a proposal. Corbett says that on occasion he did assign subjects, but he justifies such assignments by noting that many writing situations outside of the classroom come with subjects assigned: "I wanted [students] to be aware that they wouldn't always have the choice [of a subject]" (July 23, 1990). However, Corbett did not typically specify subjects.

As we noted in Barriss Mills' essay "Writing as Process" (1953), purpose as a criteria for rhetorical choices gained acceptance without explicit reference to its classical sources. In fact, the first of many editions of James M. McCrimmon's highly popular Writing with a Purpose: A First Course in College Composition appeared in 1950. In his Preface, McCrimmon begins his textbook in the following way:
This book is written in the belief that the most useful approach to the problems of composition is through a serious concern with purpose. A clear grasp of his intention becomes the only criterion by which a writer can wisely choose between alternatives. These choices cannot intelligently be made apart from some frame of reference. The writer's knowledge of his purpose is that frame, and his decisions are wise or unwise as they are or are not appropriate to his purpose.

In "Rhetoric in Senior High School" (1966), Corbett relates purpose to the kind of discourse involved, and the kinds of discourse mentioned are the current-traditional four modes. Two of these modes clearly reflect separate purposes (exposition, to inform; argumentation, to persuade), but the other two modes tend to confuse purposes (description and narration, to move and to entertain). Purpose is more clearly described in "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" (1967-68, 1970). In that essay, Corbett associates purpose with the formulation of a thesis. Corbett suggests that student writers ought to formulate a thesis before drafting; it provides a goal, a way of deciding what goes into a piece of discourse, and it provides unity and coherence. Corbett made one of the few substantive changes between the 1965 and 1971 editions of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student in his presentation of thesis formulation. In 1965, Corbett agreed with the above suggestion of having a thesis before beginning drafting (34-38), but in 1971, he qualified that stance, allowing for drafting to become part of the discovery or invention process (45-49). "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" (1972) reveals some evolution in this respect, for in this essay, purpose as a reference point has evolved into "the means . . . to effect . . . purpose"--that is, the three appeals (logos, ethos, and pathos), thus moving us into a different set of contributions (202). This change reflects Corbett's greater
tendency to discuss elements of the three main canons of rhetoric instead of the
four rhetorical reference points as contributions of classical rhetoric in later
essays of the 1970s and 1980s.

Clearly, Corbett has not accepted post-structuralist dismissals of author
intentionality. For Corbett, writers certainly do have intentions when they write,
and moreover, these intentions can be identified through an analysis of the
writer's text. He points to writers' testimonies and our own experience as writers
and readers for support. Yet Corbett also recognizes that identifying such
intentions is not easy and that readers' responses can vary:

I think that there's no question that we read and we apprehend
differently, that various people reading the same thing or seeing the same
thing are going to get different things from it. And I agree that it's
because either one's powers of observation are keener or we're looking
for different things or our educations are different or our philosophy of
life is different. So I think that if that's what reader response is—that
"Yes, there is a meaning in the text, but various people are going to get
different meanings out of that text, I suppose I'd have to agree to a
degree. (July 9, 1990)

Corbett admits that he still subscribes to the New Critical notion that "there is a
meaning in the text, and our job as readers is to try to get at that meaning from
the signals that are presented in the work" (July 9, 1990). That is how he was
trained, Corbett explains--to believe that the task of the reader is to get at the
author's intentions, that authors do "encode some kind of meaning" in their texts.
Still, he is willing to concede that readers may take different meanings from a
single text (July 9, 1990).

One rhetorical norm that is never ignored by Corbett is the awareness of
audience. Even as early as "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (1963),
Corbett includes audience awareness in his list of three things that classical
rhetoric has to offer composition teaching (17). And almost any time that he mentions the awareness of audience as a contribution of classical rhetoric, he adds that it is "the chief determinant" or "the chief informing principle" or "the most important criteria guiding choices" ("Rhetoric in Senior High School" 27; "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 200; "New Look at Old Rhetoric" 67; "Relevance of Rhetoric to Composition" 12). Corbett finds that "the most serious deficiency in the way we have taught composition in the past has been our failure to specify an audience for the themes we assign" ("Relevance" 12). While audiences tend to be specified in real world writing, audiences are generally ignored in composition classrooms. But just an awareness alone that there is an audience is not enough; writers also need a knowledge of the particular audience to be addressed by each particular piece of discourse ("Enabling Discipline" 200-201). He lists the various features of an audience the writer needs to know: interests, temperament, educational level, and probably state of knowledge about the subject of the piece ("Relevance" 12).

Naturally, the importance of audience awareness means that there may be the need for some pedagogical changes. Corbett points out that students need time to assess their audiences. He suggests the writing teacher begin by specifying an audience for her students' essays, practice audience specification with the whole class, and then allow each student to specify her own audience on her own ("Relevance" 12-13). About his own teaching, Corbett says:

Always--and very early after I got into classical rhetoric--I would always in my assignments specify an audience. Then we would do some brainstorming about what is likely to be the disposition--what are the values--of that audience . . . . I don't think I ever gave an assignment where I didn't specify audience. (July 23, 1990)
His other suggestions for teaching audience awareness include role-playing and composing dialogues for fictional characters ("Enabling Discipline" 201).

Corbett cites his own success with such exercises in his own classrooms:

> I would have exercises where I would give [students] one topic and ask them to put on different hats, try out different perspectives, and attack it from different points of view or different voices. That was role-playing. Or I would give them a task—say, something like "If you were the father of these teenagers, how would you speak to them?" And then something like, "If you were a close friend, how would you talk to them?" (July 23, 1990)

Corbett notes that these exercises also help the student develop a sense of voice, a sense of what the classical rhetoricians called "ethos," which is the final reference point or rhetorical norm.

*Ethos* also represents an important aspect of invention, the first canon of the system of classical rhetoric. Corbett has written fairly extensively on invention. As I mentioned earlier, each edition of *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* is organized around the three major canons of rhetoric typically considered applicable to written discourse, and each edition devotes more pages to invention than to either of the other two canons discussed: arrangement and style. I haven’t the space here to fully describe Corbett’s discussion of each canon, for the canons are the very backbone of the classical system. However, within his discussions of the rhetorical canons, Corbett has made some of his major contributions to composition study and teaching.

*Rhetorical Canons.* Corbett’s emphasis on the rhetorical canons, especially through his use of them to structure his two major textbooks, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* and *The Little Rhetoric and Handbook*, can
mislead us into viewing his descriptions of them as simply rehashed classical descriptions. In fact, a closer reading of Corbett on the canons and discussing them with him in conversation reveal important differences. Corbett has undergone, in addition, an evolution from a traditional (though not necessarily classical) view of them as actual stages in the process to a more contemporary view of the canons as activities that writers and speakers engage in but not necessarily in any particular order. The change in formulation of a thesis sentence mentioned above indicates the evolution in Corbett's view of the rhetorical canons.

I. *Invention*. The evolution has been most evident in his discussion of invention. In the 1965 and 1971 editions of *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, Corbett begins his chapter on "Discovery of Arguments" (invention) with the sentence: "The beginning of all discourse is a subject" (1965, 34; 1971, 45). The notion of a subject is, of course, discourse-bound; that is, the writer begins knowing she is going to produce discourse. In the third edition of the text (1990), however, Corbett has made a brief but important change in the wording of the opening sentence: "The beginning of all discourse is a topic, a question, a problem, an issue" (32). This topic/question/problem/issue, he continues, may be said to be the subject of the discourse, but clearly, a topic and certainly a question or problem or issue can exist prior to any notions of discourse. The discussion that follows indicates Corbett's bias for the more traditional view of invention, but the change shows his recognition that invention (and rhetoric in general by implication) may not be discourse-bound.
In a more recent article, "The Changing Strategies of Argumentation from Ancient to Modern Times" (1986), Corbett shows how elements involved in argumentation, typically associated with invention, have evolved in history. The essay reveals Corbett's recognition that classical rhetoric was not a unified system, that there were major differences between Greek invention and Roman invention and the invention systems that followed. Corbett's discussion of invention in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* and elsewhere follows Greek rhetoric, dominated by Aristotle, more closely than any other rhetoric.

The classical invention system divides into two discussions: that of persuasion strategies (the three modes of appeal) and that of methods for developing matter to use in one's appeal (notably, what has come to be called "the topics"). A major contribution that Aristotle made to the study of rhetoric was his classification of three ways of effecting persuasion: the logical, ethical, and emotional appeals. The revival of classical rhetoric in the late 1950s and 1960s reintroduced this classification with appropriate applications to written composition. One major issue relating to the logical appeal was whether it involved simply the application of syllogistic logic, whether syllogistic logic had a place in the composition classroom. We may recall the 1956 CCCC session "Current Conceptions of the Language Arts: Rhetoric, Grammar, Logic" mentioned earlier. The report of this session concludes, "If logic means only the syllogism . . . , it cannot be of much use in teaching composition" (157).

Rejection of the syllogism in composition follows classical rhetoric's line: syllogistic logic does not deal with contingent matters and probabilities but with truth; contingencies are matters left up to rhetoricians. Aristotle introduces the
enthymeme as the rhetorical equivalent of the logical syllogism. Corbett explains the difference as follows:

[T]he essential difference is that the syllogism leads to a necessary conclusion from universally true premises but the enthymeme leads to a tentative conclusion from probable premises. In dealing with contingent human affairs, we cannot always discover or confirm what is the truth.... But frequently, in the interests of getting on with the business of life, we have to make decisions on the basis of uncertainties or probabilities. The function of rhetoric is to persuade, where it cannot convince, an audience. (Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 1990, 60).

Having remarked on Corbett's agreement with Aristotle that rhetoric's province is "contingent human affairs," we need to note that Corbett nevertheless encourages the teaching of logic to writing students and includes a full discussion of syllogistic logic in all three editions of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student.

Ethos, the persuasive appeal of the speaker's or writer's personal character, overlaps the canons and the rhetorical norms or reference points, as we mentioned previously, but Corbett usually speaks in greater detail about it as an aspect of invention, as part of the overall rhetorical system. Berlin, in "Contemporary Composition: Major Theories" (1982) and in Rhetoric and Reality (1987), claims that Corbett is primarily logos-oriented, that he is "committed to rationality," making only cursory concessions to emotional and ethical appeals. Such a characterization may well be true about Corbett's view of pathos, but a good case can be made that Corbett placed ethos on the same level of importance as logos. Understanding Corbett's views on the ethical appeal requires a close reading of his works and personal conversations with him, for he emits an ambivalence about the value of ethos in relation to logos.
In conversation, Corbett admits his bias for logic in practice in the works that Berlin analyzes (Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student and "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist"), but "ideologically," he says, logic is not primary. "Certainly that's not true of Aristotle, from whom I learned a great deal of this," Corbett says. "I think it's not true of Cicero and Quintilian. So if [Berlin] is saying that classical rhetoric in general concentrates on the logical, I think he can't back that up" (Oct. 11, 1989).

Corbett’s own teaching is indicative in this regard. He did not teach logic in most of his writing classes, never in a freshman class. But Corbett did regularly include discussions of ethos. In teaching the ethical appeal, Corbett relies upon analyses of model essays taken from a reader or from student papers:

You can do more with teaching ethos when you’re teaching critical reading. Very often where we’re using some essays as a model for some future writing assignment, one of the things that I always try to make an effort to get the students to analyze and appraise [in each essay] is what kind of voice, what kind of posture, what kind of persona, is there— in other words, to make them conscious of the voice, the personality, that is behind the words that we’re reading on the page, and then making them not only aware of that but also of the effect it is having on their acceptance of what is being said . . . . I think maybe that’s the way you have to teach ethos: to see how it is done in things that are already composed . . . . (Oct. 16, 1989)

He asserts, "Of all the things that I did in a writing course, that one [discussing the ethical appeal] may be the most fruitful" (July 23, 1990).

Corbett notes in several works that Aristotle "regarded the ethical appeal as the most potent of the three strategies of persuasion ("Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 204; see also Introduction to The Rhetoric and Poetics of Aristotle xvii and "The Ethical Dimensions of Rhetoric" 256). In conversation, Corbett explains:
The only reason [Aristotle] doesn't give as much attention in the *Rhetoric* to the ethical appeal is that he has treated it at great length mainly in the *Nicomachean Ethics* but also in his *Politics*, where he develops at great length the potency of the character of a speaker or writer, and so that although he wishes that the rational animal mankind could conduct all of their affairs and make their decisions in the parlance of reason, as a realist, he recognizes that they're also creatures of emotions and creatures of doubt in kind of a moral sense that makes these other appeals very potent. (Oct. 11, 1989)

In "The Ethical Dimensions of Rhetoric" (1984), an essay devoted entirely to a discussion of *ethos*, Corbett expresses his own belief:

* Ethos plays an increasingly vital role in the interrelationships of people in communications ranging from the local to the international and that as teachers we should make our students aware of this role. (257)

He concludes:

When we understand all that is implicit in Aristotle's notion of the ethical appeal, we can see why *ethos* could be the most potent means of persuasion. An author could be consummately skillful in appealing to the reason and the emotions of an audience, but if the audience did not trust the author, all the skill displayed in the appeals to reason and the emotions would go for naught. (259-60; also, "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 204).

Corbett's interest in *ethos* extends into a discussion of the elements of this appeal. Aristotle says an audience's trust is elicited when they perceive three particular features in a speaker. Lane Cooper translates these features as "intelligence, character, and good will," but Corbett retranslates them more specifically as "practical wisdom" (to guide a person in practical, everyday decisions), "virtue" (honesty and integrity), and "benevolence" (a genuine concern for the welfare of others) ("Ethical Dimensions of Rhetoric" 258-59).

In writing about *ethos*, Corbett also confronts two major issues: that of how *ethos* is exerted and that of morality. The former issue involves the question of whether *ethos* is exerted through the text alone or if it also consists of the
audience’s response to the speaker’s prior reputation. Corbett again follows Aristotle here, writing in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*:

> Some people, of course, already have a reputation familiar to an audience, and this reputation, if it is a good one, will favorably dispose an audience toward them, even before they utter a word. In the last analysis, however, it is the discourse itself that must establish or maintain the ethical appeal, for what a person says in any particular discourse could weaken or destroy any previously established reputation. (1990, 81)

The issue of morality in discussions of *ethos* manifests itself in Corbett’s writing in several ways. Historically, Aristotle’s seeming amorality has bothered many readers. Corbett, however, does not find Aristotle indifferent toward values at all. He provides a detailed defense of Aristotle in “The Ethical Dimensions of Rhetoric” (260-63). He cites the passage in Aristotle that says we need to learn to argue both sides of a question in order to better refute opponents’ arguments, not to advocate evil. He notes that Aristotle recognized that rhetoric could be put to evil uses, but that Aristotle did not, therefore, condone such uses. Rather, the abuse is attributed to the practitioner, not to the art itself. Corbett’s final argument for Aristotelian *ethos* is grounded in the feature of virtue, one of the constituents of the ethical appeal. Corbett writes:

> The people’s protection against an unscrupulous demagogue lies in the fact that the viciousness of such a person will eventually reveal itself and consequently the persuasive effectiveness of that person will be forever destroyed. (“Ethical Dimensions” 262)

Another manifestation of Corbett’s concern with the ethical in rhetoric can be found in his work on “doublespeak.” Corbett’s long involvement in the study of doublespeak is one often ignored by historians. Yet since 1974, he has been a member of the NCTE Committee on Public Doublespeak. Established in 1971, the committee each year issues the Orwell Award to the best book or
article about the responsible uses of language and the Doublespeak Award for
the example of the most flagrant misuse of language for purposes of deception
and concealment (Oct. 12, 1989). In "If I Speak with Forked Tongue . . . ."
(1976), Corbett distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable language
manipulation. "If we don't make some sharp discriminations about the kinds of
doublespeak we want to eradicate," Corbett writes, "we might very well put
ourselves out of business as teachers." He argues that context is the
distinguishing feature: "who is saying what to whom, under what conditions and
circumstances, with what intent and with what results?"

The need to understand context suggests some interesting pedagogical
problems. One way of developing a writer's sense of the context of her writing is
to teach the distinction between pose and posture, an original contribution of
Corbett's discussed in "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" (1972) and a
contribution that has been completely neglected by historians. Pose is "a stance
adopted because it may get you what you want," while posture is "a position
assumed because it represents your convictions" (205). In conversation, Corbett
problematises any easy reductions of this dichotomy. He notes that in everyday
life, we often have to balance pose and posture. Nor is pose always false or
misleading:

Sometimes, just to get on with other people, we have to assume different
kinds of roles, and it doesn't necessarily mean that we're insincere or
trying to deceive people . . . . I don't mean to suggest that pose is
something to be avoided whereas posture is the thing that we should
strive for, because I think there are times when we have to do both simply
because we're community animals and we live in communities and we
have to get along with people. (Oct. 12, 1989)
We daily assume different roles in our interactions with others. These shifts in *ethos* "are just a normal part of being a social animal" ("Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 205).

Corbett's pose/posture distinction does not simply repeat Wayne Booth's notion of "the rhetorical stance," although they both share the important feature of balance. The rhetorical stance balances the various possible emphases on the three traditional elements of any communication: communicator, subject, and audience. Corbett's pose/posture distinction, on the other hand, represents a more fundamental balance, that between personal convictions and rhetorical strategy, not only among rhetorical strategies. The fact that both Booth and Corbett believe that balance is of principal importance suggests a certain "realistic" (as opposed to "idealistic") political attitude that accepts compromise as inherent in human interactions. It also assumes that meaning can be communicated; to accept radical post-structuralist notions about the continuous play of meaning makes such balancing unnecessary, even absurd, acts.

Pedagogically, the pose/posture distinction provides several ways for student writers to learn about *ethos*. Students may analyze pieces of rhetoric (discourse, advertisements, etc.) to see if they can get a sense of how much is pose and how much is posture. By analyzing each other's writings, they may come to some insight into what aspects of their writing seem posed and what aspects seem genuine. And by considering pose and posture during their own inventions, students can gain experience in dealing with *ethos* as a powerful persuasive tool. As Corbett claims, consciousness of *ethos* teaches the student
more than simply an academic communication skill; "the rhetorician is enabling the student for 'real life' by engaging the student in role-playing" ("Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 205).

One very successful way that Corbett has found of teaching rhetoric—a way that focuses sharply on ethos—involves the use of advertising. Corbett explains:

Both in freshman level composition courses and in advanced composition, I will frequently bring in a piece of advertising, say, from a magazine that I've xeroxed, or I will delegate the students to find an example of what they consider to be questionable advertising—that is, advertising making claims that are exaggerated or deceptive. Then they write about it. And I give them certain ways of how to proceed in exposing [the deception]. They have to be sure themselves of the facts, to be able to support their claims that there is deception here and to back that up. I have used that in my classroom. (Oct. 12, 1989)

For students to be able to identify deceptive advertising, they must first of course know what deception is, and so the pose/posture distinction and attempts to teach it suggests the sticky educational problem of teaching values. Corbett sees such teaching as "inevitable" but also believes that there are distinctions to be made about the kinds of values we should introduce in writing classes:

I think that it's inevitable that [teachers] will try to inculcate certain virtues, certain sets of values, and I think the safe way to do it is to use those universal, secular virtues that everybody would agree with: honesty is better than dishonesty, and so forth. We don't get into those fine points of morality. For instance, I would never discuss in class or give my views about abortion. I have very strong feelings about abortion, and they're religious ones, and moral ones, but I think I would be breaking this barrier, if I were to give my religious views about abortion. That's not my place to be doing that in the classroom. (Oct. 12, 1989)

Like the teaching of ethos, the teaching of pathos, the emotional appeal, has been much neglected and for similar reasons. Rhetoric has gotten the reputation of being the art of flim-flam, and one way of deceiving an audience is
by playing on their emotions. Yet, like our suspicions of *ethos*, our suspicion of *pathos* has no historical basis in the teaching of rhetoric ("Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 202-3; "Ethical Dimensions" 265-66). Corbett insists:

> There is nothing necessarily reprehensible about being moved to action through our emotions; in fact, it is perfectly normal. Since it is our will ultimately that moves us to action and since the emotions have a powerful influence on the will, many of our actions are prompted by the stimulus of our emotions. When it is not pure emotion that prompts our will, it is a combination of reason and emotion. *(Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 1990, 86)*

Like *ethos*, recognition of the rhetorical power of the emotional appeal has pedagogical implications. In his own teaching, he reports that discussions of *pathos* were tied to analyses of model essays. He states:

> I tried to make students more conscious of the emotional appeal because the tendency, I'm sure, of English teachers in general and, I think, of the kind of teachers that we had, was to be suspicious of emotions. What I wanted students to see were the legitimate uses of emotions, because we are creatures of emotions as well as of intellect. *(July 23, 1990)*

Yet, I sense in Corbett's discussions of *pathos*, an uneasiness with teaching students about manipulating audience emotions. He makes two points about the pedagogical contributions of this concept. First, he points out:

> [P]art of the enabling process [of rhetoric] is making people aware that there are occasions when appeals to emotion are not only inappropriate but reprehensible .... We need to be made aware of the role that emotion plays in human relations generally and in the communication process particularly, to be made aware that the stirring of the appropriate emotion at the appropriate time can be a legitimate and an effective tactic for getting people to do something or to see something in a particular light .... *(Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline* 203-4)*

One of the main contributions, then, in learning about the emotional appeal is as an analytical tool for defensive purposes. We should notice above and in other discussions of *pathos* that Corbett feels it is best combined with reasoning. In *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, Corbett tells the reader at one point,
"[D]on't allow your heart to prompt you to do something that your reason or conscience would later regret" (1990, 94). Second, Corbett provides very little advice on how to teach students to appeal to the emotions. Unlike in his discussions of logos and ethos in "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline," in his section on pathos, he offers no techniques for, no real discussion on, how to teach it. In Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, he does show how description can evoke an emotional response, and he discusses "the use of emotion-laden words" (1990, 88-92). Corbett also quotes from Aristotle's analysis of the emotions (1990, 92-93). But he concludes that once students have become aware the possibility of choosing to appeal to the emotions, they should "'forget' about it"—that is, they should "be natural; let the nature of the subject matter, the occasion, or the audience elicit the appropriate kind and the right amount of emotional appeal" (1990, 93-94). Clearly, the emotional appeal for Corbett is subordinated to reasoning.

The second of the two areas of interest in invention has been the development of invention techniques or heuristics to use in the three different modes of appeal. Developing such heuristics has been a major project in composition studies since the 1950. A long list of formal and informal invention systems have been suggested over the years, but perhaps the most influential and controversial has been the classical system of the topoi or "the topics." And once again, understanding Corbett's conception of the topics requires the close reading of a case history approach.

Corbett defines the topics as "the method that classical rhetoricians devised to aid the speaker in discovering matter for the three modes of appeal."
To put it another way, the topics constituted a method of probing one's subject to discover possible ways of developing that subject" \((Classical\ \textit{Rhetoric}\ \textit{for\ the\ Modern\ Student},\ 1990,\ 24)\). What has bothered a number of scholars from Hugh Blair in the eighteenth century to Knoblauch and Brannon in 1984 has been the seeming artificiality of the topics. But in \textit{A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric} (1975), Frank D'Angelo put forth a compelling argument that the topics actually represent "symbols of abstract, underlying mental processes which take place in the brain" \((41-42)\). His description of the composing process reveals his tendency to view the topics not so much as an artificial heuristic as a model of how the mind works during composing. He does note that the topics can be used as an artificial invention system, but clearly, it is not his project in that book to promote them as such \((53)\).

Edward Corbett, on the other hand, given his pedagogical project, does mean to promote the topics as just such a heuristic system. Yet, he also wants to take into consideration the fact (and he does accept it as fact) that the topics are "based on the characteristic ways in which the human mind reasons or thinks" \(\text{"The \textit{Topoi}\ Revisited"} \ 47\). In several essays and in conversation, he echoes his statement in "A New Look at Old Rhetoric" (1967) that the topics are "a form of epistemology . . . . They accurately categorize the mental processes involved in any kind of inquiry" \((66)\). In another interview, he explains:

\begin{quote}
I have always maintained that the Aristotelian topics . . . really grew out of Aristotle's analyses of how the human mind operates. We make inquiries about what something is and that involves us in definition . . . . We compare it with something we know more familiarly and find similarities. All of the kinds are formalized systematic ways of approaching a subject in the natural way that lets the human mind operate. (Lunsford and Ede interview)
\end{quote}
In other words, we cannot escape the mental operations described by the topics. Corbett admits, for instance, that he does not consciously use the topics himself as a heuristic, but that he can find their use in analyses of his compositions, indicating that they do exist in the mind (Oct. 10, 1989).

I am not at all convinced that Corbett's view of the topics differs significantly from D'Angelo's. Compare Corbett's description above of the relationship between the topics and the mental operations they represent with D'Angelo's description of that same relationship. D'Angelo writes:

The conceptual theory of rhetoric... conceives of the topics as symbols of abstract, underlying mental processes which take place in the brain. In other words, these topics have a psychological reality. But since the brain is inaccessible to observation, we can only infer the characteristics of these underlying processes. We do this by constructing a model which depicts the structure of the components. (41-42)

I observe two differences between Corbett's and D'Angelo's conceptions of the topics. First, while D'Angelo emphasizes the theoretical aspect of the topics a model for certain mental processes, Corbett emphasizes the practical aspect of the topics as an invention heuristic for writers. Second, Corbett seems to make a close distinction between the conscious application of the topics called for by classical rhetoricians and the typically unconscious, "natural" use of the mental operations that result in manifestations available for analysis using the topics. For Corbett, the topics as a label applies to a conscious, formal approach to inquiry, but he recognizes that when a writer typically sits down to compose, she will use methods of inquiry that she is unconscious of. And he is not ready to say that those unconscious methods are the same as the conscious, formal system of the topics as heuristic. He is once again avoiding criticism that he is trying to read the writer's mind (something equivalent to New Criticism's admonitions
against the "intentional fallacy"). And yet, Corbett is not reducing the topics simply to their result on the page or to their content. They are, after all, a technical (he even finds them "mechanical") apparatus or "system" for invention ("New Look at Old Rhetoric" 66). But what ends up on the page (the product) is, as many composition scholars believe now, not the same as what the writer does to produce what's on the page (the process), and it is this distinction that Corbett is upholding. He is fairly explicit about the distinction in Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, when he writes:

> The human mind, of course, does think about particular things, but its constant tendency is to rise above the particulars and to abstract, to generalize, to classify, to analyze, and to synthesize. The topics represented the system that the classical rhetoricians built upon this tendency of the human mind. (1990, 95)

The question that comes to mind, of course, is, why then make students consciously use the topics? Corbett's answer is quite clear; the system works:

> What I am claiming about the usefulness of [the topics] is that for students who have not yet developed ways of generating ideas, I think that they can; in fact, I've had evidence of it in the classroom. The students seize on those [topics] as very helpful ways of generating ideas. (Oct. 10, 1989)

Of course, the topics have been only one invention heuristic suggested by composition scholars. In The Little Rhetoric and The Little Rhetoric and Handbook, Corbett takes up other heuristic techniques in addition to the topics: brainstorming, meditation, the journalistic formula, Burke's "pentad," topical questions, problem-solving, and even research activities and writing itself. And in his own writing classes, he teaches this variety of invention techniques and approaches: "The point I want to make is that some of these heuristic strategies are more congenial to certain personalities than others" (July 23, 1990).
Typically, his classroom procedure consisted of reading and discussing these strategies and perhaps finding evidence of them in model essays.

2. Arrangement. "Of all the canons of classical rhetoric," Corbett says of *dispositio* or arrangement, "that's the one that less has been done on" (Oct. 3, 1989). This lack of scholarly work on arrangement probably derives from the fact that "the processes of invention and disposition are not really as independent of one another as we may have suggested by giving them separate treatments" (*Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 1990, 300).

Corbett's discussion of arrangement emphasizes the planning aspect of it. He notes that it has a twofold nature. On the one hand, for many people, arrangement means only the parts of a piece of discourse. These parts vary in number among classical rhetoricians, but Corbett has settled on six as representative: introduction (*exordium*); statement of facts (*narratio*); proof of the case (*confirmatio*); refutation of opposing arguments (*refutatio*); and conclusion (*peroratio*). Knoblauch and Brannon argue that these parts have been used as a formulaic blueprint to which students have been made to adhere (30). Such may well be the case for some modern teachers and scholars, but it is not for the most prominent classical rhetoricians. Corbett writes in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*:

Classical rhetoric did deal with those parts and in that sequence; but it was concerned with something more. It was concerned with the strategic planning of the whole composition.

Quintilian hints at the more important concern of disposition when he says that it is to oratory what generalship is to war. It would be folly to hold a general to a fixed, predetermined disposition of his forces.
He must be left free to distribute his troops in the order and proportion best suited to cope with the situation in which he may find himself at any particular moment. (1990, 278-79)

In conversation, Corbett recalls that at the time he was writing *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, he sensed that textbooks of the period had lost what he saw as the most important aspect of the division of discourse into parts: the different functions that the parts serve. While the division may seem mechanical, he says, "what was distinctive about it was that [the classical rhetoricians] saw that you were doing different kinds of things, necessary things, in those parts" (Oct. 3, 1989). This notion of function differs dramatically from the arbitrary nature of other divisions suggested during the period: the notion of a beginning, middle, and end; and the notion of the five-paragraph theme. Both in "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (1963) and in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, Corbett asserts that there is no formula for arrangement. In conversation, he proposes that perhaps the most important use of the parts of a discourse is as a "kind of heuristic, because they suggest to the writer what needs to be done in those parts" (Oct. 3, 1989).

In "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (1963), Corbett notes that "instruction about these usual parts of a discourse was only one concern, and that a minor one, of dispositio" (18). More important to Cicero, for instance, and certainly to Corbett, is the selection and organization of material developed during invention, "the strategic planning of the whole composition" (*Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* 278-79). Writers must not only arrange their essays according to some broad outline of functional parts but also arrange matters according to the effect within each part (e.g., how much of a statement of facts is necessary; which arguments are strongest and how best to arrange
them in the confirmation). Corbett argues in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* that the concept of audience is an important influence on arrangement, especially in this second aspect of it (1990, 287-93). Again, there are no formulas for this kind of arrangement, but Corbett notes that classical rhetoric does offer "general principles to guide us in strategically adapting means to end" ("Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 18).

3. *Style.* In considering Edward Corbett's views on the third canon of rhetoric, style, we ought first to recall that it was through stylistic pedagogy that he was first introduced to classical rhetoric. He went searching for a solution to his pedagogical problem of how to teach the criticism of nonfiction prose, and he stumbled onto Hugh Blair's stylistic analyses of Addison. Corbett has been consciously writing about and teaching style probably longer, then, than he has been teaching the other canons of rhetoric. Two of his earliest major professional articles focused on style: "Hugh Blair as an Analyzer of English Prose Style" (1958) and the often reprinted "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style with a Demonstration Analysis of Swift's A Modest Proposal" (1965). The Blair essay simply presents examples of the rhetorician's method of sentence-by-sentence analysis of prose, which would seem to have more analytical than generative value. Corbett appears to recognize this, when he concludes that "if Blair's method proves to be inadequate for our purposes, it may serve at least to point the way to the development of an analytical technique that will supply a real need in our composition and literature classes" (12-13). "A Method of
Analyzing Prose Style," on the other hand, presents the system of stylistic analysis that Corbett has been promoting ever since with only a few additions.

For Corbett, style is more than simply ornamentation of thought. In one sense, it is as he defines it in "Teaching Style" (1986), "the choices that an author made from the lexical and syntactical resources of the language" (24). But Corbett makes it very clear in Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student that he thinks --and he believes that classical rhetoricians would think--that those stylistic choices involve more than simply supplying prior thoughts with verbal dressing. He cites Cardinal Newman's definition of style with favor: "Style is a thinking out into language" (1990, 380). Thus, style, like arrangement, is intimately connected with invention. Style is functional; "it is another of the 'available means of persuasion,' another of the means of arousing the appropriate emotional response in the audience, and of the means of establishing the proper ethical image" (1990, 381).

In the essay "Teaching Style" (1986), a paper that Corbett reads yearly at the summer conference run by Janice Lauer, now held at Purdue University, he distinguishes between two objectives of stylistic study, one analytical, the other generative: "to learn either how to analyze someone else's style or how to improve our own" (25). Stylistic analysis, typically thought of as an objective of the literary scholar, can be put to use, however, in the improvement of our own styles: by analyzing models for imitation and by analyzing one's own means of expression. Put another way, improvement of style involves two steps: analysis or "close study of the model to observe how its excellences followed the precepts of art" ("The Theory and Practice of Imitation" 182) and genesis, practice
producing one's own sentences. Taken all together, works on style from both analytical and generative perspectives, Corbett maintains, makes style the most written about canon: "Now whether it is motivated by an interest in rhetoric, it seems to me that there has been more activity on the stylistic side of rhetoric than on any other" (Oct. 16, 1989).

The popularity of Corbett's graduate-level seminar on style, which had been given regularly since its inception in 1983 until his retirement in 1990, provides evidence of the popularity of stylistics in general. Corbett recalls that the way that course came about and the interest it generated surprised him:

In the winter quarter of 1983, I was invited to be a visiting professor at the University of Houston. One of the things that they asked me to teach, in addition to teaching the freshman level course, was a graduate seminar in style. And so I said, "Well, I've never taught one, but I have some ideas about a course in style, and I'd very much like to teach it, because I have been very much interested in the subject." So I devised a course and taught it. Then while I was away, the graduate students here [at Ohio State] heard that I had gone off to Texas to teach this stylistics course, and they went to the graduate chair and said, "How come we let him go off to another school and teach neat things like style, and he's never taught it here?" So the graduate chair communicated [their complaint] to me. I didn't want to impose this course [on the department], because I didn't think anybody else would be interested in it. But apparently there is interest in it, and I said I'd be glad to teach it. When I came back, I offered that course. It was substantially the same course I had taught at Houston. I thought it was such a precious and private kind of interest. I didn't want to foist my interest on my graduate students. I had no idea that there was that much interest in it. There have always been a lot of students in it. (Oct. 16, 1989)

Corbett's seminar consisted of work in both analytical and generative stylistics but with an emphasis on the analytical. Students produced analyses of their own work and of the work of a writer of their own choosing, and they produced a paper on some other aspect of style, often a study of what others have said about the style of one writer.
Stylistic analysis involves two procedures: gathering data and interpreting data. The elements that the analyzer looks at include diction, sentence patterns, figures of speech, prose rhythms, and paragraphing. Limitations of space here won't allow us to detail what one would look for in each of these elements, but Corbett has provided just such detailed descriptions in "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style" (1965), "Teaching Style" (1986), and all three editions of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student.

Corbett has provided just as much detail in discussions of other methods that can be used to improve style. Clearly, for him personally and pedagogically, the most effective are a cluster of techniques he associates with one of the classical means of acquiring discourse skills, imitation. Imitation exercises were frequently performed by students in Corbett's stylistics seminar. In "The Theory and Practice of Imitation" (1971), Corbett traces the long history of imitation in the teaching of rhetoric. Classically, imitation exercises involved translation (typically from Greek to Latin and vice versa), paraphrasing, and exploring various ways of saying the same thing (Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 1990, 461). Corbett offers us several modern equivalents of classical imitation.

The first modern imitation exercise consists of copying verbatim passages of another writer in order to acquire a close look at the writer's stylistic choices. Typically, the writer will be one admired by the person doing the copying ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 18-19; "The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric" 185-86; "Teaching Style" 31; Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 1965, 465; 1971, 510; 1990, 475). Corbett's own practice of copying passages goes back to high school. There, he was introduced to the
exercise by one of those nameless English teachers who inspire us and then disappear into oblivion. Corbett was so intrigued by the exercise and felt that he learned so much from it that he continued to copy passages even after high school. He explains his practice of the exercise this way:

I copied hundreds, thousands, of words . . . . I would make it a regular practice every morning. I'd write one page. I never did more than one page, and I think I learned more about writing from that practice which I continued on my own than from any kind of exercise that I ever did, because what I found is that you can read with great intensity and care, read and reread, and so forth, and you would notice things. It's surprising how when those words come through the muscular effort of your pen, it's just amazing how many more things you notice. (Oct. 4, 1989)

Corbett also began having his own students copy passages as a stylistic exercise early in his teaching career at Creighton. He had no training in teaching composition and did not know at the time that he was using an exercise that had its roots in ancient Greece. Yet, even then, he noticed changes in his students' writing that he attributed to the copying:

What I used to do was require the students to submit one page of something they copied at the beginning of every class; occasionally, I'd read a couple of them aloud and ask students, "What did you notice about that?" But the great joy to me was when after an extended period, some of those neat phrasings or structures or ways of saying things began to appear in their papers. (Oct. 4, 1989)

Corbett relates a story concerning the success of this exercise that one can tell is dear to his heart:

I may have told you the story of the student who one time came to me and said, "You know, when I write that stuff, after a while, I forget that they are somebody else's words, and then, I'm writing it, and I get a real sense of the power here." When you get mastery of language what power you have. He said, "I forget that those are somebody else's words . . . ." It was one of the most exciting testimonies I ever had from students. (Oct. 4, 1989)
Even in his graduate-level stylistics seminar, Corbett required students to perform this copying exercise at the beginning of every class period. When I asked Corbett if such copying would have the same powerful effect if done with a computer, he emphatically replied, "Definitely not!" A good typist or keyboardist of any kind, he notes, will not pay attention to the words being typed; to do so, to become aware of what is being typed or keyed in, slows down the process, and the tendency is to speed up the process on the keyboard. The effect, Corbett contends, lies in the very muscular movement and the slow pace of the writing, allowing the mind to absorb the eccentricities of the writing, to in a very real sense imitate the original writing of the passage (July 9, 1990).

Another exercise in imitation consists of copying a passage but changing one element all the way through it in order to become more familiar with how that grammatical or mechanical element works. For instance, the student might change all past tense verbs into present tense. Other imitation exercises suggested by Corbett include composing sentences on the pattern of models and rewriting sentences in a variety of ways ("The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 18-19; "Teaching Style" 31).

A final exercise that Corbett associates with imitation is sentence-combining. In conversation, he calls it "a form of imitation" (Oct. 16, 1989), but he also notes that sentence-combining goes beyond imitation, tending "to move you toward more original kinds of exploitations of language or explorations of language possibilities" (Headnote to "Theory and Practice of Imitation" 178).

As noted earlier, the ancients classified three means of acquiring oratorical skills: precepts, imitation, and practice. What actually went on,
however, Corbett suspects, "was largely precepts, getting the rules and then observing others doing them" (Oct. 4, 1989). While the emphasis in much of Corbett's work is on stylistic analysis of models and imitation, he actually places more importance on practice. In *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, he writes that "it is only by writing that the student will learn how to write. One learns to write by writing" (1990, 382).

4. Memory and Delivery. In his work adapting classical rhetoric over the years, Corbett has not found the classical canons of memory and delivery to have much relevance to the study of written discourse, which is to say that he conformed to the general thought about the relevance of these canons at the time. It has only been recently that composition and rhetoric scholars have sought to revive and adapt these two canons. Corbett has certainly taken notice of this recent scholarship, but he has not included the two canons in his most recent edition of *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (1990). Still, he talks highly of Winifred Homer's adaptation of them in her textbook, *Rhetoric in the Classical Tradition* (1988).

In 1983, Robert Connors in "Actio: A Rhetoric of Manuscripts," successfully translated the canon of delivery, which had been strictly defined by classical rhetoricians as meaning oral delivery or elocution and gesturing, into choices a writer makes about format and neatness in appearance. Connors suggests that selections of typeface, ink, and paper quality as well as typography and layout represent rhetorical choices that correspond to those of oral delivery. More recently, Kathleen Welch in "Electrifying Classical Rhetoric: Ancient
Media, Modern Technology, and Contemporary Composition" (1990) has argued that the very medium in which one chooses to communicate (oral communication, film or videotape, or written document) and how one chooses to distribute something performed in a written medium (e.g., professional publication or faxing a document) are rhetorical choices. The now more prevalent technologies of "secondary orality," the video, photocopier, and computer technologies, change the way the communication is perceived as well as received (Welch 26). The facsimile machine and the computer modem, for instance, now make it possible for an audience to read a document within an amount of time that approaches simultaneity with its composition—that is, in an amount of time similar to that in which an audience of oratory experiences their communication.

The translation of *memoria* over to a category descriptive of an activity involved in a writing process has proven more problematic. Horner proposes that we translate this classical canon as repositories of information, including then among its modern elements not only the human memory but also libraries. Such translation, of course, has no historical basis, since both the ancient Greeks and the Romans had much more specific notions of what they meant by *memoria*, relating it particularly to human memory processes.

Welch in "The Platonic Paradox" (1988) has argued for the centrality of memory to the composing process, and there is no denying that memory processes function in highly significant ways when we write. For instance, Welch is absolutely correct in noting that the recursive nature of composing demands our recognition of the involvement of memory composing processes (Welch 5-6).
And, as Welch observes, "Perhaps the most important connection that memory as a canon of rhetoric gives us is its explicit pointing to psychology," and Welch notes the link between memory and creativity (7). In writing, she contends, memory remains important, but it "changes emphasis, particularly in the formation of consciousness as it relates to technology" (7).

The problem with identifying memory as a "canon" of written rhetoric is indicated in Welch's assertion that memory is not just a section of the rhetorical system but actually acts, quoting F. A. Yates from *The Art of Memory*, as "the groundwork of the whole" (8). That is, memory as a psychological process--not just as memorization which Welch and others have argued is an oversimplification of the classical definition--functions within or behind each of the other three "canons" or categories of activities. As Horner points out, in order to "invent," the writer must have a store of knowledge, whether that store is external (in a library) or internal (in one's memory)--and clearly at least some of that external knowledge must be internalized for the writer to introduce it into the writing process. The same sort of knowledge is necessary in arrangement and stylistic activities. In order to arrange a piece of writing, the writer must also keep in mind what has been "invented." And memory functions as a definitely preconscious activity as writers produce writing in their own particular styles. In both cases, arrangement and style, an at least somewhat internalized knowledge of the conventions of the writing genre being written is necessary. The very culture of the writer plays upon the writing through her memory functions. By identifying memory as a rhetorical canon, the classical rhetoricians may have been underlining its importance to the composing process,
but they were also suggesting that it can be discussed separately from the other canons, thus, allowing for its degeneration into simply memorization again. So fundamental is memory to all activities of the writing process that any description of its rhetorical function requires full descriptions of these other "canonical" activities. Any discussion of memory's role in written rhetoric cannot be separated from other canons of rhetoric in a way that captures the complexity of its involvement.

In sum, then, memory may best be thought of not as a canon of rhetoric—that is, not as a class of activities involved in composing—but as a necessary neurological function that informs each canon. As the next two chapters of this dissertation will indicate, it is at this more detailed level of rhetoric, the level where human psychology enters, that memory is best described.

**Classical Rhetoric as Epistemic**

In the previous sections of this chapter, I have sought to describe Edward Corbett's application of classical rhetoric to modern composition studies. As I have sought to show, in some respects, Corbett follows the classical system closely; in other respects, he has had to modify the system somewhat. Having described the system that Corbett offers, I am now in a position to evaluate some more recent interpretations of the revival of classical rhetoric. Clearly, Knoblauch and Brannon's description of classical rhetoric as mechanical and imaginatively stifling has no credence. James Berlin's description, on the other hand, deserves closer study.
Berlin's project has been to classify various modern rhetorics informing the study and teaching of writing. His taxonomy has been described in several essays, dating back to 1982, and most notably in his book, *Rhetoric and Reality* (1987). Berlin divides these rhetorical systems into three major categories, based on underlying ideologies: Objective, Subjective, and Transactional. Classical or Neo-classical rhetoric falls under Berlin's Transactional heading, those rhetorics that are clearly given preference in the Berlin hierarchy. But that category has its own hierarchy, too, with classical rhetoric subordinated to what Berlin calls "social epistemic rhetoric."

Transactional rhetorics have in common the view of reality as a product of the interaction of all rhetorical elements involved in the process (material reality, writer, language, audience). According to Berlin, the most striking feature of the classical rhetoric movement is its commitment to rationality. Logic, Berlin claims, dominates the classical system. *Ethos* and *pathos* are considered subservient to *logos*; participants in the communication are portrayed as entirely rational beings responding rationally to rational arguments; logic leads inexorably to truth, and that truth exists prior to the transaction; and language, thus, becomes simply a vehicle for the message. On the other hand, in Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric, knowledge does not exist prior to the transaction but is generated by the transaction, and language conditions the knowledge acquired through the transaction.

Yet, as I hope we have seen in our study of Corbett, *logos* does not dominate the whole classical system, although in some essays, he does make explicit his preference for the logical appeal, especially over emotional appeals.
By temperament—and upbringing, no doubt—Corbett is biased toward logical reasoning, but he also clearly recognizes the power of the ethical appeal. He recognizes the contributions that the emotional appeal can make to the rhetorical transaction, too, but he is distrustful of it in the classroom. The workings of any system or technique in the classroom is the measure of its worth to Corbett. Logic, then, plays a subservient role to the overall rhetoric. Rhetoric, Corbett has said on several occasions, systematically engages the whole person, the ethical and the emotional as well as the rational being (see, for instance, "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" 16, and "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline" 207).

As for the epistemological value of rhetoric, that issue is complicated for Corbett. His view of epistemology follows Locke. "A good deal of what we learn," he says, "comes through our senses and not through the reasoning process . . . . It's a reflection on the impingement of the world on us that adds to our stock of knowledge" (Oct. 11, 1989). Yet Corbett's extensions of rhetoric's province, noted earlier, suggests that this acquisition of knowledge through the senses may itself have some rhetorical aspect, especially if we emphasize that this acquisition comes through an "impingement of the world," suggesting the involvement of others in social transactions. Clearly, for Corbett rhetorical transactions are "empowering" epistemologically (see "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline"), and Corbett believes strongly in the role of language in knowing. "In a sense," Corbett says, "you don't know something, you haven't grasped it, until you have verbalized it" (Oct. 11, 1989).
Yet there is a key difference between Corbett and Berlin on rhetoric's epistemic nature, which Berlin has pointed out. For Berlin and his preferred "social-epistemic rhetoric," knowledge derives from the rhetorical transaction itself; it does not exist prior to that transaction. For Corbett, however, there is an objective reality existing outside of the rhetorical transaction:

I've always believed—and maybe because of my Catholic upbringing—that there is a Truth out there, there is an objective reality, and that one of my functions as a reasoning human being is to open my senses and my mind to what's out there and discover what is truth. (Oct. 11, 1989)

The rhetorical transaction for Corbett provides one medium by which human beings may approach that objective reality.

It is important at this point that we understand some fine distinctions that Corbett makes. Corbett believes strongly in the existence of objective reality, but he is not certain that rhetoric can provide direct access to that reality. And so Corbett concedes the probability of multiple versions of that reality. When I suggested that he and I label this a pluralistic attitude on his part, he agreed: "I would certainly believe that. There is more than one avenue to arrive at that truth" (Oct. 11, 1989). Corbett cites the analogy of witnessing a car accident. He has no doubt that ten witnesses will produce ten different accounts of the accident, but he asserts that the multiplicity of versions of the accident does not mean that the accident did not happen and did not happen in a fixed way (July 9, 1990). For Corbett, then, rhetoric is not the only way of knowing, and rhetoric does not in-and-of-itself produce truth; it produces versions of reality, approaches to some absolute truth that may or may not be fully accessible. As will be seen in the next chapter on Janet Emig, such a view of epistemology accords with the philosophy that has come to be known as "constructivism."
Corbett makes no mention of such a philosophy, and it is enough to observe here his acceptance of a pluralism.

Professional Commitments

Although Edward Corbett has been actively involved in professional organizations since the late 1940s, attending as he did some of the earliest conventions of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), his professional activities blossomed during the 1970s. He chaired the CCCC's program in Seattle in 1970 and was Chair of CCCC itself in 1971. He became a member of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1971 also. He has been a member of several NCTE and MLA committees and commissions, on the editorial boards of a number of professional journals, and been chairman of the Rhetoric Society of America from 1973 through 1977. And finally, between 1974 and 1979, he was editor of *College Composition and Communication (CCC)*.

CCC Editorship

Although the journal had an editorial board, *CCC* was not a refereed journal under Corbett. The nominal board was there simply to give the illusion of a refereed journal; Corbett, in fact, made all the decisions himself, sending out no more than half a dozen articles for an opinion in his whole five years as editor. As editor, Corbett oversaw the continued expansion not only in length but also in depth of the journal. For instance, he published Mina Shaughnessy's first article in an NCTE journal, "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing."
and he published Janet Emig's famous "Writing as a Mode of Learning" essay. And the list of important composition scholars and researchers whom he published goes on: Jim Corder, Richard L. Graves, Ann Berthoff, Donald Murray, Maxine Hairston, Robert Gorrell, Frank D'Angelo, Lee Odell, etc. He also published the special issue in 1974 of the controversial CCCC resolution "Students' Right to Their Own Language."

*Recovering the History of Rhetoric*

Corbett has also continued to give numerous talks around the country. And while his concern for pedagogy continues to manifest itself, many of his more recent papers have focused primarily on historical topics. History, of course, has always played an important role in promoting the application of classical rhetoric to composition instruction, but in these cases, the pedagogical is often subordinated, if not peripheral.

The most pedagogically oriented of these historical essays is also the earliest, "Some Rhetorical Lessons from John Henry Newman" (1980). As a contribution to rhetorical history and theory, Newman's *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, published in 1870, deserves recognition, but Corbett makes it clear that he believes any rhetoric text ought to provide "practical advice" (215). The chief pedagogical value of Newman's rhetoric is its awareness of audience psychology and its implication "that some of the ways in which our students argue in their papers may not be all illogical or non-logical as we have supposed" (221).
The pedagogical implications that Corbett seeks to derive from "John Locke's Contributions to Rhetoric" (1981) seem even more strained. While Locke remains historically significant and as provocative as his epistemology is, we cannot escape the fact that this epistemology is largely obsolete. Yet, the essay remains valuable for its historical insight. Corbett sends us back to Locke, if not for pedagogical knowledge, certainly for historical knowledge, for as Corbett points out several times in the essay, Locke is the source for a number of our current notions about composition and composition pedagogy.

Several essays expand our knowledge about classical rhetoric. "Isocrates' Legacy: The Humanistic Strand in Classical Rhetoric" (1985) rewrites some of our beliefs about the dominance of Aristotelian rhetoric. Corbett admits his earlier belief that Cicero and Quintilian were the sources of humanistic education. But now he has come to realize "that Cicero and Quintilian--and many subsequent rhetoricians--had their intellectual roots in the Greek sophistic tradition, best epitomized by that eminently successful teacher of rhetoric, Isocrates" (268-69). "The Classical Paideia in the Ancient Greek and Roman Schools" (1985) describes the educational system and rhetorical training of these ancient cultures, and "Classical Rhetoric: The Basic Issues" (1988) discusses the controversies over rhetoric that have survived since the classical period: the issue of rhetoric's relationship with philosophy; the issue of which method is best to use in the training of rhetoricians (precepts, imitation, or practice); the issue of the morality of rhetoric and whether moral teaching ought to be included in rhetorical training; and finally, the issue of the proper provinces of rhetoric and poetics. Corbett suggests that these issues will continue to plague rhetoric in the
future, although he characterizes them as evidence of rhetoric's vitality, but he
comes to no conclusions about these issues. "The Cornell School of Rhetoric"
(1985) seeks "to acquaint the people in English who are now interested in
rhetoric with where the impetus came from," the Speech Communication
scholars who made up the faculty at Cornell's Speech Communication
Department (Headnote, 289). The title of Corbett's essay "The Changing
Strategies of Argumentation from Ancient to Modern Times" (1986) charts
transformations in the way people have argued down through the ages and is in a
sense a brief history of rhetoric. And his answer to the "How Did Rhetoric
Acquire the Reputation of Being the Art of Flim-Flam?" (1987) is entirely
historical. The point here is not to claim that Corbett's interest in pedagogy has
waned. Clearly, it has not. He has taken a strong interest in technical writing
over the last ten years, for instance; and he has in the works a small textbook on
argumentation for Macmillan.

Conclusion

Edward P. J. Corbett's attitude toward composition studies doesn't seem
to have changed much over the years. He began a teacher desperate to discover
a way to teach something he had not been trained to teach but optimistic enough
to believe he could find a way of doing just that. This optimism seems to have
never left him.
Is Composition Decomposing?

In 1977, he wrote a paper called "Is Composition Decomposing?" The essay was a response to several alarms that had been sounded in CCC, which Corbett was editing at the time. Ron Smith, in a study commissioned by editor Corbett, had found dramatic changes between 1967 and 1974 in requirements of the Freshman English course. Regina Hoover, in the same issue of CCC, reported on a CCCC panel entitled "The Demise of Freshman English." She assumes the death as fact and calls for voluntary Freshman English courses. And Patrick Shaw, in "Freshman English: To Compose or Decompose, That Is the Question," also in that same issue of CCC, sees a national trend toward leniency as the cause for calls to drop the Freshman English course. Corbett's response was twofold. First, he argues that doomsday reports that "Johnny can't read" are overly simplistic, failing to account for huge enrollment increases, varying definitions of what is meant by literacy, and greater emphases on tests of questionable value. He writes:

After more than a quarter of a century of reading student papers, I have found that the percentages of good writers, of competent but dull writers, and of barely literate writers have remained remarkably steady. (27)

And, Corbett goes on, if we mean by "composition" a knowledge about the composing process and how to teach writing, then the status of the field looks even brighter. He notes at least six developments suggesting that this kind of "composition" is clearly not "decomposing":

1. through five years (1965-1970) of National Defense Education Act (NDEA) summer institutes, thousands of secondary school English teachers were exposed to theories of rhetoric and composition pedagogy;
2. we have seen numerous innovative new textbooks by James Moffett, James Miller, Peter Elbow, Donald Hall, and Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike;

3. we have seen provocative new theoretical works by Francis Christensen, James Kinneavy, James Moffett, and Frank D'Angelo;

4. new studies from outside the discipline have been imported, providing new knowledge for the field, works by Bruner, Piaget, Vygotsky, Polanyi, and Kuhn;

5. indications are (one need only read *Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays*, edited by Gary Tate) that recent research in composition is exploding (Corbett points out and details Janet Emig's *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, James Britton's *The Development of Writing Abilities* (11-18), and Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*);

6. we have seen increases in the formal training of composition instructors.

This same optimism about the status and future of composition studies can be seen in other more recent essays by Corbett. At the end of his recent retrospective of the field, "Where Are the Snows of Yesteryear? Has Rhetoric Come a Long Way in the Last Twenty-Five Years?" (1987), he dismisses any feelings of nostalgia, having found too much sun "beaming benevolently on rhetoric" at the present (355). In conversation, Edward Corbett speaks only of his past contributions when questioned about them; at the end of our set of interviews, he expresses no regrets in his career and no nostalgia but talks about his plans for the future and about "the bright young people who have entered the profession":
Some of the best and the brightest now of our students are going into this area, and that more than any other thing makes me optimistic about the future of composition and rhetoric studies . . . . And they find it intellectually exciting and want to make a contribution to it . . . . When I go to those conventions and hear these young people, I say, "My God, they're just quantum miles ahead of where we were at that stage." It's just so encouraging to see that. (Oct. 17, 1989)

Corbett's Contributions

Corbett's admiration for recent researchers and scholars in composition and rhetoric is ironic, since in several ways he made their work possible. Corbett's contributions fall into three broad categories. First, he has led the way for the acceptance of composition studies by English departments. By associating writing instruction with a tradition going back to the ancient Greeks and involving such figures as Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, and Hugh Blair, Corbett has provided composition studies with respectability as intellectual endeavors. Corbett's strong literary background provided him with connections he could make between rhetoric, composition, and literary study, connections that suggest possible unifying principles. Certainly, as he demonstrated in one of his earliest essays, "Hugh Blair as an Analyzer of Prose" (1958), rhetoric can function both analytically and generatively. He also edited a book (Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works, 1969) that sought "to show that rhetoric had relevance also to the study of literature" (Headnote interview, Selected Essays 73):

One of the things that I noted when I was studying the history of rhetoric was that there came to be periods when it was difficult to discriminate where poetics ceased and rhetoric began. It just seemed that especially during the Renaissance both in Italy and in England, it seemed to me there came to be a time when the two just seemed to be intimately joined, and it was hard to say this is a rhetorical approach or this is a poetic approach. It seemed to me that somebody like Horace in his Ars Poetica, which he calls an art of poetic but essentially had a kind of rhetorical purpose, when you got that combination or you began to look at literature
in that sense, then rhetoric and poetic were interweaving. Having seen right after World War II the proliferation of critical approaches to the study of literature, I just said, "Well, it seems to me another way that you can look at this is to look at literature as not only something that is contributing to our aesthetic pleasure but is something that has designs on us, too." (Oct. 10, 1990)

Corbett reports that *Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works* did not gain much readership. But clearly, the production of such a work, a work that focuses on rhetoric's analytical potential, indicates his literary orientation, which inevitably comes through in his other writings and talks. Undoubtedly, too, the long history of connections between classical rhetoric and the study of literature, involving scholars such as T. W. Baldwin (*William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, 1944) and Sister Miriam Joseph (*Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language*, 1947) as well as more contemporary scholars like Wayne Booth and Edward Corbett, established a context for this acceptance. And, as noted above, his relations with those in both the Creighton and the Ohio State English departments were almost idyllic, compared with others' experiences. Of his experience at Ohio State, Corbett says:

> I think people who are familiar with [my work] are interested in it, appreciate it, respect it. But I suspect that a good many of my colleagues are just not aware of my work . . . . They're aware that I operate in that area, but I'd be surprised if many of them read many of my articles and books. But that doesn't necessarily mean that they don't respect it. It's just that, like all of us, they have their own interests and have a hard time just keeping up with work in their own field. But I've never felt neglected or that I wasn't appreciated. (July 23, 1990)

Second, through his systematic presentation of rhetorical principles for written discourse and his assumption that rhetorical skills in writing can be taught, Corbett has helped to furnish composition studies with a justification for the study of writing and the teaching of writing. And finally, Corbett's revived
classical rhetoric has supplied composition scholars and researchers with a way of talking about activities involved in composing processes.

*The Corbett Case History*

Finally, we need to take some account of the methodology used here to illuminate Corbett’s career and thought. As I hope I have shown, Corbett defies easy classification; he is not *simply* a modern-day spokesperson for classical rhetoric; he has sought to adapt classical rhetoric to the situations of twentieth-century writers, which simultaneously may share certain general, perhaps universal or even ontological, characteristics but whose contexts differ dramatically. Corbett’s case history provides a picture of a complex individual scholar whose experiences and thought are both representative and at the same time, singular. For instance, as I have indicated, while on a very general level, Corbett’s *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* compares with Weaver’s *Composition* and Hughes and Duhamel’s *Rhetoric: Principles and Usage*, it differs in important ways, ways that have made it much more popular and influential than the other two textbooks. I have also noted Corbett’s assimilation of Kenneth Burke’s rhetoric as well as Aristotle’s and the possibilities of seeing classical rhetoric as process-oriented, especially through a consideration of rhetorical norms. The case history approach also helped to illuminate Corbett’s view of the relationship between *logos* and *ethos*, an illumination requiring not only a close reading of a wide variety of Corbett essays but discussions with Corbett about the relationship. Close reading also helped to reveal Corbett’s subtle thinking about the topics. And without the case history approach, we
might well conclude, along with Knoblauch and Brannon, that Corbett views the classical parts of a discourse as a formula for arrangement of written discourse. Finally, the Corbett case history has provided a wealth of information about his early life and education, his teaching, his own composing processes, as well as his thought. In sum, the case history approach has allowed us to go beyond broad, simplistic generalizations about Edward P. J. Corbett that tell us little about how he has really influenced composition studies and about how that field of study has really developed.
Janet Emig’s career differs markedly from that of Edward P. J. Corbett. Corbett’s training was largely classical and literary; Emig’s, on the other hand, was decidedly multifarious, including studies in psychology, physiology, linguistics, the history and philosophy of education, and philosophy, as well as literary studies. Corbett, as Chapter III indicates, worked almost exclusively within the rhetorical tradition that began with the ancient Greeks. Emig, however, has produced diverse pieces of scholarship from a variety of perspectives: psychological, biological, philosophical, and so forth. Corbett in addition has progressed smoothly through the profession, from graduate student to full professor, his scholarly thought undergoing few, if any, disjunctions; Emig’s career and thought, on the other hand, have experienced several disruptions and transformations. Taken together, these two careers reveal the diversity—and the diverse possibilities—of composition studies. Yet, despite the differences, Emig, like Corbett, has been too simply categorized by a study of a too narrow range of her work.

Janet Emig has been regarded as one of the most influential figures in the field of composition. Stephen North, for example, calls Emig’s monograph *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* "arguably . . . the single most influential
piece of Researcher inquiry—and maybe any kind of inquiry—in Composition's short history" (197). The influence of this work on the acceptance of case study and composing aloud research methods in the field cannot be underestimated. Nor can we ignore its more general effect of popularizing the so-called "process" approach to writing instruction and its influence on researchers to adopt a more cognitive approach to understanding and teaching writing. Following James Moffett’s *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*, which appeared in 1968, *The Composing Processes* (1971) added significantly to the momentum of the "process" movement. Before Emig published her monograph, there had been few attempts to describe the actual processes students used to produce texts. The same can be said about "Writing as a Mode of Learning" (1977), which has provided the Writing Across the Curriculum movement with its philosophical justification.

Yet these works generally speaking remain the ones that Emig is known for and the ones that taxonomizers of composition studies rely upon to make their classifications of her. In more specific ways and through most of her other works, Emig's influence has unfortunately not been as great as it should have been. For instance, while the discipline has generally accepted notions of writing as a process, it has not often gone as far as Emig has in describing and absorbing such descriptions of this process—or, should I say, of these "processes," for many of us continue to talk about writing processes as if they could be described as one monolithic process. And while researchers have adopted and improved
Emig's use of case study and composing aloud methods, they have ignored other methods suggested by Emig, such as the study of the composing behaviors or lack thereof of brain-damaged individuals.

The reasons why researchers in composition have not continued investigations in some of these areas suggested by Emig's work are probably many, but one reason clearly has been that most scholars in this field have been trained in English and English Education departments dominated by a different tradition than the one informing research in the cognitive development of writing or in the physiological aspects of composing. The tradition of literary study has been almost exclusively analytical. In fact, a strong bias developed during the twentieth century against the notion that composing processes could be productively discussed, especially in terms of the writer's cognition. With the rise of individualism in Western culture after the Middle Ages, there gradually emerged a view that writing—at least "good" writing and writing beyond simply the day-to-day exchange of information—was dependent upon the imagination, and the imagination was the province of "genius," and genius for the most part was beyond examination, except for analyses of its products. The New Critical admonitions against committing "the intentional fallacy" represent the height of such positivistic notions. The other consequence of such thinking was the rise of notions that rhetorical skills in writing could not be taught. Thus, any theories suggesting otherwise were generally debunked. Classical rhetoric, however, functioned analytically as well as generatively, and its analytical possibilities allowed for it to be seen from the mid-1960's on as another possible critical approach, providing its practitioners with some amount of respectability. The
history of that tradition parallels and sometimes intersects that of literary study. Rhetorical criticism overlaps literary criticism, as the work of Wayne Booth, Edward P. J. Corbett, and others has indicated. Stylistic analysis and the study of poetic prosody owe a great deal to developments in the rhetorical canon of *elocutio*. Prominent figures in rhetoric have also played roles in literary history: Aristotle, Cicero, Hugh Blair, I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth are notable examples. Names included in the "tacit" tradition of Composition that Emig has sought to illuminate, on the other hand, are virtually unknown in literary study: Thomas Kuhn, George Kelly, Michael Polanyi, Eric Lenneberg, Piaget, Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, and Howard Gardner, among others. Moreover, differences in the kinds of research done separate the two fields. Examining brain-damaged individuals in order to identify, say, the relationship between thought and language seems to some a far cry from examining the texts of literary figures like Shakespeare, Keats, and James.

In contrast, Emig herself appears well trained in all the fields of English studies and moves easily through them. She has studied and written on linguistics, is an accomplished and widely published poet, and has full literary training. Early in her career, she wrote critical papers as well. As a matter of fact, as will be discussed later in this chapter, her poetry both feeds and is fed by her prose. But her main project since the middle 1960's has been to illuminate writing processes and to increase our understanding of how better to teach writing.
The specific motivation to write on the themes that she develops will be
explored more fully as this chapter progresses, but several overarching motives
can be stated here. Emig set herself, preconsciously at first, "a goal of trying to
suggest all the avenues of research [researchers in composition] could pursue"
(May 9, 1990). More personally, she attributes the diversity of her career—both
the diversity of research and the diversity of roles she has played in this field—to
a desire to be intellectually challenged and not bored. In conversation, she
remarks, "A friend of mine said she always looked at my career as one whereby,
every time I got bored, I tried to find another transformation of the field" (May
9, 1990). Yet, the themes that she addresses are not unconnected. Her work, in
fact, beginning while she taught high school, before she had entered Harvard’s
PhD program in English Education, forms a spiraling network of connecting
themes, motifs, and allusions. I have discerned at least eight general umbrella
themes that I believe characterize her work. They appear generally in
chronological order, although there is considerable overlap, of course. Emig
never abandons a major theme; rather, each seems almost to emanate out of its
predecessors, so logical does the next step in her research seem.

The eight major themes that I have discerned in Emig’s work appear in
the following order:

1. Her first interest—the core theme of all of her work—is pedagogy: how to
teach written composition. This theme appears in her earliest publication, "We
Are Trying Conferences" (1960), published in the English Journal, but it also
appears in most of her talks and essays throughout her career, including her
most recent publication, "Our Missing Theory" (1990) and many of her most recent talks, such as "Teaching As Theorizing" (1989), where Emig questions the use of certain theories, notably deconstruction, in the classroom.

2. With her reentrance into graduate school at Harvard in the early 1960's, Emig discovered and developed the notion that writing ought to be viewed as much a process as a product. This idea began with her recognition of the complexity of the writing process compared with the simplistic descriptions provided by textbooks. This development in her thought can be seen in very early, pre-graduation publications: her qualifying paper for the Harvard Graduate School of Education, "The Relation of Thought and Language Implicit in Some Early American Rhetoric and Composition Texts" (1963) and "The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing" (1964). Both of these works appeared before the publication of Rohman and Wlecke's federally funded research study, Pre-Writing: The Construction and Application of Models for Concept Formation in Writing (1964) which is frequently identified as the "origin" of the "process approach." Rohman and Wlecke speak more explicitly about the pedagogical implications of this view of composing, although in her advice to teachers at the conclusion of "The Uses of the Unconscious" Emig includes encouragement to view student compositions as "entities that evolve and develop" (52). For the most part, however, in these very early publications, Emig was concerned with problematizing the field's too easy descriptions of writing processes. Nevertheless, not much later, in "On Teaching Composition: Some Hypotheses as Definitions" (1967), Emig explicitly connects this complexity she found in composing with how teachers teach writing.
3. *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (1971) both epitomizes the early theme of complexity in composition and incorporates implicitly the next interest of Emig's: developmental rhetoric, the concern with understanding the influence of the cognitive development of each student on that student's rhetorical skills and thereby on how that student should be taught writing. It is this theme with which Emig has been most identified—to the point even of ignoring much of her later work. The interest is made explicit as early as 1969, when Emig published "The Origins of Rhetoric: A Developmental View," but it is clearly evident even into the 1980's and 1990's. In "Creating Minds, Created Texts: Writing and Reading" (1983), for instance, Emig and June Birnbaum attempt to describe the developmental aspect of a "constructivist" perspective. As will be seen, the attraction of the constructivist philosophy is exactly its easy assimilation of cognitive learning theory.

4. In this same problematizing mode, Emig began in the mid-1970's, with the publication of "The Biology of Writing" (1975) and "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Writing Process" (1978) to explore the complicating factors involved in the physiological, especially the neurological, aspects of composing. In the 1980's, she continued to discuss these factors as can be seen in her introduction to the textbook *The Four Worlds of Writing* (1981, 1985) and in her encyclopedia article "Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric" (1982).

5-6. The theme of writing as a mode of learning logically feeds into Emig's embracing of a "constructivist" philosophy and her arguments for others to embrace such a perspective. But the former theme may be separated to a certain extent from the latter because it was developed prior to her recognition
of constructivism and because it has taken on a life of its own through its
influence on the Writing Across the Curriculum movement. Although this essay
has been seen as a vital statement of justification for that movement, Emig has
not continued to explore Writing Across the Curriculum. Nevertheless, her work
in its cross-disciplinarity embodies at least that aspect of Writing Across the
Curriculum. As a corollary to her constructivism, Emig has sought to describe a
highly multidisciplinary, transactional, philosophical, psychological, process-
oriented tradition that informs her perspective on composing. Through Emig's
exploration of this tradition, it can be seen how, implicitly, constructivism has
informed most of her work for most of her career. The members who are
identified with this tradition also tend to be those philosophers and researchers
whom Emig both cited in support of her earlier themes and named as
constructivists in her later works.

7-8. Finally, beginning in the early 1980s, Emig began increasingly to
comment on the profession of composition instruction and the field of
composition research. The themes are clearly evident in her more recent
Inaugural Address as NCTE President (1988) and her published essay "The
Making of a Writer as a Maker of Worlds" (1988).

This multiplexity of thought strongly suggests that classification of her
work cannot be easily accomplished. Recent taxonomies that tend to view her as
simply interested in empirical research or in cognitive functions during writing or
in the cognitive development of student writers fail to take into account much of
her work over the past three decades. Perhaps the epitome of these taxonomies'
failures is James Berlin's recent article "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing
Class." There, he identifies Emig's *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders* with what he calls "the Rhetoric of Cognitive Psychology," stating that it was informed by the developmental psychology of Jean Piaget. He also goes on to describe certain features of this "rhetoric" which he finds in its representative work, notably the essays of Linda Flower and John Hays. But Berlin makes no attempt to distinguish among the practitioners of such a rhetoric. The features he notes are a preoccupation with "analytical writing"; an emphasis on rationality, with a view of language as a system of rational signs; and an emphasis on problem-solving or goal-directedness. As I hope to show during the course of this case history, Emig defies classification. As we will see, Piaget played virtually no role in informing Emig's monograph, and Emig's work in general, even that involving cognitive psychology, cannot be said in any way to be defined by the features Berlin associates with cognitive rhetoric. She has always been concerned with imaginative as well as analytical writing; her work on the preconscious and later on the biology of writing clearly reveal a qualification of rationality in writing; and finally, she has rarely discussed problem-solving, and her work does not seem informed by it. Emig's diversity of thought and experience is simply not easily grasped by sweeping generalizations.

*Educating a Polymath, Feminist and Teacher*

Any understanding of Janet Emig's intellectual development must take into account the social and political vicissitudes in her career and their influence on her work. So interactive are her professional and intellectual careers that
they cannot easily be discussed separately. In many, many ways, the shape of her research and theorizing is informed by the shape of her professional career.

**Working Women and Family Attitudes**

Janet Emig was born on October 12, 1928, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Although neither of her parents had the chance to attend college, Emig reports that both were bright and highly valued academics. At one point, they moved their home in order that their daughter might attend Walnut Hills High School, which they viewed as equivalent to a prep school. They very much wanted her to attend college. Moreover, her great aunt Nora, Eleanora Berne, was a teacher of reading and second grade at Windsor Avenue School for twenty-five to thirty years. During the Depression, in the early 1930's, when Emig was three or four, the family lost their house and moved in with Nora and her sister, Dodo. They lived there for two important years in Janet Emig's education. She wanted to learn to read early—that is, before first grade—and Nora agreed to help. Emig recalls:

We did it the summer I was four, and it was marvelously done. All I can remember is reading Billy Goats Gruff. I keep trying to recall more than that. When I got to first grade, the first grade teacher thought I was jesting that I could read, and my aunt was so indignant, I think she went to school and had a talk with her. (May 8, 1990)

The Emig family, then, included bright, assertive, *working* women as well as men. Emig's grandmother had worked as a medical receptionist and her other aunts all held jobs, "and so there was a tradition of women [in the family] working that went back several generations" (May 8, 1990). Nora seems to have been an especially strong influence during those early years:
I associated being a teacher with being powerful, because my great aunt Nora at that time was the economic center of our family. She made enough money to build a house in which all of her family lived including her father, and then she had enough money to protect all of us during the Depression. So to me, to teach was to be strong and to be a strong woman. (May 8, 1990)

Another important aspect of her childhood involved her parents' attitude toward childrearing. Emig reports that she "was allowed to decide many things that most children are not allowed to decide" (May 10, 1990). Her religion is an example. The religious background of the family was very diverse. She reports that for several generations, religion was "a source of great controversy" (May 10, 1990). Her great grandmother had been a devout Catholic, while her great grandfather was a devout Lutheran. Her mother, who was raised in their home remembers "nothing but arguments about religion" (May 10, 1990). As an effect of such arguments, Emig's grandfather never attended church. Her mother, however, at the tender age of three or four, Emig recalls hearing, decided she wanted to go to church, and so she took her little brother by the hand and "literally walked him to the church that was nearest their house which happened to be the Disciples of Christ" (May 10, 1990). Emig was baptized in that church. Her father, however, who was of English and German Lutheran background, had become agnostic. As a consequence, Emig's parents agreed that Mrs. Emig could have total charge their daughter's religious training until her twelfth birthday; at that time, the decision became Janet's. She attended church "morning, noon, and night" until she was twelve and then she decided not to go anymore: "[A]ll the business about imprinting of religion did not work with me" (May 10, 1990).
"Auditorium" and Preparation for College

During the 1930's, Emig attended Williams Avenue Grade School in Norwood, Ohio, whose administrators turned out to have been influenced strongly by the educational philosophy of John Dewey:

It was a school that looked like a very traditional elementary school, but it was a school with an incredible aesthetic component. We had a course called "Auditorium." Strange name. The era was the Depression, so consequently, a great many very gifted young people who had no other way to earn a living, particularly active artists, went into teaching. So "Auditorium" was a kind of multi-art phenomenon, and I don't recall how much of the day we spent doing it, but it was a very large, satisfactory chunk. When I was there, the "Auditorium" teacher was Bernette Thompson, who became--and again, this is a feature of the Midwest --a family friend. And she is still active in Oakland, California. Bernette was a child prodigy who had just graduated from the Eastman Rochester School, and you can imagine what kind of career there would be for concert pianists of eighteen or so, and so she went and got her teacher's certificate, and she came to us. (Oct. 27, 1989)

Emig states that her memory of the school and the amount of time spent in "Auditorium" is that of a child and that of a child who obviously found Auditorium immensely satisfying. The students spent Auditorium doing activities such as creative dramatics, music, and art appreciation. Emig believes that the school as a whole was remarkable:

We had a marvelous little, round principal named Oscar Maddux .... And he would call us over to the door from these classes .... Can you imagine this happening today? And he'd say, "Are you having a good time?" If we didn't say yes, the teacher really was in trouble. (Oct. 27, 1989)

"So this," Emig observes, "was the mood of my education" (Oct. 27, 1989).

Emig also remembers her eighth-grade teacher, Lenore Davidson's collection of some 2000 books she considered appropriate for her students. These books were left in the back of her classroom, and "whenever you weren't
doing your required work, you read. No one ever interrupted you. You could read--if you worked quickly, and I did--you could read all day" (Oct. 27, 1989).

Emig also attended Walnut Hills High School, "a remarkable place, too" (Oct. 27, 1989). Emig recollects that 95% to 99% of the students at the time went on to college, and 90% went east to college. The coursework was very demanding, including the kind of literature survey that one would find in universities and colleges today. Emig recalls being fortunate to have as her freshman teacher the senior English instructor at the school and therefore having "an amazing introduction to Shakespeare" (Oct. 27, 1989). Walnut Hills, in fact, put on annual Shakespeare productions which were so well known that agents would attend.

_Becoming an English Major at Mount Holyoke_

Although she loved English, Emig planned to go into medicine. She won a four-year scholarship from Westinghouse and, after graduation from high school in 1946, began her undergraduate education at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, the same college that Emily Dickinson attended almost a hundred years before. Emig's experience at Mt. Holyoke was clearly better than Dickinson's had been, and she speaks highly of the education that she got at the single-sex college.

During high school, Emig developed an interest in science and planned to enter medical school. The appeal of medical science for her seems to have been genuine and reappears later in her concern with the neurological aspects of writing. But her interest in English, especially in her own literary efforts, was
greater. She wrote a good deal of poetry in her junior year of college and even completed a novel her senior year. She won both the Phi Kappa Delta Poetry Prize in 1949 and the Kathryn McFarland Prose Prize in 1950. She would also bribe her waitressing friends who worked in the faculty restaurant at Holyoke to allow her to wait tables on all the visiting writers, who included the likes of Thomas Mann, Edith Sitwell, and Dylan Thomas. And so Emig finally concluded that she did not want to go into medicine. She explains her decision this way:

I realized two things. I didn't care for the incredibly over-detailed life. It also struck me as an extremely humorless life. No one I saw in science was having a good time, and everyone I saw in English was, and that somehow registered. Also, I don't have the discipline to be a doctor, and I really found hospitals abhorrent places. (May 8, 1990).

Announcing such a decision to her parents, as we would expect, caused some anxiety:

When I realized I was going to be an English major, and I went home for Thanksgiving, I thought, "Now what will I do? They have sacrificed." I said between bites, "I think I'll be an English major instead," whereupon my father said, "I was wondering when you were going to notice what interested you most." That was the big crisis. (Oct. 27, 1989)

Being in English at Mt. Holyoke, by the way, did not necessarily mean studying literature exclusively. The school had perhaps one of the few undergraduate composition majors at the time. "Composition" there included courses in description and advanced description and was apparently a creative writing program as much as anything else. Emig is unsure how widespread such opportunities were at the time, but she clearly took advantage of them.
After graduating from Mount Holyoke magna cum laude in 1950, Emig immediately began her M.A. at the University of Michigan. She had chosen Michigan because it seemed to offer good training for her as a writer. There, she experienced an early influence on her later research in her writing seminar with Roy Cowden:

[He] would bring in drafts [of professional writers' works]. We looked at many versions of Keats' odes. We looked at many versions of an early chapter of Hardy, Jude [the Obscure] and Tess [of the D'Urbevilles]. (May 8, 1990)

Her experience with sexism at Michigan in the very early 1950's, however, caused Emig to reconsider a career in English. She observed that only the men on the faculty there at the time were promoted, and she reports that she was "treated appallingly in the literature courses." The comments on her papers in those courses were brutal. When she applied to enter the PhD program, she was denied entrance. Part of the problem, she maintains, had to do with veterans from World War II who were pouring into universities and colleges, including graduate programs. As large numbers of these veterans gained acceptance in graduate schools, many women who normally would have been accepted were forced to sacrifice their places. As Emig recalls it, none of the women in the M.A. program at Michigan got into the PhD program. Her experience with sexism and the university's rejection of her application for PhD work represented the first major obstacles in her career. These would be the kind of obstacles that she would confront again in the years ahead.
Sexism and English

Sexism was not, of course, limited to Michigan. Emig considered applying to enter the graduate program at the University of Cincinnati, where she knew both faculty and students. After an interview there, she reports that William Clark, the English department head, said to her, "Well, Janet, I could let you in. Of course, you never could get a job, so why should we both bother?" (Oct. 27, 1989). Emig then tried for admittance at Oxford for the BLitt degree but was turned down, because the author that she proposed to work on, George Eliot, was considered "too modern" (Oct. 27, 1989). Emig now looks back on her inability to enter a PhD program in English and her decision thereafter not to choose the study of literature as a career as auspicious:

I have to congratulate myself on making an alternate choice, because my [female] friends who went into academic English at that time in a sense have never been heard from. They just disappeared and were ground up into the system. (Oct. 27, 1989)

Teaching: "We Are Trying Conferences"

Locked out of further graduate education for the time being, Emig taught as a daily substitute in the Cincinnati Public Schools. In 1953, she began teaching at the Hillsdale School for Girls in Cincinnati, where she was assigned Grades 7 through 10 for three years. Although teaching writing along with literature, Emig reports that she continued to view herself as a creative writer, not as an "analyst," someone dedicated to the study of theories and pedagogies of writing. She would continue to see herself in this light for a number of years to come, even as she advanced in composition. During this period, the late poet
George Elliston left a good deal of money to the University of Cincinnati to bring visiting poets there each year. Emig took a workshop with John Berryman, with whom she became good friends.

Like Corbett's description of his early teaching, Emig's description of her teaching at this time is not flattering. She calls it "appalling" (Oct. 27, 1989). She explains that she had not yet worked out a theoretical point of view:

I was teacher as testgiver. It was very much giving the assignments on Monday and evaluating them on Friday, and I didn't teach. From Tuesday through Thursday, I was not doing anything that could be construed as teaching composition" (May 8, 1990).

However, in 1957, she was hired to teach grades 10 and 11 at Wyoming High School in Wyoming, Ohio, near Cincinnati. This change turned out to be favorable for several reasons. According to Emig, Wyoming had a very enlightened superintendent, and Emig's experience with the curriculum changes that he oversaw led to her first publication. She also was put in contact with intelligent and ambitious colleagues, which eventually led to her return to graduate school. Emig taught at Wyoming from 1957 to 1960.

William J. Ousel's work on class size greatly influenced Wyoming Superintendent Harold Bush. Teachers at Wyoming High School co-taught no more than four classes a day with "only" twenty-five students in each class. The extra two periods were then allotted to individual conferences with students. This, remember, was the late fifties and early sixties, well before Donald Murray and others began extolling the virtues of, and explaining how to go about, performing such conferences. Emig admits that conferencing at Wyoming High
School was naive, compared with what came later, but "there were no models for it at the time" (May 8, 1990). Still, this teaching experience influenced her later views on conferencing:

Even though, in retrospect, I don't feel I really knew how to teach writing very well, [because of] the fact of the conference early on, I was able to appreciate later the validity of everything Don Murray was describing. (May 8, 1990)

This experience with conferencing led to Emig's first publication, "We Are Trying Conferences," which not only discussed their use of conferencing but was in fact a report on the entire three-year-old English curriculum at Wyoming. She describes fully her first semester Sophomore unit, and the description suggests that her teaching was better than she remembers. She writes:

We try to get our students away from the prescriptive notion of language--"This is good English; this is bad"--to a descriptive attitude--"This is appropriate for a conversation by the lockers between classes; this is inappropriate for a paper in American history. (224)

With each piece of writing, students were asked to list the "communicator, receptor [audience], purpose, and situation" for that piece. And the instructors would "set up specific writing situations in which three of these elements remain constant while the fourth changes" (224). Clearly, students in these classes learned how to be rhetorically flexible. Moreover, grades were de-emphasized. No grades were put on the writings themselves: "We do not intend to have the important part of our evaluation, our comments and questions, ignored in favor of a quite arbitrary figure at the top of the page" (225). There was also use of peer-responding, then referred to as "the buddy system" (225). All this, in addition to the conferences!
"We Are Trying Conferences" established the core theme which informs Emig's works and career in composition studies that will follow. As I have suggested, she never abandons this interest in defining how teachers can better help their students learn to write, even as she broadens her thematic concerns to the defining the nature of the composing processes and the many factors that complicate those processes.

At Wyoming, Emig also came in contact with other dynamic teachers who influenced her career. Betty Williams, the chair of the English Department there, for instance, introduced Emig to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Knowing that Emig was interested in poetry, Williams asked her if she would consider nomination for the NCTE Committee on the Reading and Teaching of Poetry. Emig had to ask what NCTE was. She soon received a formal invitation to join the committee from Dorothy Pettitt, and she attended her first NCTE convention. This committee was especially active and produced two booklets describing how its members taught some of their favorite poems (Inaugural Address, 1988; May 8, 1990).

Emig left Wyoming High School to teach at University College, a new community college that was part of the University of Cincinnati. The reasons are not difficult to figure out. Even with a comparatively reduced class size, she still taught 100 students a day and worked a 90-hour week. A colleague from Wyoming High School, Joseph Samuels, also left in order to become the dean at University College. As with several of her colleagues, Emig was ready to move on in her career. The next step was a PhD, but that proved more difficult than one can imagine.
Emig had already "semi-decided" to return to graduate school for her Ph.D. when Betty Williams, who had involved her in NCTE, introduced her to the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Williams invited Emig to join her at a convention being held in Cincinnati. At the 1960 CCCC's convention, Emig heard Priscilla Tyler, then of Harvard, give a talk "on something called structural linguistics" (Inaugural Address, 1988). Emig was so impressed by the talk that she attended summer school at Harvard that year, taking a course on composing processes taught by Professor Tyler. She then applied for admittance into the English Education program at Harvard.

There were other programs that she could have chosen at the time, notably the one at Florida State. The reasons that she chose Harvard suggest that she had learned the lessons taught by the sexism of Michigan well—perhaps too well: "I chose Harvard for the reason that as a woman in academe, I knew that I'd better have the best address" (Oct. 27, 1989). She did not realize until three months after she had started that the program was virtually non-existent. Although Priscilla Tyler was on the faculty there, she had little status, because she rarely published; in fact, Harvard did not renew her contract, and Tyler left after Emig's first year at Harvard.

Emig has spoken eloquently about the influence of Priscilla Tyler in a headnote interview in *The Web of Meaning* (61). Meanwhile, the other faculty member in her program was fired the second week into the term by the President of the university for unbecoming sexual behavior. Emig recalls how
she suddenly found herself the Teaching Fellow for Harvard’s Master of Arts and Teaching program after having been there only two weeks. "Discovering him gone and with Priscilla not having status, there was scarcely a program there, so I had to invent the program" (May 8, 1990).

There were, of course, serious disadvantages attending this situation, but it did allow Emig a certain freedom to devise for herself an interdisciplinary education that she would draw upon for the rest of her career. She was able to study psychology with Eric Lenneberg. She took classes in linguistics at MIT, where she audited a course with Edward Klema and "heard a great many lectures by [Noam] Chomsky." She also took "wonderful courses on the history of education" with Priscilla Tyler that first year and a course in the philosophy of education with Israel Sheffler. And she took courses and heard lectures by faculty in English, including Kenneth Lynn and Perry Miller (Oct. 27, 1989).

Although Emig put the situation of a virtually non-existent English Education composition program at Harvard to her best use, the obstacles that she had to overcome there cannot be minimized. The evidence is overwhelming that the School of Education at Harvard in the 1960’s was exceedingly biased against those who sought to work in the field of composition, those whose interests tended toward writing instruction. The numbers alone tell the story. Emig recollects that forty-four students entered with her, and only six graduated, "an attrition rate inexcusable given the talent of everyone there." She maintains, There might have been [only] two not-able persons, but the rest were very gifted. It was just a maze that some couldn’t find their way out of. It was an incredible waste of talent, and it’s the one reason I still have hard feelings about Harvard. (May 8, 1990)
Among the talented who left this program was James Moffett, who went on to author the highly influential *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (1968). Emig describes the problem this way:

At that time, at Harvard, it really was the case that writing was described very regularly as a skill and that linguistics and literature were described as major disciplines. So there was immense resistance to considering composition as anything other than what one could pick up quickly. There was really no true acceptance of the fact that it could be studied and/or taught, other than to provide circumstances under which students could come together in a creative writing course. . . . The climate in the English departments at Harvard was completely inimical to the notion of considering it. (July 16, 1990)

The story of Emig's dissertation epitomizes these difficulties she encountered at Harvard. She began work for her degree in 1961, but her dissertation was not accepted and she did not graduate until 1969. The reasons include both the absence of adequate direction in her field and the bias against what she was doing. Several possible dissertation projects had to be abandoned. For instance, in 1964, she ran a pilot study on outlining at Lexington High School where she supervised MAT's. It was meant to produce results for a special paper and could have led to a dissertation. Emig examined twenty-five Grade 11 honors class themes and the planning materials for them. She was looking for correlations between the students' planning schemes and good evaluations and grades. Three judges graded twenty themes (nine with outlines and eleven without outlines). The results revealed no correlation at all: "The [grade] A's had nothing to do with planning schemes" (May 8, 1990). The study would eventually become a source for the research that did finally result in her
dissertation and then her monograph (Composing Processes 25-27; May 8, 1990). But at the time, it was felt that the project simply "wasn't significant enough" (May 8, 1990).

Her progress was also slowed down considerably by the fact that dissertation advisors kept abandoning her—or she them. In the end, she had worked with a total of ten dissertation advisors. Each advisor had definite ideas about what she should do—and not do. Most of them, she says, "were telling me that what I just wrote wouldn't do; so to get a steady sense of the whole was extraordinarily difficult. Each person had a different commitment to a different tack and methodology" (May 9, 1990). The biases of one in particular, Peter Noumeyer, advisor eight, proved to be especially irritating and her response climactic. When he was assigned the job of directing her dissertation, he told her to find another topic, because "being interested in how children write is not unlike being interested in how cripples skate" (quoted in Emig and Parker, "Responding to Student Writing, 14; and in conversation, Oct. 27, 1989). Emig recounts her response this way:

By this time I was angry. And so I wrote a very long letter to [Harvard] President [Nathan] Pusey, because I knew from the earlier incident [the firing of a faculty member] he was a man who took action. I described my experiences. I don't know what happened. I think he must have written to someone at the School of Education saying . . . , 'Get her out.' (Oct. 27, 1989)

Finally, linguist Wayne O'Neil, who had been at Harvard but who had moved to MIT, heard what had happened and volunteered to chair her committee through a cross-registration arrangement. Emig summarizes the whole experience:

It seemed to be beyond the purview of the people who were my advisors with the exception of Wayne O'Neil, who, though a linguist, knew the work that was going on in composition at the University of London and
seemed to regard the concept of studying it as having some legitimacy... . And I think that background was fairly common. I think at that time, writing was regarded rather widely as a skill, having not at all the same disciplinary density as literature or linguistics. (July 16, 1990)

Tenure and Promotion in English Education

Emig jokes that she has been fired "once for being a woman and once for being an American" (May 8, 1990). And indeed, she was denied tenure at the first two schools at which she taught: the University of Chicago and the University of Lethbridge in Canada. In both cases, the circumstances of her "firings" were unusual and appear to have been provoked by biases beyond her control.

Tenure Review at Chicago

In 1965, four years before she had received her PhD, Emig took a position as an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of Chicago, running their MAT program. Emig's contract at Chicago had been typical: tenure track, renewable after three years, with a tenure review at the end of the fifth year. In 1969, Emig's fifth year there and the year of her graduation, Chicago decided not to renew her contract, despite the acceptance of the monograph for publication. Emig reports that sexism, a bias against composition studies, and circumstance combined against her continuation at Chicago. She explains:

What happened was that I inadvertently—and it really was inadvertent—gave the Dean, at that time Roland Campbell, the word that I was finishing [the dissertation] but there had been so many feet out slowing my dissertation down, and then, every year, I would have a new class and be held up. But The Composing Processes was finished and was available to the tenure committee. Someone on the committee said it was a very
minor piece of work that would have no influence, and that composition was not very significant. So, subsequently, there have been a number of abashed people at Chicago . . . . I have received one apology, from John Wilson, who was the Vice President.

Emig also believes that she had the full support of the English Department at Chicago. In conversation, Emig reports:

I had a fairly clear sense that even though there were some hostile types in [the English] department, that there was deep pleasure with the MAT program. I know [Wayne Booth, the English Department representative on the tenure review committee] would have supported me, and I think other major people would have, too. That's my sense of things. (July 16, 1990)

But on the day of the hearing, Booth's sixteen-year-old son, whom she reports was "a brilliant actor" as a high school student, was killed in a freak automobile accident. Emig describes the day as "just chaos, and so nobody from the English Department [was at the hearing]. I'm sure had there been a notice or something, someone would have come over, but it was just one of those things" (May 8, 1990).

The Lethbridge Experience

When her famous monograph *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* was published, Janet Emig was no longer at the University of Chicago but was teaching at Lethbridge University in Alberta, Canada. She taught there from 1969 to 1971. It was there that she revised *The Composing Processes*. She left the United States both because she had become "absolutely disaffected with American university systems" and "for political reasons" (May 8, 1990). These
were years of strident protest against the Vietnam War, and Emig was, in her words, "wildly against" it. And so she applied to become a landed immigrant with the intent to remain in Canada.

Lethbridge was a new provincial university and was considered the third in a hierarchy of three universities in Alberta. Perhaps because of that in some way, Lethbridge turned out to be "a fairly exciting experiment in curriculum" (May 8, 1990). The community was predominantly Mormon and conservative. But the school itself included a number of liberal United States immigrants on faculty. Many of them had moved to Canada to protect their children from being drafted and sent to war. Their stories fall outside the purview of this dissertation, but Emig maintains that they are stories that ought to be told, for in 1970 and 1971, Lethbridge underwent an anti-American purge. Emig explains, "Essentially, they fired all the Americans on the faculty of education, because we were going to be replaced by Canadians" (May 8, 1990). Emig came back to the States to work, but many of her colleagues moved then to Australia and New Zealand or were forced to find jobs in other fields; they could not and would not return to the U.S. at that time. But that is not the whole story.

There's another tragic part of this that people don't know. We know about the young men who couldn't come back. What we don't know about is the parents who were academics who went over to save their sons. I have one friend who couldn't get back for a job here, and they will always be in Canada. Their sons were able to come back, but the door is closed academically, and they couldn't return, so there they are in this small town. But none of their sons went to war. (May 9, 1990)
The Rutgers Experience

In 1971, Emig was hired as an Associate Professor at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, in Brunswick, where she has remained, except for various visiting professorships. She had actually been called by two different people for two different jobs at Rutgers on the same day, one an administrative position as an associate dean, the other a teaching position in the Department of Science and Humanities of the Graduate School, where her former Chicago colleague Robert Parker also taught. Emig preferred the non-administrative position. She interviewed with a number of other schools, but Rutgers offered her a job with a person whose philosophy she knew, and it offered her tenure: "After my career and after what had happened both in Chicago and Lethbridge, tenure was particularly desirable" (May 8, 1990).

Despite the many attractions of Rutgers, it did not furnish Emig with an entirely happy atmosphere in which to work—at least, not in the beginning. She perceived members of the department and her dean as hostile. She had difficulty getting research done, and at first, she was not promoted. Emig kept busy, acclimatizing herself to the new environment and "trying to establish a fairly young program" (Web of Meaning 109).

While at Rutgers, Emig has taken up a number of themes: the biological aspects of writing; writing as a mode of learning; constructivism as an underlying educational and rhetorical philosophy with its own tacit tradition; and her commentary on the profession. Some of her most well-known essays have been published while she has been teaching at Rutgers, and The Web of Meaning, a collection of her essays that won the Mina Shaughnessy Award, was published in
1983. Yet, once again, because of an anti-composition bias and because of sexism among some colleagues and administrators in her school, she has met with opposition to her promotion. Her professional experience at Rutgers during the seventies and eighties was better only because she had been hired with tenure. In "Journal of a Pessimist" (1980), she relates her difficulties acquiring promotion to full professor:

When I was promoted to full professor [in 1975], I was not supported by any colleague within my department, within my school, or by my dean. I was promoted by a so-called summit committee composed of faculty outside education and by selected members of the administration. (50)

Part of the reason for the problem: there were only four other women in her department. Emig ran into the same obstacle when she was finally appointed "Professor II," the equivalent of a Distinguished Professor rank at other universities. Again, the school's decision not to promote her had to be overridden (May 8, 1990). Emig reports that to the best of her knowledge, the percentage of women at "Professor II" is "something like 7%." She remarks that the sexism that delayed her promotions at Rutgers cost her thousands of dollars in salary (May 9, 1990).

Despite these difficulties at Rutgers, Emig has enjoyed the interdisciplinarity of her department, which had been called "Curriculum and Instruction" before she got there, was called "Science and Humanities Education" when she arrived, but is now called "Learning and Teaching." One reason that the Rutgers position attracted her was this cross-disciplinarity. It is the only cross-disciplinary department at Rutgers and employs faculty from "all
of the cognate-based disciplines." As Emig notes, this sort of department naturally allows for "the kinds of conversations that are only arranged artificially through a lecture series in most universities" (May 9, 1990).

Intellectual Commitments

Although I have separated Janet Emig's intellectual life from her professional life, I realize of course that such a division is simply a rhetorical construct of arrangement to aid our understanding, that in reality, the history of a mind very much reflects the political, social, and cultural events that surround it. And in Janet Emig's case, the connections between the diverse developments in her thought and those in her career can be both obvious and surprising.

In the previous part of this chapter, I pointed out the rise of her interest in pedagogy and how this interest informed her first publication, "We Are Trying Conferences," a description of what seems to have been a remarkable writing curriculum at the high school where she was teaching. Her interest in pedagogy and in understanding the nature of writing led her back to graduate school and into her career in composition. In this section of her case history, I will explore the developments of Emig's thought, focusing on the diverse but related themes that she addresses.

As will be seen in the following discussion, recent descriptions of Emig categorizing her in very particular and limited ways fail to account for the majority of her research and scholarship. Stephen North, for example, calls her "a leading member" of his "Clinicians" category based entirely upon his analysis of The Composing Processes of Twelfth-Graders. He does acknowledge one other essay, "The Tacit Tradition," as admittance into his "Philosopher" community.
He also writes, however, that "most members of the field do give their primary allegiance to one community or another" (2), and the emphasis on *Composing Processes* in Emig's case suggests he believes her allegiance to lie with the "Clinicians." Like North, Berlin in *Rhetoric and Reality* acknowledges that Emig transcends the category he wants her to represent, the rhetoric of cognitive psychology, but he scarcely makes passing mention of her scholarship outside of that category and in doing so lumps almost two decades of research and publication under the label "her most recent work" (159-160). And as I mentioned in Chapter II, Berlin's taxonomy, which is based on analyses of underlying ideology, does not really allow for overlap, for to do so implies an inconsistency that would threaten his privileging of ideology as our evaluating criteria.

*The Complexities of the Composing Process*

It is remarkable that Emig would be able to produce a dissertation under the conditions at Harvard described above, let alone publish articles in the field, but she did. Before receiving her PhD, she had given at least eight talks on issues in composition studies to various groups, including CCCC and NCTE, and she had published four papers in addition to "We Are Trying Conferences." Emig continued to be concerned with pedagogy, but she also introduced two new major themes: the complexity of human writing processes when compared with the traditional simplistic descriptions of a monolithic composing process presented in textbooks; and developmental rhetoric, understanding the effect of students' cognitive development on their rhetorical skills.
The basic sources for Emig's recognition of the complexities of writing processes—her own experiences as a writer—were already in place before she began her work at Harvard. The stimulus that activated these sources was her reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rhetoric and composition texts in Priscilla Tyler's seminar:

I was looking at primary sources, a focus of work Priscilla Tyler was doing at Harvard; and I was struck by the inconsistencies in the statements about rhetoric and the actual writing of a given period. But I was more struck by the difference even then between the way I write and statements in the texts. The initial impulse, one that I think also informed The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders later, was the dissonance or discrepancy between major rhetoric texts of the time and my own experience. (Web of Meaning 1)

Emig found that the writing process described in these texts contrasted strikingly with the testimonies of professional writers, which as a poet and novelist she had been reading; with the theories of modern philosophers of language and creativity, whom she had begun reading; and most importantly, with her own typical writing process.

Emig's composing process is, I suspect, highly idiosyncratic:

I am not a linear writer . . . . The metaphor I have for my own system of writing is a crazy quilt. I write portions, and they seem unconnected, but I know that they are all connected. And I write them in any order that they come to me. And then, as one does with a quilt, I do the framing and do the design and do the border. It's a totally unnerving way when people look in on how I'm working, but I obviously have intuitively a sense of the whole, so I can work on portions. I never supply the framing statements until the end. I write many drafts, twenty to fifty. "Writing as a Mode of Learning," I don't even remember how many I wrote. And I'm constantly refining. So it's a very laborious process, and so I just knew this erratic way of working, I sensed, was characteristic of what other people did as well. (May 8, 1990)

What is "characteristic" about her composing process is the idiosyncrasy. Emig acknowledges that her way of composing—from parts to whole—is probably the
opposite of the way others do it—from whole to parts (May 9, 1990). But she hypothesized that if her way of writing didn't conform to textbook descriptions, others might not either. Emig also reports that for some, perhaps many, papers, she writes a poem about the topic before she takes it up in prose. This part of her process, she admits, is probably "extremely unusual" (May 9, 1990).

These sources are especially evident in Emig's first two important papers written while at Harvard: "The Relation of Thought and Language Implicit in Some American Rhetoric and Composition Texts," which was her "Qualifying Paper" for the Harvard Graduate School of Education, accepted in 1963; and "The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing," presented at the 1963 NCTE convention as her first public performance and then published in College Composition and Communication in 1964. While the stated purpose of the former paper is to study "the theoretical statements and the implications contained in rules and pedagogic exercises about the relationship of thought and language" in some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts (3), an ulterior motivation also seems apparent. Not only does Emig describe the "well-formulated theory of knowledge which the writers, with more or less close agreement, share" (3), but she also evaluates this "theory" through a comparison of it with modern attitudes on the same relation drawn from psychology, philosophy, and literary criticism. Moreover, she goes on to question modern textbooks that maintain the same obsolete "theory" as the older texts (3, 35-36).

This "theory" of the relation between thought and language Emig finds most accessible through examination of nineteenth-century textbook views on "pre-writing," which she defines as "acts leading to writing, especially planning as
exemplified by outlining," and on metaphor. Historically, her interest in pre-writing is important, since this paper was written prior to Rohman and Wlecke's monograph on pre-writing which came out in 1964. For the textbook writers studied (and even for many of the more modern textbook writers, Emig intimates), language is subordinated to thought. In many cases, these writers view metaphor as ornamentation, although Emig does note some exceptions. Still, she writes:

Modern theorists disagree with all aspects of these writers' presentations of the relation of the metaphoric to the literal: especially they point out that by their understanding, metaphoric activity cannot be translated or paraphrased into perfectly equivalent literal terms for the reason that metaphors say-and-mean in ways literal statements cannot. Because they do, metaphoric statements form a unique form of discourse with attributes not possessed by the literal--attributes that give them special powers as a mode of expression. (34)

Planning, according to these writers, involves developing a clear conception of the topic before beginning to write. The only "writing" that goes on during this "pre-writing" stage is outlining; the rest of the time the writer is meditating and contemplating. Writing then equals "a swift, full ordered recording" of the plan (9-10). It is worth noting that Rohman and Wlecke's conception of "pre-writing" did not represent a much different view of the relation between thought and language. Although more writing was suggested in the form of journal entries, their model remained linear, with "pre-writing" still referred to as "the Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process," as Rohman called it in the subtitle of his 1965 article. The "Writing" stage remained primarily a recording of that discovery.

Emig makes no attempt in this very early paper to propose an alternative model, but she does offer the beginnings of a tradition that could inform an alternative. Modern theorists, she reports, view thought and its linguistic
expression as inseparable; to change the way one expresses the thought is to change the thought. Emig quotes several scholars and theorists from various disciplines who support this view, including logician W. V. O. Quine, who perhaps states the idea best: "Meanings . . . purport to be entities of a special sort: the meaning of an expression is the idea expressed" (qtd. 8). Even as early then as 1963, Emig seems implicitly to be embracing a "constructivist" philosophy, a view of reality as constructed through symbolic processes, a view that rejects claims of a unique, pre-existent reality. It is also interesting to note her interdisciplinarity in this early paper. She would continue to rely on researchers and theorists from many different disciplines as her career progressed and would make this interdisciplinarity an issue itself in the 1970's and 1980's.

One of Emig's seemingly least influential papers was "The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing" (1964). It is ironic that it would appear the same year as Rohman and Wlecke's monograph, for the thesis of Emig's paper represents a diametric opposition to the clear-cut linear model they present. Emig is again focusing on discovery --the discovery of thought and expression--but she contends that such discovery is not a fully conscious activity. Rohman and Wlecke also allow for subconscious inspiration in their use of meditation during "pre-writing," but their linear, chronologically staged model would seem to limit such subconscious activity to the planning stage of the writing process. Subconscious activity, according to Emig's discussion here, is not constrained to one particular stage but seems to inform a writer's composing process throughout.
In an earlier interview, Emig points out that she is not really talking about the unconscious here but the "preconscious" \(\textit{Web of Meaning}\) 44. Freud distinguished three levels of consciousness: the conscious, which consists of our immediate field of awareness; the preconscious, which consists of latent elements within the psyche that can be recalled to the conscious level; and the unconscious, which consists of experiences that cannot be recalled to the conscious but appear in conscious and preconscious behavior in disguised forms, such as through symptom formation. An in-depth discussion of the preconscious, Emig notes, appears in Lawrence S. Kubie's \textit{Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process} (1958). In that work, Kubie describes the preconscious as follows:

The symbol for a chair can set echoes reverberating down many mental corridors, all of which are tagged by the coded symbol "chair." Furthermore, the symbolic can be a model of a chair, a toy, a drawing, the word, or the thing itself. Obviously we cannot and do not "think of" all of these connotations every time we use the word "chair." Yet they are not "unconscious." They are lurking in the wings where they are accessible on need . . . . From the context and goal of our thought flows a process of automatic (preconscious) selectivity which excludes those meanings which are irrelevant to our central focus: but although we may shut the doors of thought against them, the affects which these fringe meanings evoke remain active. Consequently even as we sit unthinkingly on a banal kitchen chair, there will be some affective stirring from these collateral meanings of the concept "chair," like the sound of distant music. (24)

Kubie asserts that the concept of the preconscious is crucial to learning. In his essay, "The Utilization of Preconscious Functions in Education" (1967), which strikes a theme similar to that of Emig's essay, Kubie claims, "Conscious processes are important not for thinking but for sampling, checking, reality testing, correcting, ruminating, and communicating" (94). Learning, he says, is "predominantly preconscious" (94). According to Kubie, we are constantly bombarded subliminally with data both while we are awake and as we sleep.
"Teaching" in a classroom setting, reading homework, taking tests, and so forth, are simply part of this continuous flow of information. The preconscious registers it all. "[T]he conscious component is only a weighted sample of the continuous stream of preconscious processing of data: a sample which is given conscious symbolic representation" (94-95). Yet--and this is important for understanding composing--even the selection of symbolic representation occurs preconsciously (95).

Substituting the term "preconscious" for "unconscious," we can see that Emig makes a similar argument in her essay, disputing the descriptions of composing in textbooks such as Warriner's Handbook, Grade 11, where, she observes, "there is no wisp or scent anywhere that composing is anything but a conscious and antiseptically efficient act" (48). In reality, Emig insists, writing "involves commerce with the [preconscious] self," that it is "often a sloppy and inefficient procedure for even the most disciplined and long-writing of professional authors" (48). Here, as in her qualifying paper, she relies partially on the testimony of these professional authors to support this idea. Gertrude Stein, for example, is quoted saying,

[Y]ou have to know where you want to get; but when you know that, let it take you and if it seems to take you off the track don't hold back, because that is perhaps where instinctively you want to be and if you hold back and try to be always where you have been before, you will go dry. (48)

All this is not to say that Emig agrees wholly with Kubie's full discussion of creativity. In fact, she finds his notion of the creative process "a little heavily Freudian" and "couldn't agree with it" totally (May 8, 1990).
Another source that informs this essay and is probably a source for much of her other work is her dissatisfaction with her own composition instruction as a student. Emig remembers:

About the only portion of the process that was ever taught was the outline. I guess teachers did it because it gave them something to do. I remember being indignant about being required to do sentence outlines for research papers in high school. I thought it was absolute, total nonsense, and I wrote mine after I wrote the paper . . . . I checked with all my able friends, and we had all done it the same way, and I thought, "This is a pretty silly waste of time, this total obsession with that format . . . ." I remember hating that a great deal as a junior and senior in high school. (May 8, 1990)

In two other works, both published in 1967, Emig returns explicitly to the theme of pedagogy. In "Language Learning and the Teaching Process," she describes three modes of teaching: the prescriptive, the descriptive, and the productive. These categories of language teaching were first put forth in Chapter Seven of *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (1965) by Halliday, McIntosh, and Stevens. Emig sought to detail more fully these categories. She discusses them in their relation to composition teaching, not simply to the teaching of linguistics. While she acknowledges that teachers typically engage in all three modes, she also points out that teachers tend to emphasize one mode, depending on the amount of time spent in each. She thus justifies the clear hierarchy she establishes among them. Prescriptive teaching represents the most problematic, assuming as it does "that there are absolute standards, which are known and unanimously shared by educated adults, to which a student's oral and written language should attain" and "that prescriptive teacher intervention can effect changes in oral and written language patterns of late adolescents, or early adolescents, or even of elementary
children" (602-3). Here, the theme of cognitive development begins to enter Emig's work. A dismissal of "absolute standards" seems also implied, a denial that she will explicitly return to when she fully embraces her constructivist perspective in the 1980's. Emig associates prescriptive teaching with concern over mechanics and trivial grammatical errors. The major problem with prescriptive teaching is that psycholinguists and psychologists generally agree that children learn the basic structures of language not long before fourth grade, if not before they enter first grade. Prescriptions simply appear not to work.

Emig argues that the subject matter of descriptive and productive teaching is "more broad and varied," and the range of roles for teachers is greater. Descriptivists also tend to be concerned with grammar, but it is a grammar that does not insist on absolute correctness, a grammar that does not automatically doom the student to failure. Productive teachers, on the other hand, are interested in the student's use of rhetorical "registers"--that is, "specific realms of language use, such as the realm of professional jargon or a style directed to a given sort of audience" (607). Emig defines productive teaching as "helping the student extend the use of his native language in the most effective way" (607). The productive teacher will concern herself with the student's ability to predict audiences for different types of writing, for example. The teacher also assumes the roles of explicator and fellow writer when teaching in this mode.

More interesting in terms of her intellectual development is "On Teaching Composition: Some Hypotheses as Definitions," which appeared in the first year of Research in the Teaching of English, then edited by Richard Braddock. This essay presents a systematic outline of the teaching of
composition and the features of composing that inform that teaching. Emig feels it was her "first effort to do a theoretical formulation" and "a crucial early formulation before Composing Processes" (May 8, 1990). The essay also represents a synthesis of themes she was working with at the time. Emig here suggests a form of teaching in light of her description of composing.

The essay divides into two parts, one on teaching and one on the nature of composing, but from the beginning, we can observe a good deal of traffic between the two. Emig defines teaching as "the intervention . . . into a process . . . to improve that process or the product of that process" (128). She contends:

For far too long, for far too many of us, the teaching of composition has been solely product-centered. We have been concerned exclusively with the piece of writing, more particularly the simonized draft submitted for the devastation and the grade. (128)

That process is described in more detail in the second section of the essay. Here, Emig wants to make clear the nature of genuine teaching in light of this notion of intervening into a process. She is clearly problematizing the teaching "process," too. No longer is "teaching" considered simply assignment, lecture, grade. For Emig, teaching as intervention exists in two modes: "the proffering of freedoms and the establishing of constraints" (128). " Freedoms" here are defined as "varieties of cognitive and affective support" (129). The teacher "proffers freedoms" in three ways: through the provision of stimuli, through "the extension of options," and through "the acceptance of divergent [that is, idiosyncratic] writing behavior" (129). Stimuli for writing may be verbal (e.g., assignments, teacher-student dialogues, professional or peer models) and nonverbal (e.g., other modes of communication like music, rituals such as
Options available for use by the teacher could include allowing the student to choose her own subject matter as well as presenting the student with knowledge of and practice in skills needed for writing. Allowing for the idiosyncrasy of student writing could result in permission for a student not to complete a given piece of writing or the withholding of any form of evaluation or permitting a student to write a narrative instead of the expository essay assigned (129-30).

Constraints are defined as "counterforms of these freedoms" (130). Such constraints include "the rationing or removal of stimuli," "the establishing of parameters" (e.g., audience identification), and "the interpretation of teacher support as certain kinds of insistences, such as the insistence at carefully selected times upon closure" (130). Emig is very careful here not to preference one mode of intervention over the other. As Duke Ellington said, "Limitations are a wonderful thing. Everyone should have them" (quoted 130).

In the second part of the paper, Emig distinguishes between the simplistic, chronological model of writing as a single monolithic or universal process and the more complicated and problematic view of composing as multiple, sometimes idiosyncratic, and typically nonlinear. Significantly, she is not opposing a process-centered approach with a product-centered one but rather is setting two process-centered models against each other. Thus, when composition scholars speak of Emig's work as giving impetus to the view of writing as a process, that is too simplistic a generalization. She certainly does argue for a process approach, but what Emig means by process is much more complicated than what many others have meant by process. The division
between "process" and "product" is clear-cut, and while the process/product dichotomy probably did (perhaps still does) need a detailed elaboration, the opposition between the linear, chronological model and Emig’s recursive, pluralistic model is more subtle, and this opposition between two process models will probably prove to be more important in the long run.

Emig herself cannot recall the origins of the process/product dichotomy. In the preceding chapter on Edward Corbett, I cited Barriss Mills’ 1953 article "Writing as Process" as perhaps the earliest post-war proposal that we should study how people write as well as the products of their writing. But it is doubtful that Mills’ article has had much, if any, direct influence on many in the field; it had none on Emig; she has never read the article (July 16, 1990). Just as clearly, Emig was already thinking of writing as a process when Rohman and Wlecke advanced their model of the process and thereby gave impetus to the general idea of writing as a process. Emig suggests that, at least for herself but probably for others as well, Priscilla Tyler might have been the source of such thinking. It is ironic and a little amusing to think that what is often described as a paradigm shift in a whole intellectual community’s thinking about writing might be traced at least in part to a person who herself had profound difficulty writing, published little, has in the past held a diminished status in her field, and relied almost entirely on teaching as her medium for communicating her influence (Web of Meaning 61).

Emig, on the other hand, has relied on publication and public speaking as well as teaching to communicate her influence, a significant aspect of which has been her rejection of the monolithic myth of the writing process and her
insistence on its pluralistic, recursive possibilities. In "On Teaching Composition," she describes both clearly. The traditional, monolithic view of composition treats the process "as a fixed and full ordering of . . . three components occurring in a lockstep, non-recursive, left-to-right sequence" of planning or pre-writing (all activities relating to the writing of a piece that occur prior to the production of a first draft), writing (the actual "effort to formulate . . . [a] sequence of words"), and revising ("that activity, or series of activities, by which the writer adjusts, at a time usually separated from the writing of a draft, part or all of that draft to more closely approximate certain substantive and stylistic aims") (130-31). Unfortunately, few of us actually write in that way. More typically, Emig asserts, writing is "not monolithic, or tri-partite, or non-recursive" (131). She explains:

[I]nstead of a single process of writing there may be processes of writing, at least a process that can be changed--shortened, lengthened, transmogrified--by a number of variables. Instead of a process or processes inexorably made up of three "stages," there may be more or fewer components. Writing may be recursive, a loop rather than a linear affair--one can write, then plan, or one can revise, then write. (131)

For the rest of "On Teaching Composition," Emig presumes the correctness of her more complex view of writing and seeks to delineate the variables that affect the nature of each student's writing process and what all this means for the teacher.

Emig distinguishes four variables affecting the length and nature of student writing processes: the sophistication of the student's skills as a writer; the student's temperament; the student's "ego-strength," which Emig points out is frequently affected by teacher evaluation; and the mode of writing that the student chooses to write in, or that the teacher assigns for the student to write in.
It is interesting to notice that the former three forecast a concern with the student's cognitive development, a theme that soon after the publication of this essay comes to the forefront of Emig's research. But in this essay, Emig focuses primarily on the fourth variable: mode.

The two major modes that Emig distinguishes are the "expressive" and the "communicative" (132). In Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, she would label them "reflexive" and "extensive." Emig says that she "tussled for years about what to call these" (May 8, 1990). It was not until her advisor Wayne O'Neil put her in contact with James Britton, Harold Rosen, and the other members of what she calls "the London group" that she began to arrive at ways of actually talking about these differences.

According to Emig, two dimensions tend to determine the mode chosen: the impulse behind the writing, or its motivation, and the audience perceived for the piece. Emig's description of audience reveals the fluidity of her categories. Audience for Emig forms a continuum connecting the fully expressive audience of the writer's own self with the variously distanced communicative audiences of teacher, peers, and others (133). Some forms of expressive writing include diary and journal entries and personal letters, while a few of the forms of communicative expression involve argumentation and exposition (133-34). Obviously, much writing is a mix of expressive and communicative motivations and audiences.
Just as clearly, these variables affect (or should affect) teacher intervention into the student writer's process of composing. For instance, Emig suggests that proffering of freedoms exclusively, perhaps even non-intervention, may be best for expressive writing, while intervention during the writer's planning may work best for communicative writing (134). Also, mode affects (or should affect) the way teachers evaluate students. Teachers should not evaluate writing in the expressive mode, while evaluation of writing in the communicative mode can be rigorous (134).

The real question, however, involves how one determines when and what kinds of freedoms to proffer and/or constraints to establish. The answer, Emig declares, is as complex as the nature of composing itself: it depends on the student. We teachers, she says, need a "preknowledge of every student writing under our care," and we can gain this "preknowledge" by asking our students to keep writing diaries and by observing them as they write (134-35). Emig recognizes the increase in work her suggestions demand, but she can offer no way around it (135). In conversation, Emig admits that she was "terribly teacher-centered" at that time:

I hadn't imagined the possibilities that would come about through the use of peers. I think who changed my point of view was Moffett in *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*, writing about learning from teachers, learning from others, and about how there is an interplay in the learning of writing. And now I'm utterly persuaded, but Moffett was the first one who set it out. (May 8, 1990)

This explanation ought to be applied to the teacher-centered implications for teaching that she provides at the end of *The Composing Processes for Twelfth Graders*, which have been strongly criticized by some of her reviewers.
Developmental Rhetoric

It was at the University of Chicago that her interest in understanding rhetorical skills developed in children and young adults blossomed, but the seeds had been sown through several experiences at Harvard. While on the Editorial Board of the Harvard Educational Review, Emig co-edited with James T. Fleming and Helen M. Popp a special issue of that journal, which eventually was issued as a slightly expanded monograph collection entitled Language and Learning. The special issue of the journal appeared in Spring of 1964, and the monograph was released by Harcourt, Brace and World in 1966. This experience remains important in two respects. First, Richard Young and Alton Becker submitted their first essay on tagmemics, which led to a serious conflict among the editors (May 10, 1990). Emig found the Young and Becker essay "terribly exciting," her co-editors did not. The battles over whether to include the essay lasted until 3 a.m. one morning, she reports, "whereby they said, 'Sentence-bound analysis is the future,' and I said, 'Rhetoric is the future.' There was some vote with the fifteen of us [on staff]." Emig recalls that the vote "was eight to seven to get it in there" (May 10, 1990). The essay did not appear in the special issue of Harvard Educational Review but did in the expanded monograph.

Emig's experience co-editing Language and Learning was important also, because it gave her opportunities to talk with psycholinguist Roger Brown. The collection included essays by Eric Lenneberg, John B. Carroll, Martin Joos, Raven McDavid, Paul Postal, H. A. Gleason, and Dwight Bolinger, in addition to one by Brown and Ursula Bellugi. During their talks, Emig explains, "it just
suddenly occurred to me that there was an analogue here" (May 8, 1990). The
analogue is the one between the development of language and the development
of rhetorical awareness and rhetorical skills.

This insight had been prepared for by an experience in one of her
graduate courses, which required her to help with a project of Eric Lenneberg's.
Another set of sources were her dormmates and friends in psychology. Emig has
stated that her formal training in developmental psychology was "scant." She
points out, "I never heard the name Piaget at Harvard. And, therefore, whatever
I was learning about developmental psychology was quite late; but I think I was
representative of my generation in English Education" (Web of Meaning 54).
What she did get at Harvard, however, was guidance from these peers. They
provided readings, discussions, and lecture notes. Through her friend Ruth
Rademacher, Emig read notes of William Perry's lectures, "and so William
Perry, long before his book, was a major influence" (May 8, 1990). Through her
friend Diane Drake and another friend, she got the same sort of information
from Jerome Bruner and David Tiedemann. This kind of learning experience
may well have been an important source in Emig's later rejection of teacher-
centered education.

Emig's interest, then, in developmental psychology and her concern with
the possibilities of a developmental rhetoric occurred four to five years before
her first work appeared on the subject, "The Origins of Rhetoric: A
Developmental View" (1969). This paper was written while at the University of
Chicago. Chicago proved to be "a more propitious context for [Emig's]
interdisciplinary inquiry than Harvard" (Web of Meaning 54). It had "a
remarkable graduate school of education because of the faculty there," which included among other notables Bruno Bettelheim. Emig was hired to coordinate the Master of Arts in Teaching Program in English for the Graduate School of Education there. Because she was required to supervise the MAT's, she notes, she was allowed into "the very controlled environment of [Bettelheim's] Orthogenics school . . . , and so consequently, I got a keen sense of the work he was doing" (Oct. 27, 1989).

In "The Biology of Writing" (1975), Emig briefly defines developmental rhetoric as studying the way children "progress through describable and regular stages of development to cognitive maturity" (14). Emig's project is not, however, to chart the stages of rhetorical development in the way that, say, Erik Erikson charted eight levels of human integration into society, his "Eight Ages of Man." Instead, she explores the ramifications for teachers of the fact that humans do develop cognitively through stages. Emig makes no claim to be a cognitive psychologist. She relies on trained developmental psychologists to do that sort of charting; she takes the charting that they have done and draws out implications for the rhetorical development. Her thesis in "The Origins of Rhetoric" is "that very early developments in the personality and in the perceptions of an infant are prerequisites or precursors to certain features and practices of mature rhetoric" (56). She cites interconnections between Erikson's first three levels of integration and rhetorical theory. Within these three stages of development, we can see the rise of rhetorical consciousness (or rather, rhetorical preconsciousness). At the first level, the infant makes the distinction between self and nonself. At the second level, the infant differentiates between
persons, of which she is one, and objects. And at the third level, the infant begins to perceive the "rules or formulas governing the relationships between people and objects, and the infant perceives the "potential for complex manipulation" of these rules or formulas (56-57). This partial developmental model suggests that the desire and ability to communicate persuasively, at least to a very general extent, appears to be inherent and develops during infancy, before the child can even hold a pencil, and it develops simultaneously with, or perhaps even before, the development of verbal language.

In "The Origins of Rhetoric," Emig also discusses the mother's role in her child's language acquisition. The mother or primary caregiver will typically deal with the child's utterances through what Bellugi and Brown in "Three Processes in the Child's Acquisition of Syntax" call "expansion." That is, the mother will expand the child's simple utterances into grammatically understandable expressions. Suppose the child says, "Baby highchair." The mother might respond, "Baby is in the highchair," repeating the child's words but adding enough syntactical material to make it into a complete conventional unit. Emig cites Bellugi and Brown's two possible answers to why mothers augment their children's utterances in this way: (1) the mother "is trying to serve as translator to the world for her child," preparing the child for social interaction; and (2) the mother "is teaching the child by providing models into which [the child's] syntax can appropriately grow" (58). But Emig suggests a third possibility herself:

[The mother] is expanding her child's utterances for the purpose of understanding [the child] herself. Perhaps adults need a certain amount of uttered syntax...; and if the speaker/writer does not provide enough, the adult hearer/listener will provide it [herself]. (58)
Expansion has interesting rhetorical and pedagogical implications. First, the three roles the mother serves in expansion ("collaborator in formulation," "reformulator," and first audience, "the first nonself trying to cope with the utterance and help it sustain a life of its own in the world") provide "the origins of all three components of mature rhetoric--that is, (1) the shaping, and (2) the reshaping of spoken or written discourse (3) to satisfy the needs of an audience" (59). Second, if we then propose, as Emig does, that the teacher's role is maternal (Web of Meaning 133)--that is, an analogue to the mother's--then we can extrapolate teaching roles that best serve the student:

If we can be present when a student is first formulating [her] discourse, when it may be in a telegraphic state, we can help [her] as once [her] mother did in expanding the discourse--acting, in a sense, as collaborator. We can also immediately be an audience responding as [she] writes. (59)

Such an approach "requires a different model for teaching from the one we have often used" (59). Emig explains:

It is highly individualized; it requires the trust of both parties; it is hardly a large-group activity; it may be rejected by the writer; and, as in other kinds of learning, the teacher may be too late. (59)

Clearly, an important element in teaching for Emig is the teacher's response to the student writer, and in a later (1976) unpublished report that she wrote with Rutgers colleague Robert P. Parker, Jr., the issue of responding is addressed. In "Responding to Student Writing: Building a Theory of the Evaluating Process," Emig and Parker claim that in order to respond appropriately, teachers need to assess not only "the student's level of cognitive development and level of mastery of rhetorical and literary forms" but their own stage of life development. After all, responding is an interaction, if we accept the roles for the teacher suggested in "The Origins of Rhetoric."
Central to understanding any kind of responding is George Kelly's notion of "anticipation." Kelly believes, "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which [the person] anticipates events" (quoted by Emig and Parker 5). Emig and Parker assume that a teacher's anticipation of how a certain life experience should be approached will affect that teacher's response to a student text about that life experience. The problem in responding, then, is to understand not only a student's outlook on life but our own. This problem becomes apparent when the values a teacher holds at a certain stage come in conflict with those of a student. Erik Erikson in *Childhood and Society* "suggests that at various stages of our lives we have central concerns that focus and absorb our emotional energy" (21), that is, that cognitive development—changes in the way an individual thinks—continues throughout an individual's life.

As an example of how responding can differ according to the effects of the responder's particular life stage, Emig offers two possible scenarios, two responses to a typical male student, 18 to 25, who will be primarily concerned with seeking intimacy. In one case, a teacher between the ages of forty and fifty-five who has "as his current life project that which Erikson suggests is representative of that age" (broadly defined as nurturance and care of the young) responds to this student; in the another case, a teacher of the same age who is a male and who, although middle-aged, is seeking intimacy with someone new after just experiencing a painful divorce. Emig and Parker conclude:

It seems fairly obvious that these two readers will bring different values, different kinds of engagement to their reading of the student revelations because of the nature of their own concerns—one more possibly parental
Implicit in this model is a rejection of pure objectivity and the notion that teachers can respond to student texts without reference to their own experience. The inherent lack of objectivity does not mean, however, that a teacher cannot respond appropriately and responsibly. The authors do allow for a "humanistic view," the notion that there is a single life project that we all share and "that if we read imaginatively, as well as securely, we can overcome the hazards and intrusions of any and all differences--age, sex, race, temperament, emotional state, training, cultural or class background and membership" (23). That seems like an awful lot to overcome, and the authors don’t put much faith in the view that these obstacles can be overcome easily. But with knowledge of one’s own development and of the possible stages one’s students may have achieved, the teacher can more easily avoid such hindrances--or perhaps, even put them to use.

Emig’s essay "Children and Metaphor" (1972) presents an example of the power of taking a developmental approach, for it provides insight into the uniqueness of metaphor. Emig writes that "what seems unique about metaphor, that establishes it as a special case [among figures of speech] is that it undergoes transformations as we develop intellectually" (106). She had been struck by Chukovsky’s notion that all children are geniuses at metaphor until they reach four or five, which she read in his *From Two to Five* while at Harvard (May 9, 1990). The topic, then, seemed a natural one to take up in conjunction with her interest in developmental rhetoric. What emerges in this paper in addition to an extensive set of research questions for further study of metaphorical
development in children, are a few contributions that the developmental approach can make toward answering some of the most fundamental and controversial questions we have about metaphor.

Simply observing a child's use of metaphor suggests an answer to perhaps the most fundamental question: is metaphor optional or necessary? Emig relates an anecdote from James Britton's "Talking and Writing." In conversation, she reports that she had heard him tell the story about his daughter in a talk sometime before she ever read the article, and the story had apparently lodged in her preconscious (May 9, 1990). Britton recalls his two-and-a-half-year-old daughter's introduction to strawberries. Looking at them, the girl said, "They are just like cherries." Tasting one, she likened them to candy. Finally, she said, "They are like red-ladybirds." Emig suggests that "for Britton's daughter, at this moment, metaphor was not an optional feature of discourse; it was her only means for dealing with a new experience." She concludes that "metaphor may well be a constitutive form of language, an absolutely necessary feature of discourse" (103). This essay implies that there may then be two kinds of metaphor: a necessary, natural kind, fundamental to linguistic development, perhaps to language period; and an optional, more artificial kind, closer to stylistic ornamentation.

*The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*

Janet Emig's famous monograph was published while she was at Lethbridge, but she had conducted the research while at Chicago and under the influence of cognitive psychology. Although the monograph does not discuss
developmental rhetoric explicitly, the interest it demonstrates in describing the writing processes of adolescents at a particular educational level implies the informing influence of cognitive development.

*The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, a slight, 151-page NCTE research report, published without fanfare and sold for under five dollars, has become one of the most influential and controversial works in the field of composition studies. Especially of late, it has come under fire for its imperfections and perceived imperfections. Yet, in order to appreciate the work, Emig insists, we must understand *The Composing Processes* in its historic context and neither treat it as a model for research anymore nor castigate for features that either were made necessary by its context, were acceptable at the time of its publication, or were the result of a naive researcher performing certain kinds of research virtually new to her field.

The case study methodology, for all intents and purposes, did not exist in composition studies before Emig’s research. And it is doubtful if she would have discovered it, had she remained at Harvard rather than moving to Chicago. Emig acknowledges the influence in this regard of Carol Hostetter, who was at that time a co-editor of *Reading Research Quarterly* and research assistant to Helen Robinson at Chicago. Emig describes Robinson’s *Students Who Fail in Reading* as a “classic study which was case study” (Oct. 27, 1989). Robinson did not help Emig directly, but Carol Hostetter helped with the research design. Still, Robinson was probably aware of what Emig was doing, and Emig read Robinson’s work carefully. She also "read very carefully what Bruno Bettelheim said" (May 8, 1990). Her final advisor, linguist Wayne O’Neil, was also helpful
in devising her methodology, Emig says. As a good dissertation advisor should, he kept her anchored in reality, rejecting her earliest proposal for case studies of 24 subjects.

_Dissertation and Monograph._ Emig's monograph, _The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders_ (1971) should be distinguished somewhat from the dissertation from which it originated, "Components of the Composing Process Among Twelfth-Grade Writers" (1969). The two-year gap between her graduation from Harvard and the publication of the monograph was spent revising the dissertation for publication and teaching at the University of Lethbridge. The major revisions can be listed easily. The change in the title suggests one revision category: elimination of the "dissertationese," especially passages that forecast or summarize ("The purposes of this study are . . . ").

Emig also rearranged some of the material. For instance, Chapter Two of the monograph, "Design of the Study," originally appeared as a section of the chapter that included the case study of the subject called "Lynn." By far the most significant difference between dissertation and monograph was the elimination of the dissertation chapter "Limitations of the Study." A brief summary of those limitations is embedded in the introduction of the monograph (4-5), but the accentuation of being a chapter all its own is lost. This change has certainly haunted Emig over the years, for her critics have generally failed to acknowledge the tentativeness of her conclusions and her own appreciation of the study's limitations.
While these are important differences, the two works are more similar than not. Both, for instance, highlight the case study of Lynn and summarize the studies of the other seven students in one separate chapter. That change was just one of many extensive revisions Emig made in her dissertation even before acceptance by her committee. Emig recalls "a length requirement," which occasioned the collapsing of seven case studies into one chapter. As it is, the dissertation is 335 pages long; the case study of Lynn alone consists of 50 pages of text and 120 pages of appendices material, including interview transcripts, composing aloud transcripts, writing autobiographies, and writing samples. If she had included full case studies of similar length, with materials for further appendices, the dissertation would have run close to 1500 pages. Emig chose Lynn to highlight, because, as Emig explains, "[s]he gave me the most visible record of her process, and to me, she was less enigmatic, and to have a sense of the others as personalities would have taken longer" (May 9, 1990). Emig reports, too, that in retrospect, she can see that she "wanted to do a full study of a girl rather than of a boy, but it was the case that the girls were more forthcoming anyway" (May 9, 1990). Emig also thinks that this gender difference she perceives in her subjects might well have been due in part to her own sex. "We talk a lot about sex differences in writing itself," she reflects, "but we don't do it for investigator/subject" (May 9, 1990).

Another factor that affected the final outcome of the study was time. Due to circumstances, the research for the dissertation had to be done over a summer. The year before, she had gone into both the public schools in the city of Chicago and those in the suburbs to find subjects. As director of the MAT
program at the University of Chicago, she was well known in many of the
schools. Emig, by the way, speaks highly of the school administrators, both in
Massachusetts and in and around Chicago, who allowed her to conduct research
in their schools. At the time, language arts department chairs were "free spirits."
Emig reports:

They were like chairs of college English departments. In many instances
they had doctorates, and they were just as formidable and caring, and
there was no one looking over their shoulders, so if they thought
something was interesting to do, they did it . . . . Now, there is such terror
in the hearts of administrators. When Nancy Martin and I tried to collect
writing that all tenth graders did in two classes, we never did get a high
school in New Jersey to agree to participate in the study. Only one New
York high school, Great Neck, would let us collect. (May 8, 1990)

The fear now, of course, is that some researcher with permission from an
administrator will violate confidentiality, and the school will lose its state
funding. "Then," Emig says, "we were, for better or worse, much more
nonchalant about student rights" (May 8, 1990). Still, Emig agrees that students
have a right to know how they are being used as subjects. In that regard, Emig
failed to a certain extent. She was never able to get back in touch with "Lynn," to
inform her of how famous she had become through that case study. Her real
name was Susan Gzesch, and she attended Bowen High School on the south side
of Chicago.

Emig also expresses amusement at the naivety of her search for subjects,
which was done exclusively through the recommendations of the high school
department chairs:

Now I would never and would never have my [graduate] students ask the
chair of the department [of the high school] to pick students to be
subjects. Each student [of mine] told me, "I'm the wrong person. My
friend Dave is the really good writer. Too bad you're not talking to Dave." It's very amusing. It was very easy to get my sample. (Oct. 27, 1989)

After choosing her subjects, Emig tried to conduct the study in the schools during the spring, but, she explains:

Schools, being what they are, there were so many interruptions that it was a mutual agreement that we would do it in summer. And so, then, subjects had to be chosen who would be willing and available in summer. At that time, fewer kids worked, and I do think I still had an urban/suburban sample, and I did draw from one of the poorest high schools at that time in Chicago. (May 9, 1990)

In the end, she conducted her research during the summer of 1968, meeting with her student subjects in various places but mainly in the then quiet schools. She conducted her interviews with Lynn at Bowen.

_Criticisms: Neglecting Historical Context. The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders_ has been widely criticized, especially within the last ten or so years. Much of the criticism has focused on methodology. But Emig is quick to point out that times have changed considerably for graduate students doing research for composition studies. There were no courses in research methodology in the late sixties, and she had no models in her field to imitate:

I don't say this defensively, but I was having to invent this whole thing, and it was not being invented in a propitious climate. There were no professors around saying we are very excited about what you're doing; we'll help you in any way we can. Rather, there was nothing but large feet out. (May 8, 1990)

This unfavorable climate characterized the constraints under which the study was done, and Emig strongly disapproves of her work being taken out of its historical context:
What strikes me so about so many of the criticisms: these people who are so concerned with context refuse to set [The Composing Processes] in the context in which it was written. It is too ironic. (May 9, 1990)

Most exemplary in this regard, Emig feels, is James Berlin's suggestion that The Composing Processes reflects the influence of cognitive developmentalist Jean Piaget ("Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class" 480). Emig says that she had not carefully read Piaget before writing the monograph, although The Language and Thought of the Child is cited in the bibliography and there is one almost passing reference to it in the Introduction. And Piaget is not cited in any of Emig's other earlier works I have examined. She relates how she told Berlin that she had not read Piaget and how he answered, then she should have. Emig again becomes ironic:

I love a version of history where the historian tells the person what they should have done rather than what actually happened. That's a curious history. (Oct. 27, 1989)

More importantly, Emig is highly critical of what she refers to as "parenticide" in the recent taxonomizing of composition studies--that is, the "compulsion" of the second generation of researchers in this field to denounce members of the first. She is especially concerned "that those of the third generation are accepting the synthesizing of the second generation and not going back to the sources." She argues:

The need to ascribe titles and tabs and to pigeonhole . . . is a form of, I think, "parenticide," and I wish they'd find some other things to do. I don't agree with [North's] categories, and I don't agree with Berlin's, and I really think it's a loss to students, if they lose the primary materials. If we believe in reader response, then let them read the text and make up their own minds. I have not yet seen what's gained, except by people who are "anal compulsive," in all this excessive tidying up. It's been messy, and there are joys in the mess, and if they need to clean it up for their own purposes, fine, but don't foist it on a profession as a view that everyone should accept. Do I feel keenly about this? (May 8, 1990)
Moreover, Emig notes, these are exclusively "male typologists." This intellectual reductivism she views as "a certain masculine tradition whereby you have to commit parenticide before you can move on" (Oct. 27, 1989). We ought not to discount such a notion offhandedly. Not only are the typologists of composition studies exclusively male, but those interested in taxonomizing discourse aims and forms (George Bramer, James Kinneavy, Walter Beale, Timothy Crusius, and so on) are mostly male, too. Emig suggests that women simply aren't natural taxonomizers (Oct. 27, 1989). There may be some kind of analogue here with tribal initiations. Part of the pattern of initiation described by anthropologists Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell sometimes includes the symbolic murder of the father and denial of the mother. And this sort of tribal initiation typically has been exclusively male.

Voss' Positivism. Perhaps the best known criticism of The Composing Processes has been that by Ralph F. Voss. He has written two articles critical of Emig's work, both appearing in 1983. One was a review article, which Emig reports she knows was commissioned specifically for College Composition and Communication by then editor Richard Larson. The other was a paper questioning case study and empirical research in general that appeared in the Journal of Advanced Composition. Like other critics, Voss praises Emig's study for its influence ("Janet Emig's The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders: A Reassessment" 278) and concedes that case study research is not without some value ("Composition and the Empirical Imperative" 9), but the sincerity of such concessions is belied by the ruthlessness with which he decontextualizes her
research. Emig considers Voss' review to be "unscholarly" and "an act of venom" and calls it "so carefully unjust" (May 8, 1990). Voss' criticisms can be divided into two categories: his criticism of her assertions about teachers that appear in the "Implications" chapter and his criticism of her methodology.

There is no doubt that Emig makes some harsh remarks about teachers in the book. She states that teachers are often "interested chiefly in a product [they] can criticize rather than in a process [they] can help initiate through imagination and sustain through empathy and support." And she attributes the inadequate teaching of writing in secondary and elementary schools to "teacher illiteracy." Teachers, she contends, don't read enough and certainly don't write enough themselves; they have little, if any, experience in the process they ought to be teaching. For that reason, they tend to truncate the process, providing no time for planning or revision, with both being defined too narrowly (Composing Processes 97-99).

Voss finds these conclusions "too forceful, too sweeping as generalizations after a study of only eight students" and "too strong an indictment" ("Reassessment" 278). He is correct, of course. But Voss fails to take into account Emig's numerous disclaimers and recantations of those remarks. Admittedly, many of those disclaimers took place orally in talks and public meetings, but as I insisted in Chapter I of this dissertation, the medium of an event does not excuse those involved in historical inquiry, of which any review of a work twelve years old must necessarily be taken to be, from the responsibility of knowing about it. Emig submits that she made these disclaimers in virtually every part of the country to "thousands of people," yet
Voss seems not to have heard—or have heard of—them and made no attempt to contact Emig. Emig believes that, for some unknown reason, the hostility she perceives in Voss' article was purposeful: "Clearly, I was not going to be allowed to recant. This is what I call the unhistorical tradition or anti-historical tradition, to which I'm taking such exception" (May 8, 1990).

Emig's revised remarks on teachers did not go unprinted either. What amounted to a disclaimer appeared in an interview with Lois Rosen for the *English Journal* in 1979. In that interview, Emig qualifies the criticism of teachers she presented in *The Composing Processes*:

> When I taught high school, I once worked out that I was doing a ninety-hour week; therefore, I realize I'm speaking to persons who often have ninety-hour weeks. So please take my words in light of my respect and admiration. (15)

This interview deals with exactly the same issues as the section of *The Composing Processes* Voss is here criticizing and should be taken as presenting more authoritative views of teaching. Emig still agrees with much of her criticism of the way writing is taught in schools and of teachers who do not write themselves, but as she reports in a later interview, she no longer blames teachers; instead, she contends that the inadequate teaching of writing in the schools "reflects the larger view of our society toward active literacy" (*Web of Meaning* 62). Voss makes no mention of the *English Journal* interview and may not have known about it. But Voss' editor, Richard Larson, probably knew of it. From 1973 through 1978, Larson produced extensive bibliographies of scholarship in the teaching of writing for *College Composition and Communication*. Only when he became editor of that journal himself did he cease doing those valuable
bibliographies. In the final one for 1978, the year before Rosen's interview of Emig, he included a citation for Rosen's interview with James Britton, Tony Burgess, and Harold Rosen, which also appeared in the *English Journal* (209).

Understanding the exigencies involved in the composition of Emig's criticism of teachers also helps to explain why the "Implications" section took the tone that they did. In an earlier interview, Emig mentions the "self-doubts" she felt about the study. She had no models, and the feedback from advisors was mixed and sometimes discouraging. Then, she reports:

> What happened is that I was told that I wouldn't graduate unless I had a decent set of implications for teaching. I think I had a week to set them out. It was clearly a time when my ideas had to fuse fast.... *(Web of Meaning 62)*

She reports that she actually wrote the implications in about 48 hours: "I still think they wouldn't have been as caustic, if I'd had a chance to modulate them with a little more time" (May 8, 1990).

Voss' criticism of Emig's methodology is important, because it represents an attitude in composition studies that defines science in such a way as to exclude all qualitative research and case study in particular. Such an attitude assumes certain positivistic notions about scientific inquiry that allow scholars in the humanities to reject application of scientific methods on the basis that they cannot provide objective knowledge, while at the same time approving non-scientific inquiry: practitioner advice, historical, critical, and philosophical studies, and theoretical discussions based on all of the above.

In both of his articles, Voss reveals a contradictory attitude toward empirical research. On the one hand, he claims that there are "matters" involved in writing that "are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to bring under the kind
of scrutiny which will give us reliable information in the best scientific tradition" ("Empirical Imperative" 10). On the other hand, he reveres quantitative, laboratory science: "Science enjoys a cachet deservedly earned in the laboratory sciences, but not in the social sciences" ("Empirical Imperative" 6). Voss’ criticisms bespeak his positivistic attitudes toward research. The appearance of a pure objectivity is, for him, clearly the measure of worth of any non-literary research. Voss denies legitimacy as a scientific methodology to all "social science research," and especially to case study research. He declares, "The general prestige of science in our society has not been earned by the highly inferential procedures of case study research" ("Reassessment" 279). For Voss, only a context-stripped research that can measure precisely the variables of what it is studying can possess any validity. "Such precision, however, is not possible in social science research" (279).

In a recent essay, for the Handbook of Research in the English/Language Arts (1989), Emig and June Birnbaum observe that such a positivistic perspective is not unusual and that the rise of case study as an acceptable methodology parallels the rise in disagreement over the validity of the positivistic paradigm. The problem with taking such an exclusionary view of empirical research as Voss takes is its failure to recognize that no research is ever context-free. Elliot Mishler points out:

The scientific method was to be our guarantor of objectivity and neutrality; diligent application of its rigorous procedures was, in turn, to produce a body of cumulative knowledge that was systematic and general. It has not worked out that way . . . .

Scientific research is itself a social enterprise, subject to a variety of social forces other than its own declared imperative—the search for valid empirical knowledge and understanding. ("Meaning in Context: Is There Any Other Kind?" 17)
Voss, then, fails to understand that the "prestige" he believes has been "earned" by "laboratory science" was never really earned; it was, if we really want to continue using this metaphorical line, _embezzled_. As long as we continue to accept the erroneous idea that a laboratory is not a context, then we will continue to buy into the positivist's swindle.

Voss' misrepresentations of Emig and his positivistic, dichotomous view of science and the humanities are epitomized in a misinterpretation of an Emig quote at the end of "Composition and the Empirical Imperative." In _The Composing Processes_, Emig writes:

> The writer's hope and ambition for this study is that it may provide one rung of a ladder up from alchemy, so the learning and teaching of composition may someday attain the status of science as well as art. (5)

Voss misrepresents this statement as a claim that Emig equates the study of composition entirely with scientific inquiry. He fails to recognize the "as well as art" part of the formula she presents (11).

Voss clearly has little idea of the contributions case studies can make to our knowledge of composing. Emig and Birnbaum note the lengthy history of case study research, which can be traced back at least as far as Hippocrates in ancient Greece. And they point out that most case studies have been done in psychology and medicine (not simply in the social sciences, as Voss implies). In conversation, Emig relates her discovery of Robert Davis' use of talk-aloud protocols in mathematics May 8, 1990). Some of the advantages of case study methods, according to Emig and Birnbaum, are its ability to "build on the reader's tacit knowledge" and provide "vicarious experience" through its narrativity; its provision of opportunities for the reader "to probe for internal
consistency;" its provision of "a grounded assessment of context;" and its ability to "serve as one of three angles in triangulated investigation, thus helping to provide validity" ("Case Study" 3).

Much of Voss' criticism of case studies focuses on the use of talk-aloud protocols, which Emig introduced to composition studies in *The Composing Processes*. Talk-aloud protocols actually can be traced at least as far back as 1958, when Benjamin Bloom and Lois Broder used talk-aloud protocols to study students' problem-solving processes while preparing for science tests. Voss' main concern is the presence of a tape recorder, which he maintains "skews the results, for all results reflect the recorder's presence as a factor" ("Reassessment" 280). Voss offers no support for such a contention about the use of tape recorders. As a matter of fact, he provides only one specific example of what he perceives as Emig's presence skewing the results of the study. Voss claims that Emig's presence as researcher causes Lynn to feel guilty about one of her choices of subject matter. Voss speculates that "the guilty feeling . . . probably came from Lynn's sense that Emig (or a similar 'teacher figure') would tacitly disapprove of taking an easier route. But Voss gives no evidence that the researcher's presence was actually the cause of Lynn's guilty feelings other than the fact that Emig was there, asked a question, and Lynn expressed guilt. And as a matter of fact, there is no mention of guilt at all in this section (*Composing Processes* 48-50) nor in Appendix B, where we get the full transcript of the questions and answers about Lynn's paper (135-36). The main point made in this section of the monograph is Lynn's difficulty expressing feelings and Emig's interpretation of her choice of the "easy" subject as *in part* an avoidance reaction.
North's Taxonomy. In *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, Stephen North finds this explanation to be an instance of Emig's questionable interpretation of her data. He notes "how little she has to go on, and he finds her 28-page interpretation of Lynn "amazingly ambitious and freewheeling" (227). He writes:

When Emig asks Lynn that slightly distorted question on writing about feelings, they've known each other for some two hours. Two hours! And in response to it Lynn does an admirable job of--well, of expressing her feelings about expressing her feelings. So how much stock can we put into Emig's reading of this answer to what is essentially an "are-you-still-beating-your-wife" question asked of an eager-to-cooperate teenager by an authoritative stranger...? Indeed, what would we have thought if this seemingly well-adjusted young woman *had* chosen to write about her grandmother, and had proceeded to turn her composing-aloud session into a kind of therapeutic encounter, baring her soul for this woman she hardly knows? In other words, given how very little we--or Emig--know about Lynn, how safe would any such far-reaching interpretation of her choice of topic in this one very unusual situation be? (229)

In this criticism, as in his criticism of Stephen Witte's article, discussed in Chapter I, North has failed to gather all the information necessary to make a fully informed evaluation. To begin with, Emig and Lynn had known each other for more than two hours. The question about feelings was asked during their second session together (*Composing Processes*, Appendix A, 123). Moreover, Emig points out that the recorded sessions with her subjects were not the only conversations that she had with them:

She and I had spent quite a bit of time together, and there were very many conversations that surrounded this. She was forever talking about "I don't want to get into that." By that time, I had taught hundreds of kids, and I still hold with my interpretation of keeping her feelings at bay. She and I had many more conversations than were contained in the case study. (May 8, 1990)
North would of course be right to respond that the reader of *The Composing Processes* would have no way of knowing that there were more conversations upon which the author made her interpretations; he would be right to complain that she should have included reports of such conversations, even if in a general way. But, again, we need to understand that this research report was based on a dissertation; that, as Emig has said before, she didn't have much faith that many people would be interested in what she had to say (*Web of Meaning* 145); that, therefore, she did not attempt to re-perform the study or reinterpret the data in order to improve upon it; and that the study, after all, represents the first attempt at case study in composition studies and so will almost of necessity have rough edges. And anyway, North, who claims to be doing ethnographic research, should have asked her about it.

North's book, as I noted in Chapter I, presents a taxonomy of the various "modes of inquiry" and research "communities" in composition studies. Emig and others have questioned not only his categories but the whole enterprise of taxonomizing a field. Had he simply described methodologies, as Lauer and Asher did for *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*, allowing then for combinations of methods in single works and in the different works of individual researchers, his taxonomy might well have produced a challenging contribution to the field. As it is, he feels he must characterize each group or community of individuals, which leads him to unfortunate generalizations.

North labels case study researchers "Clinicians" and describes them as a group "beset by . . . a problem of 'self-image'" (199). He maintains that case study researchers and Emig in particular have tried to tie their research to an
experimental tradition (199). He sees this attempt in the vocabulary Emig uses, in discussions of "sample size and makeup"; in discussion of the "validity of her primary investigative tool" (composing aloud); and in discussion of "the correlation of her findings with other measures of writing ability or creativity" (199-200). Like Voss, North has failed to consider the use of case study in other disciplines, which is, of course, where Emig found her vocabulary. And, like Voss, North seems to be revealing a narrow, even positivistic, definition of science (May 8, 1990). North reveals his own brand of positivism and context-stripping in his complaints that Emig's mode of inquiry is "too intrusive" and "to context-irreverent" (202).

North finally sees evidence of a self-identity problem in the unwillingness of case study researchers to continue doing case studies. But such a perception reveals North's own blindness. Emig insists that "some of the most exciting work is being done in the form of case studies," and she mentions Ann Dyson's work in particular as well as that of Berkenkotter, Graves, Huckin and Ackerman, Matsuhashi, Mishel, Newkirk, Perl, Pianko, Sommers, Stallard, and others ("Case Study" 7-11; May 8, 1990). North's statement about Emig's use of case study methodology is indicative of his general failure at research into the field. He writes, "So far as I know, Emig never did another such study . . ." (202). Obviously, he made no attempt to find out, for in fact, Emig did do another case study in the early 1980's. She studied the composing processes of a boy and a girl in the Netherlands, studies that she has yet to report on in print however. Emig found no marked differences between the composing processes of the American and Dutch students she examined. What minor differences she did
find she attributes to the fact that "in Dutch schools, writing across the curriculum is a fact, unlike in our schools" (May 8, 1990). Emig reports:

Both of [the students studied] wrote every day in every class. So they were much more practiced writers than our sixteen and seventeen year olds. They were writing in religion; they were writing in history. Every single class required not only note-taking but papers, reports. My memory of the school is of everyone, pen in hand, writing, and I was told that that was a fairly representative high school in The Netherlands. (May 8, 1990)

She also found "immense ambitions for the children" held by the parents. The other aspect of these studies that interested Emig was the effect of parental alcoholism on the girl: "So much of how she proceeded is the profile of a child of an alcoholic" (May 8, 1990).

Conclusions about Composing Processes. Emig herself is quite clear about the flaws she sees in The Composing Processes:

One is that I didn’t adequately know the psychoanalytic tradition in case study. I really should have learned that . . . . Second, I really had not read enough in ethnography at the time. (May 8, 1990).

Of course, as Emig points out, many texts she could have used for the latter had not yet been written. Emig, in addition, expresses regret at not having read Louise Rosenblatt, "because a careful reading of Literature as Exploration I think would have been very helpful" (May 8, 1990). Emig also agrees with North about the unfortunate brevity of the pieces her subjects produced. But once again, the context of the document's production explains why they were short. She had to do the research over a summer. The subjects were volunteering their time, and most had summer jobs. Context also probably explains the slight confusion of the role her taxonomy of modes plays in this study. North claims
that she sets forth in the Introduction a hypothesis that her students write in two modes (reflexive and extensive), then asserts that her hypothesis has been confirmed in her "Findings," but fails to support that confirmation with the study itself. Such a claim is, in fact, not true. There are evident differences between school- and self-sponsored writings in the reports of these case studies. For instance, at one point in the chapter on the seven other student writers, Emig reports the following:

Two related generalizations seem valid about the role peers play in the writing life of the eight students in the sample. (1) No student in the sample has experienced a curriculum or a set of school-sponsored experiences in composition in which peer interactions play any formal part as, say, in reciprocal reading and evaluating of themes by pairs or groups. (2) Peers play a very significant role in self-sponsored writing of the twelfth graders in this sample. (78)

And Emig goes on to discuss in detail peer interaction in the writing experiences of her subjects (78-79). The problem here, if it can be termed a problem, is that Emig is dealing with ten variables, covering the whole of these students' writing processes, and she is trying to do it in too few pages, a length of course not simply determined by her but also by her dissertation committee and then by her editor and publisher. Still, as Lauer and Asher point out, "One of her contributions to composition scholarship was her identification of process variables and her examination of their operation in different types of discourse" (31).

Finally, Emig's conclusions are, in her words, "just unbelievably hedged around with qualifications" (May 8, 1990). In her introduction, she writes, "It is important to note that this report does not claim to be a definitive, exhaustive, nor psychometrically-sophisticated account of how all twelfth graders compose,"
and she lists the limitations of the study: its sample size (both of the number of subjects and the number of pieces of writing they produce); the difficulty, artificiality, and distracting nature of composing aloud; and the absence of any correlation of data "with any outside, 'objective' measures of writing ability" (4-5). These same qualifications appear in the "Implications for Research" section in the last chapter, but readers might well find the uncompromising statements of the "Implications for Teaching" section contradictory of such qualifying remarks. In her defense, Emig asks that we recall the directive she was given, that in order to graduate she needed to produce within a week definite, unqualified implications for teaching (Web of Meaning 62; May 9, 1990). Ironically, it is these last pages that readers usually remember (May 9, 1990). Although Earl Buxton remarks on the tentativeness of this study in the Preface to the monograph, Emig's critics have generally neglected to notice it, or when they have noticed, they have disregarded it when they began to evaluate the work.

The Biology of Writing

During Emig's early years at Rutgers, she published little. She points out that she was "trying to establish a fairly young program" and to establish herself in "a new setting" (Web of Meaning 109). She also says, "It was what you might call a bad time because it was the second time I'd been fired from a university. That experience has a very interesting effect on silencing one's thoughts" (Web of Meaning 109).
What she did produce, however, introduced a new theme for Emig: the role of physiology, including neurology, in the composing process and the development of that process. She published two important works: "The Biology of Writing: Another View of the Process" and "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Writing Process." A very important corollary to her discussions of the physiological aspects of writing is a notion that the study of brain damaged or disabled individuals can enlighten us about composing processes. Several sources for the emergence of this interest can be traced. Emig has always been interested in physiology; we recall that she began as a pre-med major in college, and at Harvard, she had a course in the psychology of language with Eric Lenneberg, who was interested in aphasia. Lenneberg's students actually visited a Veterans' Hospital, and Emig says, "It affected me, I think, very deeply" (May 9, 1990). Her reading of Howard Gardner's *The Shattered Mind* might well have been the stimulus for emergence of this interest at the time (Web of Meaning 109). It also seems possible--and Emig is willing to accept the possibility--that in conjunction with her reading of Gardner, the emergence of this theme is in some way connected with her experiences, during this period (May 9, 1990). She had in effect been fired from two jobs in three years. She had taken a position with tenure at a major research university, but because of sexism and an anti-composition bias there, it appeared she would not be promoted any time soon, if ever.

In several essays, Emig provides justifications for a biological/physiological approach to the study of writing, but the most extensive explanation occurs in "The Tacit Tradition: The Inevitability of a
Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Writing" (1980). Implicit here also is the more general defense of empirical research—and research altogether—into composing processes. This passage is a clear rejection of the notion that because some elements of the mental processes that occur during writing may be difficult, if not impossible, to measure, we should therefore refrain from research into such areas at all. Emig instead argues that if we are committed to explaining composing processes and if we believe, as it would seem we should, that these processes are "orchestrated" by subprocesses involving memory, neural-motor functions, and perception, then we as a discipline have little choice but to attend to these biological-physiological subprocesses. She repeats Brenda Milner's speculation that cognitive development may well be related to neurological development, "cognitive stages may prove correlates for increasing maturation in layers of the neocortex." But Emig goes even further: "To be even more speculative than Milner, what if the developmental psychology with which some of us currently work so closely proves to be simply immature biology?" ("Tacit Tradition" 153)—that is, what if cognitive development can be charted neurologically? As justification for her call for research on brain-damaged writers, Emig points out that deriving inferences of "the whole from the fragmented, the normal from the aberrant, the functional from the dysfunctional, is a classic research approach" in other disciplines. Nor, she declares, do such studies have to be "too clinical and anti-humanistic" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 111).
Brain Physiology. Any study of this kind, of course, requires knowledge of brain physiology. Although Emig separates her discussion of physiological elements involved in writing in "Hand, Eye, Brain," she makes very clear there that such a separation is simply a metaphorical construct, that she realizes the functions of "hand" and "eye" are orchestrated by "brain" (111). In "The Biology of Writing," she makes no separation, and she refers to the two derivative functions of "hand" and "eye" as motor competence and visual competence. Emig’s understanding of the brain reflects the hemispheric interests of the 1970s and 1980s. She refers in both essays to what she calls Robert Ornstein’s "useful, if rough" description of the functions of the two brain hemispheres in his The Psychology of Consciousness, a description, she reports, she "refined and modified" with more recent research ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 117-18). The cerebral cortex is divided into two hemispheres, which are joined by interconnecting fibers. For most right-handed individuals, the left hemisphere predominantly controls analytic, logical, linear, and sequential activities, and the right hemisphere predominantly controls holistic, relational, and spatial activities. Ornstein suggests that the right hemisphere is responsible for our spatial orientation, our visual artistic efforts, and our recognition of faces, while the left hemisphere is responsible for language and mathematics. Emig, however, cites several more recent studies suggesting that language (and math) and especially writing involve both hemispheres of the brain. Studies of brain-damaged, particularly aphasic, patients strongly supports this conclusion (see Howard Gardner's The Shattered Mind).
The suggestion here is that "the writing process is powerfully, perhaps even uniquely, multi-modal, involving simultaneously sight, sound, and touch in an intricate, mutually dependent and reinforcing cycle and that the loss of one sense-modality represents, at least for some, an almost fatal impairment of the total process" ("Biology of Writing" 17). Emig explores in turn each subprocess or modality and its possible role or roles in the production of writing, and, in doing so, she reveals connections between this theme and earlier themes that she has investigated.

**Modalities.** The "literal act of writing," the motoric procedures involved in writing (whether with stylus, pen, or keyboard) Emig finds "activating, mobilizing. It physically thrusts the writer from a state of inaction into engagement with the process and the task" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 111). She also proposes that the discrepancy in tempo between actual thought and getting thought onto paper (or screen) "allows for surprise, time for the unexpected to intrude and even take over" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 112). This notion of activating and surprising recalls her discussion of the preconscious in "The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing," for what is activation and surprise in writing but the making conscious of what was preconscious. Emig also suggests that "the literal act of writing may be for some of us an aesthetically necessary part of the process" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 112). This notion takes us even deeper into the writer's mind, perhaps even into the unconscious.
Visual competence, Emig claims, functions within each stage or activity of the writing process. For simplicity's sake, she assumes a tripartite division of the writing process into the three traditional stages of pre-writing, writing, and revision, although Emig of course views that division as an oversimplification. In prewriting activities, visual competence provides the writer with experiences from which to draw subject matter and details. When writers begin writing their first drafts, putting words on the page for the first time, Emig maintains, they "gain a sense of producing an icon, the product of writing" by seeing their words on the page ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 115). But the most important role of visual competence occurs during revision, for "the eye is the major instrument by which we rescan and review what we have written" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 113). Overall, understanding visual competence focuses our attention on the process as much as the product of composing, and while Emig presents this process in linear terms, the fact is that visual competence allows, perhaps even stimulates, the writer to rescan material even as it is being written; and it "permits individual rhythms of review to be established and followed" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 116)—that is, it allows for the recursivity of many writers' composing processes.

The importance of trying to understand the workings of the brain become obvious when we examine the linguistic and rhetorical impairments caused by even the slightest brain damage. As Howard Gardner's *The Shattered Mind: The Person After Brain Damage* (1974) makes clear, language production and especially writing involve both hemispheres of the brain, but, Emig speculates:

Modes of discourse may represent measurably different profiles of brain activity. What if it is the case that classical and contemporary rhetorical terms, such as *argument* and *poetry or extensive* and *reflexive*, may
represent centuries-old intuitive understandings that the mind deals differently with different speaking and writing tasks? (119)

Also involved here is the role of memory, for memories are often significant parts of our composing, as subject matter and as a function necessary to the composing process. Writers who have experienced memory damage typically experience serious damage to their rhetorical skills also. Emig refers to A. R. Luria’s case study of a man who could not forget. He was unable to communicate, because "almost every word set off a wild, unquenchable stream of associations" ("Biology of Writing" 18). In essence, as I think Kubie would maintain, the man’s preconscious had lost its ability to evaluate stimuli and its ability to select what would become conscious from that endless stream of stimuli bombarding it. The expression of what we find meaningful in our lives is lost. As noted in Chapter II, memory (that term we use for the selective function of the preconscious) acts as a device for measuring what a person finds valuable in her experience. Without the ability to forget, the person cannot express this valuation and may in fact be unable even to make such valuation. We thus confront a major intellectual issue of our time: the extent to which knowledge is symbolic, even linguistic. What is the relationship between linguistic ability and the ability to process experience through the preconscious and thereby be able to make value judgments? Cautious movement toward constructivism, then, appears indicated in Emig’s attention to this theme.

**Pedagogical Implications.** Even as Emig moves toward new themes, however, she retains her interest in old ones, especially the basic informing theme of pedagogy. Particularly in "Hand, Eye, Brain," Emig suggests research
and pedagogical implications of the neuro-physiological aspects of writing, and we may infer others. First, she says, we need to "learn far more about biology and physiology than we have previously been asked to learn" and become more interdisciplinary in our outlook. Emig reports on connections that she made with the medical school at Rutgers (120). In conversation, Emig relates how that connection was originally made. Dixie Goswami, then a graduate student of Emig's, was a neighbor of Leonide Goldstein, a very distinguished neurologist on staff at Rutgers' medical school, doing research on readers. They started talking shop one evening, and the next day, Goswami came to Emig very excited, reporting on Goldstein's research in right and left brain activity. Since Emig was a friend of Goswami's, Goldstein invited her over to observe his work. Eventually, Benjamin Glassner, another of Emig's graduate students, did work with Goldstein on neurological specialization while writing his dissertation, but Emig reports that the connections with the medical school have not continued:

> It was very hard for the students to cross register. Even though Goldstein had extended the invitation, that particular clinical interest did not really extend in my students beyond Bud [Glassner] very much. (May 9, 1990)

And, in fact, Emig's call for research in this area has not been heeded generally in the field. She attributes this failure to the humanistic, often literary, tradition out of which most scholars in composition emerge. Researchers who come out of this tradition generally have trouble regarding writers as disabled: "It's not the tack we comfortably take. The best we do, and I think there would be gains in doing more of it, is to look at unskilled writers" (May 9, 1990). And, of course, not only has this research been generally neglected by the profession, it has been particularly neglected by historians of Composition studies, who could well have
a role in popularizing it. But histories that focus on the larger trends and movements will inevitably pass over less favored approaches. Still, if historians have a social responsibility in writing history, as many today feel they do, then consideration of less popular approaches such as the study of biological factors in writing ought to be given. The case history approach allows historians to explore these neglected studies and to do in more depth than allowed in more general histories.

Understanding the biology of writing can have even more far-reaching implications. If writing is multi-modal, then clearly developing these modes in relation to writing would seem logical. But, in fact, "schools typically require students to be split-brained where the learning of writing and other complex arts and sciences is concerned" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 120). That is, as will be seen below, writing and reading are typically taught as totally separate activities, and writing instruction all too often focuses simply on mechanical matters of punctuation and so forth.

Constructivism: The Writer as a Maker of Worlds

In the 1980's, Emig introduced a more philosophical theme: constructivism. This theme complicates the simplistic view of Emig as only a spokesperson for a rhetoric of cognitive psychology, although the constructivist philosophy certainly does have consequences for the study of cognition. But constructivism adds a philosophical depth to the psychological aspects of the study of cognitive functions, not the least of which is writing.
In 1988, in "The Making of a Writer as a Maker of Worlds," Emig reexamined the neuro-physiological "resources and modalities" discussed in the previous section, adding consideration of a few more (hearing, "languageing," and conceptualizing) (205). This time, however, she sought to understand role of each modality from an explicitly constructivist perspective. Taking this approach resulted in a more refined evaluation of each competence or modality and a distinction between those which are absolutely necessary to the writer and those for which in cases of disability alternative modalities can be used. Emig concluded:

[B]y defining writing as a symbolic, transformative activity of creating text-worlds, we can far more discerningly determine which contributory processes we can influence and which we cannot. For seeing, hearing, gesturing, we can tap within the learner alternate modalities; borrow technologies; provide peers who can act as surrogate eyes, ears, hands, mouths, sensibilities; and we ourselves [teachers] can serve in a range of contributory roles. In cases, however, of missing memory, a natural language not acquired by adolescence, a traumatized or synaptically disorganized brain, we can do very little, or nothing. (210)

Emig's embracing of constructivism has its origins in conversations with colleagues from other disciplines, notably scientist George Pallrand, a colleague at Rutgers, and speculations she was making in the early 1980's about the nature of composition as a discipline:

I'm in the only cross-disciplinary department at Rutgers, and I'm delighted to be there, because it keeps one's view wide. What interested me was [the question] what can we say specifically about the nature of inquiry as it pertained to various disciplines? And the question I kept asking myself was "Do we have at least the rudiments of a discipline in writing instruction?" It seemed to me that we had been in action for about fifteen years. What do we have? And so that's what I wanted to speculate about. (May 9, 1990)

These speculations led to a flurry of scholarship in the early 1980's, much of which explored earlier themes and elements of her research (pedagogy; the
complexity of composing processes; the cognitive development of the writer; research methodologies; the bringing together of diverse research and scholarship; and, as we have just above, neuro-physiological factors involved in composing). But Emig revisited all of these topics in a variety of works with the new constructivist perspective. Her embracing of constructivism provided Emig with way of uniting the diversity of her themes into what amounts to a paradigm that can inform our understanding of composing processes, of writing instruction, and of the field of Composition as a whole.

*What It Takes to Make a World.* In "The Making of a Writer as a Maker of Worlds," Emig contrasts constructivist assumptions about the teaching of writing with behaviorist assumptions (204). In "Inquiry Paradigms and Writing," she compares three different "governing gazes," three ways of perceiving, three ideological perspectives: the constructivist, the phenomenological, and the positivistic, including behaviorism. Naturally, those holding these different perspectives will never represent purely each "governing gaze." These stances clearly exist on a continuum, and what Emig is describing are simply the "consummate" points of each on that continuum. The positivist-behaviorist tends to view phenomena a-contextually, stripped of context, as absolute, and therefore available for unassailable interpretation ("Inquiry Paradigms" 160-162). Students seen from this perspective are considered passive learners, consuming a fixed body of knowledge and skills, and the teacher uses certain fixed approaches to learning problems ("Making of a Writer" 204). The phenomenologist, on the other hand, "scrupulously" orients all phenomena
within contexts. For the phenomenologist, reality is relative to the perceiver; all knowledge is personal, not some fixed absolute store; and the teacher may pick and choose whatever approaches strike her fancy, since none can be privileged ("Inquiry Paradigms" 162-63). The constructivist, Emig asserts, exists between the above two extremes and is concerned with "the interplay between the knower and the known, and the mutually transforming effects of that interaction" ("Inquiry Paradigms" 160, 169).

In *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (1986), Jerome Bruner provides a description of constructivism, especially in his chapter on Nelson Goodman, a major spokesperson for the philosophy, and in his Afterword. Bruner writes:

Its central thesis, "constructivism," is that contrary to common sense there is no unique "real world" that preexists and is independent of human mental activity and human symbolic language; that what we call the world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world . . . . The world of appearance, the very world we live in, is "created" by mind. (95-96)

Thus, like the phenomenologist, the constructivist cannot privilege any one world construct over any other world construct; "no one 'world' is more 'real' than all others, none is ontologically privileged as the unique real world" (96). Kenneth Burke, an early "constructivist" by definition, put forth the metaphor of "terministic screens," through which, he argues, we selectively perceive the world (*Language as Symbolic Action* 44-62). Emig says, "the constructivist view has to do with the accuracy of the fit to phenomena, and that one in a sense tries to find the key, and there are many keys--and many locks--and many ways in" (May 9, 1990).
The constructivist, however, does not embrace radical relativism. Goodman in *Of Mind and Other Matters* (1984) says that the most effective attitude is that of "judicious vacillation"—that is, shifting among different worlds, a pluralism, but a pluralism that does not endorse a relativism that cannot distinguish between right and wrong versions of the world (32). Goodman insists:

I have not said that we can make a steak or a chair or a world at will and as we like by making a version. Only if true does description make things; and making a true version can be hard work. (35)

Bruner explains:

Interpretations, whether of text or of world experience, can be judged for their rightness. Their rightness, however, is not to be reckoned by correspondence to an aboriginal "real" world "out there." For such a "real world" is not only indeterminate epistemologically, but even empty as an act of faith. Rather, meaning (or "reality," for in the end the two are indistinguishable) is an enterprise that reflects human intentionality and cannot be judged for its rightness independently of it. (158)

Instead, truth exists in the relation between different versions of "the world."

Versions abound: "We know the world in different ways, from different stances, and each of the ways in which we know it produces different structures or representations, or, indeed, 'realities'" (109). But each version is by necessity based on a previous version or versions, because there is no one, aboriginal world available. Bruner concludes, then:

"[W]orld making . . . , starting as it does from a prior world that we take as given, is constrained by the nature of the world version with which we begin the remaking. It is not a relativistic picnic. If there are meanings "incarnate" in the world . . . , we transform them in the act of accepting them into our transformed world, and that transformed world then becomes the world with which others start, or that we then offer. In the end, it is the transaction of meaning by human beings, human beings armed with reason and buttressed by the faith that sense can be made and remade, that makes human culture . . . (158-59)
Although Goodman's and Bruner's discussions of constructivism suggest that "the world" must necessarily translate into multiple worlds, the most important feature of constructivism for Emig seems to be its pluralistic perspective, not a cosmological or metaphysical implication. She repeats something that she read somewhere: "'All we've got is our interpretation; it doesn't mean the world isn't out there,' which I think was a very neat way of saying we're not denying reality" (May 9, 1990).

The constructivist position can perhaps be best understood if we compare it with the two extreme alternatives again (the positivistic and the phenomenological), as Emig does. The former position holds that the world exists independent of human perception and that human perception can know the world directly. The latter position holds that the world does not exist independent of human perception; the world exists through human perception. The middle position, constructivism—at least that which Emig seems to be asserting—holds that the world may exist independent of human perception but that human perception can know the world only indirectly. That is, constructivism appears to accept at least the possibility of a fixed physical world, but what is meant by "reality" or "the world" involves much more than physical existence, although, for the constructivist, reality is never truly disconnected from it—or at least the possibility of it. The fact that we cannot know the world directly undermines any certainty about its existence, but that does not mean that it insures that the world does not exist.
Writing from a constructivist perspective is thus an important way in which humans make their worlds. Emig defines writing as "the symbolic process of creating worlds through texts; and then, if those text-worlds prove unsatisfactory, of re-creating them through revision" ("Making of a Writer" 203). There are certainly other modes of symbolic action that create worlds, but "writing represents for many the most available, the most accessible source of expression and power" ("Making of a Writer" 203).

Learning To Be a Maker of Worlds. In the Introduction to the first edition of the textbook *Four Worlds of Writing* (1971), Emig reports on several learning experiments conducted with students to allow them to determine just how advantageous is the ability to write. The experiments began with students being asked to describe an emotion of their choice, first nonverbally and then verbally. Next, they performed the same operations on a past learning experience. After each description session, the students formed groups and compared versions. Then, they were asked to describe the emotion and the learning experience in the form of mathematical equations or scientific formulas. The students concluded from these little experiments that verbal versions tended to be the most available, the easiest in which to elaborate temporal relationships, the versions that were the fullest and most elaborated, and the best way to convey their thoughts and understanding of the world. That is, verbal language seemed superior for such communication. In a final experiment, the students were asked to consider whether writing differed significantly from and had any advantages over the three other verbal communication processes (talking, listening, and
They each chose a current event of interest and then performed various research operations on it. They read everything they could on the event; they listened to radio and/or watched television newscasts of it; they talked with peers about it; and they wrote a response to it in whatever form they wanted. In groups, they compared these four different ways of responding to events, considering several questions: "Which way gives the greatest understanding of the event?" and "Which way provides the greatest involvement?" and "By which means could they possibly affect the event?" The students concluded that writing usually provided the best understanding of the event, that writing and talking provided the greatest engagement and involvement; and that "writing provided the most opportunity for affecting the event" (4-6).

These advantages of writing have not always been appreciated by teachers and researchers. Yet the importance of making these distinctions in verbal processes becomes very evident once one assumes a constructivist perspective. If "what we call the world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world" (Bruner 95-96), then we want to know which symbolic procedures provide greater access to such construction than others. We also must recognize the important role that learning has in such construction. After all, as Goodman and Bruner point out, worlds are not constructed out of the air; each new world is based on the mind's knowledge of a previous world. In fact, Bruner suggests that constructivism is very congenial to those interested in human cognitive development who find "different meanings being assigned to the same ‘event’ at different ages" (97). Bruner continues:
As we grow to adulthood (at least in Western culture), we become increasingly adept at seeing the same set of events from multiple perspectives or stances and at entertaining the results as, so to speak, alternative possible worlds. (109)

Suppose, then, that writing, clearly one way of constructing world versions, turned out to be not only a superior way of constructing worlds but also a superior way of seeing worlds from multiple perspectives, of learning about worlds. Put this way, the equation of learning and constructing in this model can be seen. To learn about a world is to transform it, to make it part of your own and thereby reconstruct it.

Writing as a unique way of learning and of making worlds becomes from the late 1970s forward an important theme of Janet Emig's. In 1977, she published her now most widely known essay, "Writing as a Mode of Learning." For many, this essay marks the beginning of the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum movement, although in her piece for the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, "Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric" (1982), Emig traces that movement back to the work of the London Schools Council project in the late 1960's and notably that of "the London group," led by James Britton. The source of "Writing as a Mode of Learning" was a "general annoyance at all the simple-minded statements made in public places about writing having some connection with learning" (Web of Meaning 122). Emig recalls:

I had just been in the presence of at least ten or eleven people who said, "Writing is a way of learning and thinking," and I'd say, "Tell me more about it," and they'd say, "Well, writing is a way of learning and thinking." I got nothing but tautologies, and I thought, "If it is, let me see if I can figure out how." I regarded it as just an intellectual puzzle. But I think it was a response to hearing this banal thing over and over. I wasn't denying the possibility, but I thought if we were going to keep saying it, it would be nice to do something about it. (May 9, 1990)
And, indeed, she did do something about it, although Emig does complain now about flaws she sees in that essay. She believes it is "too dense," although she attributes part of this problem to length requirements set by editor of CCC at the time, Edward Corbett. She also finds it "inadequately cross-cultural" (May 9, 1990). Emig concedes, too, that she discusses only "analytic" or "paradigmatic" (expository) writing and not "poetic" or "narrative" compositions (Web of Meaning 122). She explains that she did so consciously, because she had been given to understand that Nancy Martin was writing a piece on the same topic only focusing on narrative writing. She has yet to see that piece, but she feels certain that had she dealt with both kinds of writing, the essay would have had to be longer, for she feels that narrative is a different way of knowing from paradigmatic thought (May 9, 1990).

"Writing as a Mode of Learning" was composed prior to Emig's fully conscious embracing of a constructivist philosophy, but her vision in this essay of writing as a deliberate construction of meaning clearly indicates a large step in that direction. The structure of Emig's argument here is simple. First, she attempts to distinguish writing from the other processes; then, she attempts to chart unique correspondences between writing and learning. Emig is not satisfied with the differences she records between talking and writing in the essay. For instance, she proposes there that writing is learned, artificial behavior, while talking is natural. The distinction is, of course, too simple. And in fact, in "Non-Magical Thinking: Presenting Writing Developmentally in School" (1982), Emig suggests the possibility that humans may have a natural, genetic predisposition to write as well as to speak (136). Such a notion implies
the possibility that oral cultures might be genetically predisposed eventually to develop alphabets and writing. Emig does not resist the logic of this next step; she acknowledges:

Some anthropologists get hives when I say that. They are really, really distressed with this as a concept. It seems parochial, and it seems classist and, I'm sure, a number of things to others. But I still think there are immense limitations [in strictly oral cultures], because what you cannot do even if you're human, without [written language], you can't do, in [Jung's] wonderful metaphor, you have no way of doing, external storage of what goes on in a culture. (May 9, 1990).

This notion of the possible inherence of writing echoes Derrida's notion of the primacy of writing— that is, "writing-in-general" or "arche-writing" (Grammatology 109-12; see also Neel 110-19). Traditionally, writing has been seen as a simple copying of speech and artificial translation of thought; it has been seen as "tertiary" (Neel 110). But Derrida contends that writing as arche-writing precedes speech and that thinking depends on writing. Emig and Derrida of course would differ at this point, for Emig argues that writing is one way of making the world—that is, of making meaning. Derrida sees the endless play of language as inhibiting the communication of meaning and the making of worlds in that sense. Derrida's project, of course, is the deconstruction of "worlds," not their construction.

In "Writing as a Mode of Learning," Emig reviews various ways other scholars have tried to distinguish between the different verbal processes; none of these ways, she finds, particularly compelling. However, Emig herself does provide us with a provocative model. She offers three criteria by which to compare the different processes: creativity, origination, and graphic recording (124). The distinction between creativity and origination is close, and Emig does
not spend time to make it sharp. Creativity seems to mean the active creation of meaning; origination seems to refer simply to the origin of the verbal construct itself. All four processes, Emig asserts, are creative or re-creative. Talking is originating but not graphically recorded. Listening is neither originating nor graphically recorded. Reading is graphically recorded but not originating. Writing, on the other hand, is both originating and graphically recorded as well as being creative like the others, making it a powerful world-making instrument (124). Emig emphasizes the enabling power of writing's being graphically recorded. Not only is it important for "external storage;" it also provides "a unique external screen for self-examination" (May 9, 1990). She notes its use in "various therapies, addiction therapies, marriage counseling therapies. More and more the text is used as an external manifestation of thought and as an object that can be used with somewhat diffused passion for self-examination, examination of a relationship" (May 9, 1990).

In "Creating Minds, Created Texts: Writing and Reading" (1983), June Birnbaum and Emig explore the complicated relationship of these two verbal processes which rely on graphic recording. The fact is, the power of writing has long been underestimated by schools. The authors observe that in elementary schools, little time is devoted to writing, while a good deal of time is given over reading:

If writing instruction appears at all in these schools, it is separated in time and place from reading instruction and in contexts where parallels cannot be readily drawn between the processes . . . . Moreover, much that passes for writing instruction is actually drill in usage, punctuation, and mechanics, divorced from production of whole texts. (87-88)
A constructivist perspective on the relationship between reading and writing, however, reveals important similarities. Both processes are world-making experiences, transforming experience with the use of symbols. "Both processes are centrally concerned with the construction of meaning through text," which "is an active process of cognition" (91). "Both are acts of skill," which Michael Polanyi labels "continuous, coordinated performances" or, as the authors define it, "doing more things at once than one can possibly think of" (91). Both involve behaviors "that span a spectrum of responses ranging from the extensive to the reflexive in writing and from the efferent to the aesthetic in reading" (91-92). And both "are processes of immense perceptual, experiential, linguistic, and cognitive complexity," and thus, both are "fragile and vulnerable to interference and trauma" (92). Birnbaum and Emig find that writing and reading are "mutually enhancing" (92).

The authors, however, also point out some very significant differences in the ways the two processes are experienced, above and beyond commonsense differences. The reader experiences the text as a prepared product, something to be consumed, although the consumption naturally requires preparation of the product. The writer, however, experiences the text as an "evolving" process, an invention that can be tinkered with, set aside, or even taken apart in order to use parts for another product (94). Prediction by the reader differs from that of the writer. As noted earlier in the discussion on responding, George Kelly contends that anticipation of events is "our central unique human activity" (95). Reading researcher Frank Smith believes "that the overarching process in reading is anticipating what the writer or the text will do" (95). The reader, however, is
limited by the preexisting text—that is, by past action, the writer's writing the text in the past. The writer is not so limited; the writer predicts consequences of actions that have yet to be accomplished, actions that can be altered if the consequences predicted are objectionable. "The role of surprise, logically, will differ for the processes of reading and writing" (95). Readers form expectations and may be surprised (pleasantly or unpleasantly) if they are not fulfilled; "writers, however, seldom surprise themselves to the same degree" (95), or when they are surprised, it is a surprise attended by very different emotions, the difference between surprising oneself and being surprised by another, the difference between surprise at what I myself can create and the surprise at what another person has created. Writing is, of course, more physical, though no more active than reading (96). The authors also note, "The processes are not mutually embedded in the sense that we can read indefinitely without writing; we cannot long write without reading—that is, rereading what we have written" (96). And the authors report that a very diverse group of researchers, including Margaret Mead and Lev Vygotsky, have claimed that while writing and reading share common origins, the process of writing or composing in the form of gesture appears to develop before that of reading (96). The authors point out that in another essay, Birnbaum has theorized "that children's recognition of the meaning-making potential of their own scribbles is prerequisite to recognition of the meaning-making potential of others' texts. Therefore," they conclude, "interest in writing might precede interest in reading, although ability to read individual words might precede ability to handwrite legible words" (97).
Once having distinguished writing as unique as a verbal process and world-making activity, Emig must somehow define writing as a unique learning experience. While learning may be defined in many ways, Emig finds "consensus about certain features and strategies that characterize successful learning" ("Writing as a Mode of Learning" 126): the importance of reinforcement and feedback; being connective and selective; "making use of propositions, hypotheses, and other elegant summarizers;" and being "active, engaged, personal" (126). Emig argues that writing reinforces learning through its integration of the various neuro-physiological processes (motor, visual, and brain functions), processes that go on in so many different parts of the brain that writing must also be considered a wholly integrative activity. "Writing involves the fullest possible functioning of the brain," and it "is markedly bispherical," not simply a left-brained activity (126). Writing also provides "a unique form of feedback . . . , because information from the process is immediately and visibly available as that portion of the product already written" (127). And the feedback may continue over longer periods of time, since it exists as a graphic record. This feedback is "self-provided," too. The writer, in addition, must select from the bombardment of experience on her preconscious and establish connections and relationships in a systematic way. Finally, writing requires the writer to be active, engaged, and personal. Distraction (or abstraction—that is, dissociation from the experience) ends or at least confounds the writing process and learning, world-making in general. Nor can we speed up or slow down the process. It is "self-rhythmmed" (128). It proceeds at a personal pace.
What It Means To Be a Teacher of World-Making, Or The Great Composition Paradigm Shift. Having once established the connections between writing and learning and the equation of learning and world-making, the constructivist can turn her attention to the contributions that learning theory, thus informed by constructivism, can make to our teaching. As Emig points out in "Our Missing Theory" (1990), English studies has excluded learning theory from its array of theoretical inquiries and, in so doing, has neglected consideration of the pedagogical implications of the theories it has considered.

C. Jan Swearingen, in "Bloomsday for Literacy: How Reactionaries and Relativists Alike Undermine Literacy While Seeming To Promote It," denounces theorists on the Left and Right for their failure to consider the pedagogical implications of their theories and, in so doing, provides analogues to Emig's two extreme inquiry paradigms, the positivistic and the phenomenological. Like positivists, the New Right, represented by Allan Bloom, William Bennett, and E. D. Hirsch, seek to strip education of its contexts by calling for a return to "the ivory towerism" and "elitism" of a sexist and racist "classical education" (2). Yet the New Left has proved to be pedagogically no better. Harold Bloom and J. Hillis Miller sound as dogmatic and anti-pluralist as the New Right in their "unqualified, categorical pronouncements" and in their insistence that we assume their particular relativistic stances (3-4). As Emig demonstrates in "Our Missing Theory," typically the New Left theorists simply ignore the pedagogical implications of their theories (88). Emig agrees with Swearingen when she "rebukes colleagues who ask freshmen and sophomores to become instant deconstructionists" (91). Swearingen writes:
How can students who have not yet learned to read as "naive" or "sentimental" readers jump in at the level of problematizing such reading? How can anyone learn to problematize something that has not yet been known or imparted? Do we impart traditional modes of reading and writing only to hastily—and cruelly—grab them away? Our writing classrooms are full of students whose "self" is mute because they have never come into contact with the cultural conventions of post-Cartesian, post-enlightenment, or post-romantic conceptions and practices of self and voice. To tell such students that there is no such thing as accurate reference because there is no reality is—many feel—a pathologically arrogant pedagogical act. The left wing critical theory mandarinate, despite its claims of political correctness and reformist virtue, has manifested what many regard as a scandalous disregard for the epistemologies and voices that students bring with them to entry level courses in college. (4)

An understanding of cognitive development and a constructivist perspective on the world-making and identity-making capabilities of learning highlights the irresponsibility such disregard by some teachers. Emig suggests that this kind of disregard for students results in "cognitive shock" for the adolescent ("Our Missing Theory" 90):

If we have developmental schemes ..., you don't ask students to be total relativists until they have their anchorings, and if you read [William] Perry on developmental dimensions in adolescents and college, he says the same thing. Full relativism cognitively is late, and what worries me most about [deconstruction] is: I think it's fine for adults to contemplate, but I think to foist it upon very shaky seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds—Jan said something about "outrageously irresponsible." I agree. (May 10, 1990).

What makes constructivism an attractive theory is its balance of a contemporary rejection of positivistic notions of objectivity and the inclusion of non-relativistic learning theory. The two keystones of constructivism, noted by Marianne Amarel and cited by Emig, are the two qualities of mind implied in this balance: "the predisposition to seek order and derive meaning from experiences; and its corollary, that cognition has an intentional, purposive quality" (qtd. in "Our Missing Theory" 92). Amarel may see them as corollary,
but these two tendencies of mind easily could be also seen as diametric. On the one hand, humans have a natural, probably genetic, inclination toward finding order in and making meaning out of the endless stimuli that bombard the human preconscious. It is exactly this inclination that allows us to be world-makers. On the other hand, cognition, being intentional and purposive, must then be highly personal. Our brains may consist of the same general structures, but no two minds are exactly the same. As Emig observes, constructivism implies that theory is always "a personal construct" ("Our Missing Theory" 92). Moreover, Emig writes that constructivists acknowledge that theorizing is "an inevitable human activity. As Donald Graves once said to me," she continues, "'You can't get up in the morning without one'" ("Our Missing Theory" 92).

Adopting a constructivist attitude or theory has profound pedagogical, perhaps even institutional, implications. Students can no longer be considered empty vessels to be filled with a fixed body of knowledge kept in a faculty storeroom. Students arrive on college and university campuses with tacit theories, worlds they have already made, that a higher education will inevitably transform, one way or another. As faculty and specifically as composition instructors, knowing the power that writing can have, we face an unavoidable responsibility. The facing of that responsibility has required nothing less than a shift in the paradigm that informs our theories and our teaching of writing.

By now, most readers will have heard of the Great Composition Paradigm Shift, the transition from what is often referred to as "the current-traditional paradigm" to a new paradigm of some kind (e.g., the process paradigm). According to this history, composition studies are moving away from
an emphasis on the composed product, on mechanics and correctness, on the traditional four modes of discourse, and on unenlightened ways of teaching to an emphasis on the composing process, on invention and discovery, on the rhetorical contexts of composing, on new models of discourse, and on inventive teaching methods based on an understanding of cognitive development (see Hairston, "The Winds of Change"). As I indicated in earlier chapters, we would do well to question the simplicity of this model of composition history, which implies for many a heroes-and-villains view of changes in the field. Such a view can lead to the kind of intellectual "parenticide" we have seen in recent years. On the other hand, if we switch from viewing paradigm shifts in strictly historical terms to viewing them developmentally, too, we may find a less dichotomous, antipodal view of these shifts. In a sense, as they must in every discipline, teachers in the field of composition undergoes a personal paradigm shift as they come to conscious awareness of themselves as teachers and scholars. If we view the composition paradigm shift developmentally and constructivistically, then we must acknowledge that individuals will bring different versions of the world to the shift. Some individuals will already possess features of the new paradigm, while others will not. The problem for advocates of the new paradigm (writers of articles; directors of writing projects; and so forth) is a rhetorical one; is their audience "enlightened" already or are they addressing the unconverted?

Looking at paradigm shifts constructivistically, we can also see that what we are talking about is the making of new realities for individuals who in some sense, consciously or preconsciously, must agree. Emig is quite clear about the difficulty of shifting enough individual paradigms to shift a cultural one—so clear,
in fact, that she has decided, once she retires, she will discontinue giving
academic talks, because she finds them ineffective:

I don't believe that's how we change. I am much more persuaded that
psychic change and curricular change are analogues, and they take six to
seven to eight years to change basic structures; and all the quick fixes in
American education and sounding the chord and now we will do this and
now we will do that—it has no recognition of the slowness of the human
psyche . . . . I think what works are institutes that last a certain length,
and that are revisited. It's not the three weeks of the writing institute; it's
the groups that stay together and the subsequent meetings . . . . I am now
persuaded, to get a new curriculum in place in a school district takes
[seven years]. My close friends in teacher education—who are perceptive-
say they find it's a gentle process of two to five years. And it does not go
outside in; it has to go inside out. You have to be inside and working
very, very slowly, because human structures don't change quickly. (May
10, 1990)

Despite the amount of time it takes to make such changes, it is still worth
knowing what we should be working toward. In "Inquiry Paradigms and Writing"
(1981), Emig sets out the five basic features of any paradigm: a "governing gaze,"
a set of assumptions, a theory, a tacit or explicit intellectual tradition, and a
methodology. Emig defines "governing gaze" as "a steady way of perceiving
actuality," a consistently same way of seeing reality, something like an ideology,
governed by experiences, hypotheses about experiences, schemes, and constructs
(160). In this essay, she sets out three governing gazes, which we have already
discussed: the positivistic, the phenomenological, and the constructivist, which
she refers to here as the "transactional/constructivist." (We may want to protest
that Emig is taxonomizing here, while having objected to earlier taxonomies.
But Emig's categories here are not of the same nature as those of Berlin and
North. As we noted earlier, this classification describes points on a continuum,
not slots to be filled, and movement along the continuum is anticipated; Emig
concedes that there are more governing gazes than these three.)
Emig finds at least two kinds of methodology at work in composition studies, each informed by its own logic: rhetorical inquiries, informed by syllogistic or Aristotelian logic; and empirical inquiries, informed by correlational and causal logics. Causal relationships are known to all of us: A caused B; B was the inevitable result of A. Correlational inquiries simply demonstrate a relationship, be it chronological or much more complicated, verging on the causal (167-68).

I will discuss the tacit intellectual tradition of composition studies in a following section. The other two paradigm features (a set of assumptions and a theory) are very much interrelated. Emig observes that a theory "represents a coherent and explicit set of assumptions" (165). She also contends that there are four kinds of theories that inform composition inquiries: theories of meaning; theories of language, which may not differ from that of meaning; theories of learning; and theories of research (165). As noted earlier, a great problem in English studies has been its failure to elucidate a theory of learning. And I think that we can infer from earlier discussions of the problems with positivism, especially as it has informed some criticisms of Emig's *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, that English studies have not fully embraced an adequate theory of research. And finally, as indicated earlier, theories of meaning and of language in composition studies are in a state of flux as new paradigms are proposed and embraced.

Emig has written two works, "Non-Magical Thinking: Presenting Writing Developmentally in School" (1980) and the Introduction to *Four Worlds of Writing* (1981), which, taken together, suggest the shift in assumptions necessary
for writing instruction. Both pieces represent attempts to reach a wider
audience of students as well as teachers and scholars (Web of Meaning 134).
Naturally, the audience for the textbook introduction consists primarily of
students, but Emig says that "Non-Magical Thinking" was also written to
"students," the teachers and graduate students who attend workshops and
institutes such as the ones associated with the New Jersey Writing Project
(discussed below). Clearly, this return in a sense to the basic theme of her
career, pedagogy, has helped to inform her synthesis of interests and her
movement toward constructivism.

"Non-Magical Thinking" brings together all of Emig's major themes up to
the early 1980's in support of the paradigm shift that lies at the heart of that
essay. Emig cites psychologist Howard Gruber as the originator of the label
"magical thinking" ("Courage and Cognitive Growth in Children and Scientists").
Emig quotes Gruber:

We wish the child to grow up and in fact he does: we therefore attribute
his growth to our own desires and our efforts . . . .

In recent years we have become increasingly aware that adults do
not teach children some of the most fundamental ideas; at best, we help
to provide circumstances in which children discover what they must know.
(qtd. in "Non-Magical Thinking" 135).

Emig adds:

That teachers teach and children learn no one will deny. But to believe
that children learn because teachers teach and only what teachers
explicitly teach is to engage in magical thinking, from a developmental
point of view. (135)

Emig proposes that writing might well be a developmentally natural process;
humans might even be genetically predisposed to develop writing skills. If
writing is a natural process, then the most important feature of any writing class
must be the provision of "an enabling environment" (136). At this time, the early to mid-1980's, Emig describes her feeling about teaching writing as "minimalist: that less is more;" the teacher should not be entirely absent but should "stand out of the way" and use "a lighter touch" (*Web of Meaning* 132). She has modified this belief in recent years: "I've been persuaded by my colleagues who are developing various sets of heuristics, from Moffett to Janice Lauer to Richard Young. I am now persuaded that heuristics can be taught" (May 9, 1990).

In "Non-Magical Thinking," Emig also sets out both the tenets of the old "magical" paradigm and those of the new "non-magical" paradigm, and she describes ways teachers may stimulate the conversion experience necessary to embrace the new order. To convert themselves, Emig advises teachers first and foremost to become writers themselves, just as she suggested in the Implications to *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* eleven years before (141). Emig is adamant in this regard:

> This is a point on which I disagree violently—and I do mean violently—with Lucy Calkins who says there is absolutely no need in the world for teachers of writing to write. She has sort of taken me on in various public places, and she's never offered a shred of evidence. I, Don Graves, and almost everyone I know from the UNH group and from the National Writing Project, disagree with her. (May 9, 1990)

Second, teachers should observe their students writing and other writers, either in person or via videotape. And they should interview students, do what amounts to small case studies, all in order to acquire knowledge about similarities and differences between themselves as writers and others (142). Third, teachers need to discover the attitudes, constructs, and paradigms of those learning to write. They ought to try to learn their students’ family backgrounds, especially for education; the students’ literacy development as much as possible;
the student writers' notions of purpose and function of writing; their various performances in different discourse modes; their actual writing processes; and their attitudes toward writing and toward school in general. And finally, Emig suggests that teachers become familiar with theories of cognitive development and attempt to measure the students' growth in writing against the point of development at which the student should be.

By synthesizing and extrapolating from the principles enumerated in "Non-Magical Thinking" (140-41) and the Introduction to *The Four Worlds of Writing* (2-3), I have devised a list of tenets for the new paradigm as Emig conceives of it:

1. "Writing represents a way of making meaning of our experience" (*Four Worlds* 2). Learning is conceived of as the process by which we make meaning of experience, and writing is "a unique way of learning" (*Four Worlds* 2). That is, writing is a way of constructing reality.

2. "Writing occurs as a chain of processes. It is a series of interactions with words and ideas that develop and change over time" (*Four Worlds* 2).

3. "These interactions may sometimes be complicated and difficult to describe . . . , because we engage in so many activities almost at the same time" (*Four Worlds* 2). These activities include remembering; planning; physically writing with all the subprocesses involved in that action; reading and rereading; revising and editing and replanning; conceptualizing and supporting; and keeping an audience in mind and deciding how best to affect that audience.
4. Writing involves preconscious and undoubtedly unconscious mental activity. These less-than-conscious cognitive acts affect motivation, planning, incubation of ideas and inspiration, revising, and probably editing, too (which would explain different grammatical and mechanical styles) ("Non-Magical Thinking" 141).

5. "There is no monolithic process of writing." Writing processes may differ because of differences in aim, intent, mode, and audience. "Although there are shared features in the ways we write, there are as well individual, even idiosyncratic, features in our processes of writing" ("Non-Magical Thinking" 140).

6. Although writing is a chain or sequence of processes, these processes of writing usually "do not proceed in a linear sequence: rather, they are recursive--we not only plan, then write, then revise; but we also revise, then plan, then write" ("Non-Magical Thinking" 140).

7. The rhythms of writing are typically uneven, perhaps even erratic. Thus, the pace of writing may be very slow, "particularly if the writing represents significant learning. Writing is also slow since it involves what Vygotsky calls 'elaborating the web of meaning,' supplying the specific and explicit links to render lexical, syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical pieces into organic wholes" ("Non-Magical Thinking" 141).

8. "Writers of all ages as frequently work from wholes to parts as from parts to wholes: in writing, there is a complex interplay between focal and global concerns: from an interest in what word should come next, to the shape of the total piece" ("Non-Magical Thinking" 140).
9. "The process of writing can differ from text to text." Still, we do "tend to develop somewhat consistent patterns and strategies of working"—habits, rituals, whether we formally or informally plan, and so forth (Four Worlds 2).

10. "External factors," such as deadlines or page length directives or how much the writing will be graded or what effect the writing could have on our job status, influence our writing (Four Worlds 2).

11. "Internal factors," which may be conscious or preconscious, "also affect our writing processes" (Four Worlds 2). These internal factors include among others our commitment to the piece, our self-evaluation of our writing abilities, and how much we desire to impress our audience.

12. Textbook and teacher descriptions of how people compose can be "too simple or downright inaccurate" (Four Worlds 3). An example would be a directive that all writers must outline before beginning to compose a draft.

13. "Students' experiences with learning to write in school, exclusively for teachers, are often negative. Teachers often do not concentrate on what is most central about writing—the meaning the writer is trying to convey .. . Part of the problem is that teachers seldom share in the writing process from the outset. Instead, they wait until writers hand in papers before commenting on what should have been done differently during the writing of those papers" (Four Worlds 3).

14. "Many writers write differently in and out of the college [or high school] classroom" (Four Worlds 2). Outside writing frequently differs from
school writing by having fewer deadlines and greater concentration of readers on meaning of message rather than its style. "When writers do not have deadlines or teachers' comments to worry about, many of them are willing to spend more time writing, rather than less. Often, perhaps consequently, writers do higher quality writing outside the classroom than they do within it" (*Four Worlds* 2-3).

15. Writers can make improvements in writing processes and products through the help of others, including teachers, friends, family, classmates, and other writers ("Non-Magical Thinking" 141; *Four Worlds* 3). The roles played by others can vary. They might include being any or all of the following:

a. a *model*, writing and talking about oneself as a writer in the presence of and to the learner;
b. a *scaffolder*, providing "the blueprints and frames to make the construction of text-worlds possible" —that is, being a teacher, say, of planning techniques;
c. a *co-participant* or collaborator, giving ideas for content, structure, grammar, and anything else that eventually appears on the page and offering research help;
d. a *provider*, providing an enabling environment, a wide range of invitations for composing, encouragement, motivation, solace, advice, response, and technologies to support the construction of text-worlds;
e. an evaluator, evaluating both the process and the product and responding to both. ("Making of a Writer" 211)

It is worth emphasizing here the inadequacy of distinctions like that between teacher and peer in this regard. Peers may teach more than teachers sometimes; the best teachers may be those who accept a role similar to that of a peer. The problem is simply that to the connotations associated with the label "teacher," such as that of lecturer; lecturing is generally regarded as ineffective in writing classes.

16. "Writing is predominantly learned rather than taught" ("Non-Magical Thinking" 140).

*The Interdisciplinary Tradition of World-Making.* In the discussion of Janet Emig so far, I have tried to capture the multidisciplinary nature of her thought, but I have not really captured the intricate web of intellectual sources that informs that thought. Beginning with her Harvard qualifying paper, Emig has used works from a variety of disciplines as support for her contentions. And she has shown a knack for finding connections between them. In the qualifying paper (1963), she puts together a coalition of psychologists, philosophers, and literary theorists to make up the "modern" theorists whom she sets against the textbook writers with their obsolete notions of the thought/language relation. These modern theorists include a wide assortment of thinkers, many not known for being in the same league, much less on the same team. The list includes among others psychologists Roger Brown, Eric Lenneberg, Lev Vygotsky, and behaviorist B. F. Skinner; philosophers J. L. Austin, Max Black, Ernst Cassirer,
Susanne Langer, Gilbert Ryle, and Israel Scheffler; linguists Leonard Bloomfield and Benjamin Whorf; logician W. V. O. Quine; and literary theorist-philosophers I. A. Richards, C. S. Lewis, and Colin Turbayne. Many of these same names continue to show up not only in her footnotes and bibliographies but as references within the texts of her papers and in *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*.

Clearly, Emig has had interdisciplinary interests since the beginning of her career. We recall the interdisciplinary nature of her graduate education at Harvard and the interdisciplinarity of her department at Rutgers. With her adoption of a constructivist philosophy in the late 1970's and 1980's, Emig consciously brought together some members of the loose coalitions she had been making in past research and developed what she refers to as a "tacit tradition" for research in writing and rhetoric. As noted in the last section, Emig considers such a tradition a necessary feature of any inquiry paradigm. In fact, Emig has expressed her dismay at many studies in English Education "for their anti- or atheoretical nature," which for her results from a lack of tradition. These writers, she says, "don't know who their ancestors are. If you don't, you don't have a tradition; if you don't have a tradition, you're not part of an intellectual enterprise. You don't have a prayer of ever being regarded as a scholar" (*Web of Meaning* 157). But a lack of tradition can have an even more crucial effect. Without a recognition that our reality is inevitably built on previous realities, we run the risk of radical relativism.
Emig first referred to a tacit tradition in her essay "The Tacit Tradition: The Inevitability of a Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Writing" (1980). The paper was first given at the 1979 Canadian Council of Teachers of English conference at Carleton University. Emig states that she "was just doing a frequency count among those of us who are writing," noting the scholars from various disciplines that those in writing research were reading (May 9, 1990). She admits that she "was bored (and bored usually means angry) with the emphasis on classical rhetoric and on linguistics as sources of information, and I thought we were not at all pursuing enough cross-disciplinary approaches to the teaching of writing" (Web of Meaning 145). Some of the members of this tradition that she discusses in this essay have become fairly familiar names, often cited by other composition researchers: science philosopher Thomas Kuhn, who developed the theory of the paradigm shift; epistemologist Michael Polanyi, who distinguished between tacit and explicit knowing; John Dewey; Susanne Langer; Lev Vygotsky; Jean Piaget. But some of the names still may not be familiar: "personality theorist" George Kelly, author of a "Personal Construct Theory"; psycholinguist Eric Lenneberg, who wrote *The Biological Foundations of Language*; psychologist A. R. Luria; and several names from the ranks of neural science, some more familiar than others (Brenda Milner, Sir John Eccles, and J. Z. Young). Emig would now, of course, add more names to the tradition, since of course traditions still being drawn upon tend to evolve. Two researchers who have influenced her work but whose names were not mentioned in "The Tacit Tradition" are Jerome Bruner and Howard Gardner. In addition to authoring *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Bruner also produced *The Process of Education* in
1960, a work that Berlin contends "introduced the language of cognitive psychology . . . to education circles" (Rhetoric and Reality 122). Gardner, author of The Shattered Mind (1975) and Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983), especially influenced Emig's work on the neuro-physiological aspects of writing. She also sees his influence in the work of Ann Dyson, among others.

The common features of these scholars include (1) their tendency to play what Peter Elbow called "the believing game" (the corollary of Kenneth Burke's concept of identification and of Wayne Booth's rhetoric of assent, accepting an author's premise until there is reason not to); and (2) their "transactionalism" (an early equivalent of "constructivism" for Emig; in "Inquiry Paradigms and Writing," she combines the two in describing the "transactional/constructivist" governing gaze). Emig suggests that "transactionalists" by definition believe in "the centrality of processes" and the active participation of the learner/writer in the making of meaning "in her transactions with experience" ("Tacit Tradition" 153-55).

Constructivist Rhetoric as Epistemic

This description of Janet Emig's constructivism brings into question Berlin's distinction between a rhetoric of cognitive psychology and an epistemic rhetoric. Berlin argues that the defining feature of epistemic rhetoric is its tenet that rhetoric generates knowledge, that "knowledge itself is a rhetorical construct," that "all reality, all knowledge is a linguistic construct" (Rhetoric and Reality 165-67). Moreover, there is a strongly transactional element in Berlin's
epistemic category: "Meaning emerges . . . from individuals engaging in rhetorical discourse in discourse communities" (*Rhetoric and Reality* 167).

According to Berlin's definition, Emig's constructivistic view of verbal communication would seem highly epistemic. The epistemic quality of constructivism's central thesis is obvious: "what we call the world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world" (*Bruner, Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* 95). That is, the constructivist believes, to use Berlin's terms, "Meaning emerges . . . from individuals . . . ." Nor is the transactional second part of that definition ignored by constructivism. The constructivist, however, expands the possible constituents of a transaction. By transaction, Berlin seems to mean simply human interactions, but in "The Tacit Tradition," Emig notes that world-making transactions may be internal ("can also occur within the knower") as well as external. And external transactions may involve the knower and "another person; other artifacts; a culture; a past; a present; even a future" (154). Moreover, Berlin limits any transaction to purely linguistic communication: "all reality, all knowledge is a linguistic construct" (165). Emig, on the other hand, points out that "what is known can be a verbal or non-verbal text" (154). The construction of worlds is unavoidably, even inherently, epistemic and transactional, involving by definition knowledge of other versions of the world, other worlds. And constructivism, as shown earlier, assumes developmental and biological components to world-making; otherwise, all versions of the world might be the same, thus constituting one monolithic world, which is simply not the case.
Janet Emig and the Profession of English

Like Edward Corbett, Janet Emig has been deeply involved in other aspects of the profession in addition to teaching and scholarly research. In fact, her commentary on the discipline represents another theme of her publications. The professional activity that she appears to be most proud of, however, has been her direction of the New Jersey Writing Project.

The New Jersey Writing Project

The evolution of Janet Emig's thought occurs in a kind of spiraling pattern, beginning with a core interest in pedagogy and her own writing process and moving outward into areas of description with discussions of the complexities of composing processes and the consequent complexities of teaching writing. As I have indicated, in the late 1970's and into the 1980's, Emig moved from descriptive interests toward more philosophically theoretical concerns, with the publication of "Writing as a Mode of Learning" and essays informed more fully by a constructivist philosophy. Nevertheless, as I also have noted, while her professional career may consist of disjunctions and ninety degree turns, the evolution of Emig's thought evidences few breaks. Even as she seeks to highlight areas of research not well enough attended to by composition researchers, she interrelates and integrates rather than dissociating or ignoring.

In this spirit of integration of thought, word, and deed, Emig helped to initiate and then became the director of the New Jersey Writing Project in 1977. Writing projects—at least the best of them—typically being aimed at educating and updating the education of public school teachers in composition, inherently
bring together theory and practice. And as noted above, Emig believes such projects and institutes to be considerably better at conversion of thought on the nature of writing and writing instruction than single talks (May 10, 1990). And clearly, the New Jersey project has been successful in this regard. As of 1987, the New Jersey Writing Project had held twenty-one three-week institutes in New Jersey, and eighty-seven in other states, involving over 2,870 teachers.

In "Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric" (1982), Emig cites a 1980 survey which revealed that over 80% of elementary school teachers had no formal training in writing beyond their own freshman composition classes. To counter this situation, literally hundreds of writing projects and institutes have been developed. The precedents for these projects were the National Defense Education Act summer institutes of the 1960's, funded by the United States Office of Education. Emig ran several of these while at the University of Chicago. She brought Harold Rosen of "the London group" over to give a course within them. There were other speakers as well, and because she could draw on scholars and researchers at Chicago, Emig produced what can truly be called a "cross-arts institute" (May 8, 1990). Emig describes the multi-disciplinarity of these institutes:

All afternoon [daily] was a workshop .... Everyone worked on his/her own artistic project, and it could be anything. I think it was Wayne Booth who came by who was so interested to see a nun in full habit at a jigsaw doing this very elaborate kind of wooden collage thing. It was a marvelous experience. And the NDEA people were very enthusiastic about it. But then it really wasn't taken as a model. But when I read Gardner's *Frames of Mind*, I thought "Yes, I believe in multiple intelligences," and I also believe that we don't deliberately let schools tap into the intelligences other than the linguistic intelligences, and I think it's done rather deliberately as a form of classism. (May 8, 1990)
In "Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric," Emig highlights two other projects besides that of New Jersey as notable early ones. They are the Vermont Writing Project and the Bay Area Writing Project, which expanded into a national network (2029-39). The seed money for the original New Jersey Writing Project in 1977 came from what was then the Bay Area Writing Project. The New Jersey project is especially notable, because its research design became a model for other projects. Emig explains:

The second year, because we did pay attention to methodology--I just want people to know, sometimes I do--I had a very good statistician on our staff, so the second year, we went for validation of our project with some very sophisticated statistical analysis [reported in its "Multi-Phase Assessment of Writing in New Jersey High Schools"]. There was a sort of judicial review board in Washington [the Joint Dissemination Review Panel]. We presented our program with our findings, and in front of us, they voted like a court. We had a unanimous vote. And so we became an approved program, which meant that we were eligible for funding for five years.

In fact, the New Jersey Writing Project became the only national writing project to enjoy that status. In 1979, the National Writing Network voted the New Jersey project exemplary program status. Emig continues:

What would become the National Writing Project did not [receive validation], because they made a flaw in their design, a very simple flaw in their design. They elected to test the effects of the program by looking at the students of the teachers taught by the participants. They were out one too many circles to get [statistical] significance. I think that was the problem. We instead looked at the students of the participants, and we got marvelous results that formed two dissertations . . . . [W]e found there had been a significant change in attitudes toward writing, such as preferring, in some instances, writing to being with friends. (May 9, 1990)

Emig describes a little of her format:

The very first day, on the chalkboard says, "I'm writing. Will you join me?" And I'm writing, and whoever else is working with me is writing. And after some moments of dismay or joy, we all write. I say, "I'll read mine, if you'll read yours," and always someone volunteers. Then we go into groups and have an opportunity for everyone to read. At the
beginning, I use heuristics from [Peter] Elbow's *Writing without Teachers*. Then we form writing groups, and eventually every morning is spent with about an hour and a half of writing.

After there is a presentation on the theory of the morning and lunch, then, in the afternoon, participants do what we call "experiments." They try to enact some of what they're learning, and we role play as whatever age student they want us to be. We do a critique at the end of the day. One of the participants reads. At the end of the entire three weeks, on the last afternoon, we have a readaround, where without interruption everyone reads for a given number of minutes. It's an astonishing and moving experience. (May 9, 1990)

Emig also notes some differences in format from the National Writing Project and some other projects. The New Jersey project runs three weeks instead of four and requires two pieces of writing, "one personal or narrative, memoir or something, and the other what I call 'teacherly writing.'" And Emig requires that participants attempt to publish one of these two pieces and "share the outcome of their inquiries and their letters." Over the thirteen years of the project, Emig estimates that about 88% of the participants have been published somewhere. It could be a local paper or "maybe we're talking *Crochet News,*" but Emig insists "it immediately shifts their attitudes towards writing. Published writers simply have a different stance towards the significance of the activity, and they have far greater credibility in the classroom" (May 9, 1990). In general, Emig notes two major distinctions with the National Writing Project: a greater emphasis on theory and less on teacher practice as a source of guidance and the inclusion of a research component built into the project from its outset ("Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric" 2030).

Although connections between this practical activity and the more theoretical and scholarly discussions of constructivist learning theory may seem vague, we can easily find connections with her desire to move the profession beyond "magical thinking." In fact, Emig has said that the purpose of the essay
"Non-Magical Thinking: Presenting Writing Developmentally in School" was "to set forth what I learned . . . through doing a series of workshops and institutes going back in NDEA in 1963, 1964, and through directing the New Jersey Writing Project" (Web of Meaning 132).

**NCTE and the Coalition Conference**

As Janet Emig has gained prestige in composition and English studies, she has found more and more platforms for commentary on the profession of teaching English, from keynote addresses at conferences to the presidency of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Emig's involvement on committees, commissions, and boards within the profession began, as we noted earlier in this chapter, in 1960 with her membership on the NCTE Committee on the Reading and Study of Poetry. She remained on the committee until 1968. She has also evidenced a strong commitment to improving the status of minorities in, and the elimination of, racism and bias from the profession and the culture in general. She chaired the NCTE Ad Hoc Committee on English for the Disadvantaged in 1966-67, was on the NCTE Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English from 1970 to 1973, and was the first chair of the NCTE Committee on the Role and Status of Women in the Council and in the Profession from 1971 to 1974.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, Emig dropped out of organizational activities for awhile. Her re-involvement has been striking. Her most important ventures have been the NCTE presidency and her work with the English Coalition Conference that met in 1987. Emig believes her year as NCTE
President will prove to be historic "because of a confluence of circumstances": the selection of a new NCTE Executive Director following the retirement of John C. ("Jack") Maxwell and the institution of a strategic plan for the 1990's and the 21st century. She is especially proud of her role in the selection of a new executive director:

More and More, I think that the process by which we selected Miles Myers as the new executive director is going to prove to be one of the most significant moments for the Council. Because of who he is and how he proceeds, he is really going to change us from what I regard as an anachronism to one of the leading professional organizations. So, my pleasure is in my orchestration--and I do credit myself--of the selection process that brought us Miles. (July 16, 1990)

That process, Emig explains, involved a "genuinely democratic search" that included interviews with candidates from within the organizational structure and from without. Myers work with the Bay Area Writing Project and the National Writing Project suggested an impressive administrative ability and a broad knowledge of composition theories and pedagogies.

Emig's experience with the Coalition Conference provided part of the motivation for the "Our Missing Theory" essay. The conference gathered sixty teachers, representing eight organizations: the Association of Departments of English, the College English Association, the College Language Association, the Conference of Secondary School English Department Chairs, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the Conference on English Education, the Modern Language Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. As important as the meeting of organizations, however, was the assemblage of teachers from each level of American education: elementary school, secondary school, and college. Emig reports that there
occurred "an almost immediate confrontation about theory. The elementary and secondary teacher participants challenged the college participants' steady citing of theory to make their arguments." But in fact, what the participants finally came to understand was that "both groups were theoried, but theoried differently, drawing upon different theoretical traditions" ("Our Missing Theory" 88).

To overgeneralize, the theories that the college participants knew attempted to characterize universals of textuality and of language; the theories the public school teachers, particularly the elementary school knew, attempted to characterize the developmental dimension of learning and of teaching, the dimension that suggests that all of us evolve through phases, stages, episodes, periods (various theorists have their favorite metaphor) as we mature as doers and thinkers. ("Our Missing Theory" 88).

In general, however, Emig has been disappointed with the lack of impact the Coalition Conference has had on the profession. She maintains that it "had a potential of being the most significant conference since Dartmouth [the month-long Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English, held at Dartmouth College in 1966]" (May 9, 1990). Emig attributes its failure to affect the profession to an exclusive reliance on print media "to get out the word" (May 9, 1990). She goes on:

Consequently, it took us over a year to have very fast working editors, namely Jix [Richard] Lloyd-Jones and Andrea Lunsford, to get out the documents .... If someone were not present, I think he/she would lose interest in this. (May 9, 1990)

Emig argues that "we needed to go to the media to be on television and also find another means of getting the message out quickly" (May 9, 1990). She maintains
that "our obsession with print" is undermining our attempts to fight illiteracy. This sort of commentary has characterized much of Emig's work in the 1980's and into 1990.

Sexism in Academia

From a male perspective, if for no other reason than my own desire to emphasize it, I want to start off this section with the good news. Emig tells me, "In our field, I'm heartened. I think there are an immense number of feminists among the men in our profession" (May 9, 1990). That is the good news. Emig's experience and observation provide only a little evidence that sexism is on the wane in colleges and universities across the U.S. She has seen little change in the situation in the ten years since she published "Journal of a Pessimist: Prospects for Academic Women in the Eighties." In that essay, Emig examined the evidence she had gathered that suggested the widespread sexism of academia.

Perhaps the best evidence she has of sexism then and now comes from her own personal experience. Earlier, I noted the sexism she encountered at the University of Michigan as a master's degree student in the fifties, at the University of Chicago in the sixties, and at Rutgers in the seventies. And the prospects don't look good: "There are more women [in academics], but they stay at the lower ranks. At Rutgers, there has been practically no movement at the upper ranks" (May 9, 1990). As an example of the problem, Emig relates the experience of Dorothy Strickland, a well-known scholar in reading research, who was hired for a Chair at Rutgers:
When [she] came in to be interviewed for the chair, she said, "One reason I'll take it [the Chair] is you need a woman holder of a chair." And they said, "What do you mean?" They had twenty-five men, and they had not noticed that they had not yet given a chair to a woman. They had not even noticed. This is Rutgers. And it is many universities. And so she said, 'I feel a responsibility to my sex as well as to my race and to reading." It's this kind of lack of seeing. (May 9, 1990)

An irony here--at least for Emig and others who have studied pedagogical styles--involves gender differences in the classroom. Emig mentions other gender differences in "Journal of a Pessimist," but the one involving teaching that she remarks on in "Non-Magical Thinking" and in conversation is especially significant for those of us seeking to make the individual composition paradigm shift to the new order. In that essay, she writes:

In my experience, and it may or may not be representative, men teach as a revelation, as an expression of ego. Ego teaching has no use at all if you're trying to teach writing and rhetoric, from any other than a historical aspect. The only ego that should be of interest in the teaching of writing is the ego of the writer, which means that the ego of the teacher has somehow to stand aside. In my experience, most men aren't capable of getting out of the way . . . . I think women, in my experience, are often very, very good teachers of writing because they're willing to put their egos aside. (132-33).

And she has not changed her mind on this since that essay appeared in 1982. In conversation, she says:

I think the research is beginning to confirm my sense of difference between men and women as teachers. There are some fascinating studies coming out. Nancy McCracken has one. She gave a talk at 4C's. And we are getting a very keen sense of the difference between men and women as instructors in certain situations that are dynamic with men and women students. That remark has irked a number of my male colleagues, and I still believe it. (May 9, 1990).
Professionalism in Composition: The Arrogance of the Unique "I"

"Literacy and Freedom," Emig's keynote speech to the 1982 4C's convention in San Francisco addresses this issue of the composition community's view of literacy and forms a bridge between themes previously engaged in and synthesized under the constructivist umbrella and her commentary on professional/institutional issues. And this talk demonstrates that the "paradigm shift" involves more than simply what is written in our professional journals.

In "Literacy and Freedom," Emig argues that the composition community, represented by CCCC, "holds... a view of verbal literacy that is unique--uniquely balanced and weighted; uniquely generous, and ambitious; uniquely informed; uniquely grounded; and uniquely ethical" (172). By "balanced," she means "in part not reading-obsessed." She claims that previous views of literacy emphasized "restatement, memorization, recapitulation, of a very narrow band of texts," and this notion of literacy as "the ability to comprehend through reading the texts of others what is new information" she calls "deformed, or half-formed," because it leaves out composing (172-73). Nowhere has this reading obsession been more evident than in college English classrooms, where too often the only writings that have qualified as texts have been narrowly defined literary texts. The most marginalized writings there have been student compositions. She claims, too, that the composition community's view of literacy has been informed by research and grounded in theory. The theory that she espouses here is constructivist, and she contends that constructivism tacitly underlies the composition community's view of literacy: "We believe that writing in concert with reading uniquely sponsors thought and imagination." And the imagination
she defines as "[t]he mind actively constructing the not-here; the not-now; the not-me;" "[t]he mind actively constructing actual worlds inhabited by actual others . . . ;" "[t]he mind constructing and furnishing the interior of one's own sensibility" (177). Finally, if literacy is such an empowering part of existence (virtually the empowerment of existence), then the society as a whole must take responsibility for educating its citizens. "Freedom," despite the title of the talk, is not prominently discussed, but clearly Emig's definition of freedom here is much wider than simply political or institutional freedom, although those two kinds do seem to be embraced by her definition. Instead, she seems to be talking about personal, educational, "cultural" freedom, but especially personal freedom. Each of the features of the composition community's "unique" view of literacy aims at "freeing" the individual student from constraints placed upon her by the previous, reading-obsessed, hierarchical, uninformed, ungrounded, unimaginative view of literacy.

In this essay, Emig suggests a chronology whereby, at least among the composition community, the paradigm shift has taken place. But this suggestion is purely a rhetorical device for addressing a 4C's convention. In her other comments on the state of the profession, Emig makes it clear that the field is in a pre-paradigmatic stage ("Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric" 2022). And her descriptions of the state of American education and the American educational system strikingly support a much less optimistic view. In the beginning of "Literacy and Freedom," Emig describes the educational problem the society and the schools face:
Our entire educational system from kindergarten to graduate school is in disarray, if not actual jeopardy. On any one school day in New York City, for example, 66,000 children and adolescents—a population the size of many small American cities—roam the streets, preferring whatever the streets hold to whatever any classroom holds. In our profession, the brightest and best among the young circle our campuses driving their cabs or race from night class to day seminar to language lab to learning center in a desperate patchwork of demands and indignities bearing no resemblance to what we or they meant, nor to what any of us meant at all. ("Literacy and Freedom" 171-72)

As this passage suggests, the paradigm shift needed involves a good deal more than just changes in composition classrooms. Emig believes "that unless we change high schools utterly, we can truly check off our education system" (May 10, 1990). The picture she draws is not pretty:

It is the problem of the onset of adolescence in a society that's crazed and addicted too much of the time. And I think it also is so egg-cratey, as I said at the end of Composing Processes. There are no efforts in high school to connect concepts among the disciplines... Consequently, I think students don't know any connections. Third, I don't think teachers appreciate at all who their students are. I think they don't know the horrors of the lives their students are leading. Somebody has said that most kids work forty hours a week, and so what has to happen has to happen inside school. It has to be vital, and it has to be connected....

[T]he schools are collapsing under the burden of being the only functioning social unit... [I]f the schools are going to have the whole responsibility, then communities are going to have to be organized openly and frankly around the schools with the social workers there, with the judges there, with the courts there, with the nurseries there. If it is the one that is functioning, expand it, but don't ask it to do what it's trying to do now without any resources. (May 10, 1990).

Forces both from outside of the profession and from within the ranks of composition scholars and teachers are at work to block literacy. Emig is especially critical of "child-hating bureaucrats who are living indictments of the alleged education they are espousing for us all" (NCTE Inaugural Address). But she also views the reactions of those within the community as often playing into the hands of those seeking to block literacy. These reactions she categorizes according to the level of the educational system within which each tends to
manifest itself. At the college level, as we have discussed, Emig sees flight, a flight away from the teaching of literacy entirely, a flight into high-level literary theory and textual studies, with a narrow definition of "text." At the secondary school level, she sees flight in the opposite direction, away from theory into anti- or atheoretical positions that amount to acquiescence to the attacks upon them:

In some instances, we have been made to feel so ineffectual, so childlike in all of the unhappy senses—whining, complaining, cajoling—that when we are given a bit of power we behave like those we regard as our oppressors. We revert to a Ptolemaic view of the universe. (NCTE Inaugural Address)

At the elementary level, Emig finds the opposite of flight; she finds a digging in so that enthusiasms for change become dogmatisms, fascisms, "a doctrinaire shrillness, alienating the undecided, the teacher of good will but intellectual uncertainty who needs to be lured, not badgered, in" (NCTE Inaugural Address).

Emig proposes an alternative for teachers in her 1989 NCTE Presidential Address. There she challenges teachers to consider themselves as professionals. After all, she says, teachers don't have the support systems necessary for professionals; they can't act like doctors who possess "an all-directional peremptory mode" that allows them to say things like "Nurse, I ordered that I.V. forty minutes ago." Instead, teachers are at the mercy of "a chaos of impedimenta—demands, interruptions, irrelevancies." Teachers also are not respected or trusted to provide services without being cross-examined. Patients will take medicines prescribed by a doctor generally without question, knowing that they do not have the knowledge of the doctor about the drug. Yet doctors are often no more certain of what they do than teachers. Teachers, however, are not generally perceived as experts of an esoteric discipline. The public indeed
frequently believes it knows more than teachers about how its daughters and sons should be educated. Finally, teachers "have never learned as a group, as a community, how to assign or to deflect blame" in the same way that other professionals do. While doctors and lawyers "whistle as they work and rake it in," teachers "internalize, agonize, exponentially expanding at every opportunity [their] anxiety and guilt." Some of the public would describe teaching not as a profession but as a vocation, but Emig refuses the tag: "A vocation to me is not only selfless but egoless, and I believe--despite all state-mandated efforts to make us clones--in the arrogance of the unique 'I.'" Emig calls on teachers to "explicitly acknowledge our power, if we are ever to attain the status in this culture we deserve" (NCTE Presidential Address). In her 1988 NCTE Inaugural Address, Emig also points to major attributes needed by NCTE (and the progressive composition community in general, I assume): (1) political involvement, to counter the "child-hating bureaucrats;" (2) expansion into a variety of media and elimination of our obsession with print; (3) demographic representation, because, she asserts, "[w]e are too assiduously white, too middle-class, too suburban" and "[w]e represent . . . far too narrow a band in the profession;" and recognition of the unique qualities of this community: its support of the "integrity of discourse;" its pluralism; its belief in the transactional nature of literacy; and its ability to serve as the imagination to stimulate progression in the society's education.
Conclusion

As with the Corbett case history, that of Janet Emig reveals, perhaps more than anything else, the near impossibility of neatly classifying her work. As I reported in the introduction to this chapter, Emig claims that she set herself "a goal of trying to suggest all the avenues of research [that researchers in composition studies] could pursue" (May 9, 1990). If, over the last thirty years, she has not discussed every research possibility, she certainly has covered quite a few. And this diversity of interests is not easily categorized. Yet, the different themes of Emig's works are not unrelated. That is, I believe we can identify a thread that runs through quite a bit of her scholarship in composition that suggests synthesizing vision and a rhetorical approach on the same level as the revived classical rhetoric of Corbett.

The rhetoric I discern informing Emig's work is much more broadly cognitive than Berlin's "Rhetoric of Cognitive Psychology" classification. Berlin's category is too narrowly defined, for he argues that the rhetoric of cognitive psychology is "distinguished by its assertion that the mind is composed of a set of structures that develop in chronological sequence" (Rhetoric and Reality 159). Emig's rhetoric, however, is not simply concerned with cognitive development, although that aspect of cognition is a part of this broader rhetoric. Emig's rhetoric reflects an interest in all aspects of cognition during composing, aspects that include preconscious as well as conscious cognition, neurological and biological factors in cognition, what it means to know and to learn as we compose, and the tradition, very different from the tradition of classical rhetoric,
that lies behind this rhetoric. Such a tradition involves much more than simply psychological research and many more thinkers than simply Bruner and Piaget whom Berlin names.

The problem for Berlin here lies not so much in the scope of his history as in the thesis-driven nature of it. As I discussed in Chapter II, Berlin classifies composition studies in a way that supports his thesis that the discipline has been progressing forward toward the new and better rhetoric that he calls "social epistemic rhetoric." But Berlin fails to explore in-depth the other rhetorics he classifies, including the two other so-called "Transactional" categories: classical rhetoric and the rhetoric of cognitive psychology. And Emig's cognitive rhetoric is as thoroughly "epistemic" as Berlin's favored "social epistemic rhetoric." But his project requires differentiation, even opposition, when in fact a closer look at these rhetorics, as the case history approach requires of the historian, demonstrates their similarity and agreement on many matters. Simply put, Berlin's neat classification falls apart on closer inspection. It may be that such a taxonomy is possible, but taxonomists, as Emig has hotly implied, must justify their classification. For as important as classifications that divide the field are theories that synthesize diverse scholarship and research.

If at times, Janet Emig sounds cynical and unforgiving, it is not without merit in some cases. But generally, the impression she leaves the investigator is not one of a cynic. Rather, she comes across as Lawrence Kubie's "true optimist." In his criticisms of the American educational system, Kubie argues that our real target should be "the complacency of any of us over entrenched traditions," and he finds the real villain to be "Pollyanna, who secretly feels that
things are so bad that the badness does not exist or else sugar-coats them [these entrenched traditions]" ("The Utilization of Preconscious Functions in Education" 101). Kubie's heroine is "the optimist whose hopefulness is a creative force, [who] is not afraid to face just how bad and how inadequate the past has been, because [she] harbors a sturdy hope that with hard thinking and research better ways can be found" (101).
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The structure of this dissertation has been quite simple. The first two chapters discussed the history, definition, and methodology of the case history approach. The third and fourth chapters provided examples of what one can expect from that approach. In this final chapter, I will discuss the conclusions and the implications for research that we can draw both from the approach and from the specific case histories of Edward P. J. Corbett and Janet Emig.

As Chapter I notes, case history, like case study, seeks to produce "thick" accumulations of data and test hypotheses—not to produce conclusive evidence. In this final chapter, then, any conclusions based on the two case histories produced must be taken as just that—conclusions regarding only those two histories. Yet, because Corbett and Emig have been considered influential figures in the field of composition studies, I treat conclusions about them suggestively, employing their histories to speculate about more general developments in composition research and scholarship, about developments in the teaching of writing, about academic careers and professional lives in the years since World War II, and about generalizations being made currently concerning these developments.
The case histories presented in this dissertation yield several tentative qualifications of recent historical taxonomies of composition studies. The case histories of Corbett and Emig suggest that the typical ways in which they have been described (Corbett as spokesperson for classical rhetoric and Emig as spokesperson for a rhetoric of cognitive psychology) are oversimplified, failing to take into account the full range and depth of their thought and experience. The case history approach itself, in fact, resists such categorization. It tends to problematize easy classification; the movement in the case history is always toward the individual, the particular, the idiosyncratic. It urges the researcher on deeper into the description, resisting generalization and celebrating the accumulation of data. This tendency toward ever greater accumulations of information suggests the never-ending and dialogic quality of this research. Unlike traditional history, bounded by limits to the number of documents to be analyzed, case histories, involving as they do a triangulation of documentary analyses, oral history interviews, and a case study focus, can be ended only arbitrarily. There are always more interviews that could be made, more questions that could be asked, and more individuals who could be studied. Unlike traditional historiography, case histories respect the on-going multiplexity of history.
The Contributions of Case History Methodology

Case histories provide three kinds of historical knowledge. First, through the use of oral interviews as well as analysis of the written record, case histories may provide new "factual" information. As I contended in Chapter II, this information is no less "factual" because much of it derives from oral interviews. The reliability of any piece of information depends upon the rhetorical situation from which it originates. The new information generated by a case history can be important in validating or correcting other interpretations. In Chapter I, for instance, I sought to reveal how "context-stripped" an exclusive reliance on documentary evidence can be. As examples, I discussed Stephen North's misrepresentation of one of Stephen Witte's articles and, in Chapter IV, Ralph Voss' failure to report Janet Emig's qualifications of her strident criticisms of teachers made in *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. In the two case histories, there are other examples of new information, information that would be lost otherwise. Little of the subjects' early lives and educations exists in the written record, yet such information provides insight into the development of successful scholars and teachers, and it provides some insight into education during the 1930's and 1940's. Through a close reading of Corbett's work, the complexity of his definition of rhetoric and the complexity of his relationship with classical rhetoric can be discovered, thus correcting the view that Corbett is only a modern day spokesperson for classical rhetoric. He is that, of course, and more. The case history of Emig is equally effective in correcting mistaken views of her role in the history of composition studies. It corrects, for instance, North's
mistaken notion that her knowledge of her subject Lynn was only a few hours old when she began interpreting the girl's choices of subjects. It also brings into question North's view that case study researchers do not continue with that kind of research after fully entering the profession, for we discover that Emig has done a case study of two students in the Netherlands. This case history also focuses attention on Emig's constructivism, which has been ignored by traditional historians, yet which might well be a widespread epistemology held by many scholars in composition. Other interpretations than the ones that I have made are certainly possible but not of course without the collection of that new information.

Second, case histories often are the most effective ways of discovering the motivations, inner feelings, and values of informants. Again, such information may validate or correct existing interpretations. Case histories also provide us with a greater knowledge of each generation in composition studies. An excellent example is Corbett's unwavering belief in the significance to the revival of rhetoric in English studies of the 1963 CCCC convention. The written record suggests some importance should be placed on that conference only because several of the talks on rhetoric appeared the next fall in College Composition and Communication and have been widely reprinted. But the historian might well be lured away from it by other events that suggest a more generalized growth of interest. The value, however, that Corbett places on that convention ought to suggest to the historian that it might have been the fuel that set fire to an until-
then only smoldering interest. His commitment also suggests how little read the major journals on college composition (College English and College Composition and Communication) were during the 1950's.

Emig's case history provides information about the contexts of her various sorts of work and the reasons for its variety. Emig speaks, for instance, of the motivations behind her interest in biological factors involved in writing. And she tells of how she came to use certain methods in The Composing Processes and in other research. I also reported on her constructivism and most importantly, about how it protects itself against relativism, something Emig has not discussed, as far as I know, in print. Certainly, remembering motives, feelings, and values is as reconstructive a process, involving the shaping operations of the subject's preconscious, as the remembering of events. But, as I pointed out in Chapter II, the crafting of documents is no less reconstructive; no interpretive act is ever free of bias. How "true" a subject's memories are of her motives or values at a particular point in time can only be evaluated by a weighing of all the evidence.

Third, case histories provide such a wealth of details about the informant's experience and the history surrounding that experience that they may be referred to as historical analogues of ethnographic "thick descriptions"--that is, detailed accounts of the history of composition within the rich context of an individual's experience within that history. More than simply separate "facts" and expressions of feelings and motivations, these descriptions represent a synthesis of all kinds of data, an emerging interpretation of the information
being gathered about the individual's thought and career. These "thick descriptions" may also provide data for later generalizations that can be made from the accumulation of multiple case histories. This approach requires detailed analyses of many individual essays and talks, many more than one finds reported in more traditional histories. Thus the "thick description" of Edward Corbett included a thorough and systematic discussion of his version of classical rhetoric and his application of these rhetorical principles to the modern study of writing. And the "thick description" of Janet Emig consisted of detailed discussions of her various themes and a synthesis of these themes under the umbrella of a constructivist perspective of writing and writing instruction.

Case histories also provide guidance for future research and tentative conclusions with which to test our hypotheses. They inherently function as a useful validating device. They inevitably bring into question easy categories, overneat taxonomies, and little examined generalizations. As "thick descriptions," they tend to capture the diversity of thought that more sweeping histories tend to ignore or gloss over. Oral historian Bernard Ostry finds traditional history based simply on the written record "reductive":

The advantages of this reduction are intelligibility and clarity; we are given the illusion of understanding what happened. What we lose is the vast penumbra of doubt, the extraordinary untidiness and ambiguity of life, above all the mystery of human personality . . . . (9)

And case histories produce interpretations without reference to established frameworks within which the data must be located.
Traditional history, at least in form, recapitulates the quantitative process of theory or hypothesis validation. It requires that the historian develop a generalization that minimizes diversity of thought and experience, what Robert Yin calls "statistical generalization," generalization that seeks to "enumerate frequencies," to correlate as much data as possible and de-emphasize what cannot be correlated (21). Case history, on the other hand, relies on a qualitative process, allowing generalizations to emerge from the data and not be imposed upon it. Case history is no less selective, no less interpretive, no less theory-validating than traditional history, but it is not required to subsume all data under one hypothesis. It accommodates diversity as much as it supports generalization. Data that cannot be correlated remains relevant, because diversity is respected; after all, no individual's life is lived as a thematic unity. Close analysis and accumulation of details are valued as much as thematic harmony.

Case history, in fact, follows a different historiographical process from that of traditional history. The traditional historian will gradually (or not so gradually) define her interpretation of events as the data are being collected, and her valuations of separate pieces of data will become more easily biased toward that interpretation as it is refined and fixed in her mind. Such biasing of data ought to be expected and accepted. But the case historian's emerging generalizations constantly are tested and the final generalizations deferred until much, if not all, of the data are collected--that is, until the research process is ended. Questioners may attempt to bias subjects' answers, but the
predispositions of subjects, especially an "elite" with strong personal commitments, often defy such manipulations. Nor can the case historian avoid the frustrations of hypothesis reformulation during the process. To put off making generalizations until the end of the research process turns out to inhibit and even silence the research conversation between the investigator and the subject. The case historian's explicit and implicit interpretations provide good conversational topics. And so, case history inevitably forces the historian to develop theses that are then tested and reformulated and tested again, until the investigator and the subject find common ground upon which to develop acceptable generalizations.

It would seem reasonable to ask what effect the adoption of a case history approach has on the nature of the historical text. Expanding the historical record and problematizing the evaluation of historical evidence inevitably leads to a destabilizing of that text, if for no other reason than simply the fact of the increase in data. As James Berlin observes, "No historian can record everything" ("Revisionary History" 56). The author of a case history, if not more clearly absent than the author of a traditional history, must at least more clearly share the text with the other voices of her subject (and her subject's critics and so on). And case histories more readily disclose their lack of objectivity, since the multiplicity of voices is foregrounded rather than dominated by a thematic dialect. Case histories draw us into the "thickness" of history and highlight the selectivity, the rhetoric, of historical interpretation. Berlin contends:
A history is never innocent. The historian must always choose the story she is to tell, and the choice is an ideological one. A history of rhetoric (or of anything) will necessarily be an interpretation. The historian of rhetoric (or of anything) is always engaged in a rhetorical act. ("Revisionary History" 56-57).

No version of the past can claim absolute certainty and correctness, because it originates out of a rhetorical context that cannot be stripped. Oral historian James Hoopes notes the uncertainty at the very heart of any historical inquiry:

Too often we forget that history is... an exercise of the imagination. History, like life, is a test of our ability imaginatively to place ourselves in the positions of other people, so that we can understand the reasons for their actions. (3)

Case history, then, by de-emphasizing objectivity, partakes of the post-structuralist movement that Berlin calls "revisionary history" and that others have called "new historicism." This new historiography rejects any reference to an absolute truth that can be directly and objectively recorded; it assumes the significance of economic, social, political, and cultural contexts; and it opposes the notion of a temporal cause-and-effect development in history.

My difference with much "new historicism" involves this latter rejection of cause-and-effect as an informing principle of historical research. Many new historicists claim that change is wholly unpredictable and therefore that cause-and-effect relationships cannot be privileged. Some might interpret case history as supporting such a notion in its celebration of diversity, in its inherent questioning of the hypotheses, and in its unstable process. But, as the case histories in this dissertation demonstrate, the approach does not inherently reject cause-and-effect relationships; it simply complicates them, forcing the historian deeper into the "thickness" of the data to find such relationships. The new
historians themselves, as a practical matter, generally embrace cause-and-effect relationships in their own histories, especially those who, like Berlin, claim that history is "a play of power with consequences for the present and the future" ("Revisionary History" 56). These historians typically insist that history is an attempt to affect future ideology. But if we accept the former rejection of cause-and-effect, then we must conclude that such a history is an absurd act without intellectual foundation, other than as a fascistic attempt to control others.

Instead, I propose that history, by its very nature, seeks out just such cause-and-effect relationships, that such relationships have been the stuff of the intellectual enterprise at least since the ancient Greeks. Certainly, the ultimate aim of much research is to demonstrate causes, however uncertain such demonstrations must be. The case history, then, is able to follow a path between the arrogance of positivism on the one side and the absurdity of relativism on the other. In its advocacy of this middle ground, this pluralistic balance, the case history perhaps reveals an underlying constructivism. Events occur and perhaps do so "absolutely," without question, but our experience of events can never be direct, objective, stripped of context, a-rhetorical.

**Comparing Case Histories:**

**Classical and Cognitive Rhetoric(s)**

The case histories of Corbett and Emig suggest that a revived interest in composition studies in both English and English Education departments developed at roughly the same time. And, according to the testimony of both
Corbett and Emig, the general motivation behind the increase in interest was dissatisfaction with writing instruction at the time, a dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of their own teaching of writing and with that of their colleagues. Composition studies appear to be informed primarily by pedagogical concerns—at least for this earliest post-war generation of composition scholars and researchers. The alternative of simply studying how humans compose without reference to pedagogical implications appears to have been generally disregarded. This situation contrasts strikingly with literary studies in English departments (though not English Education departments of course) where pedagogical concerns have been generally subordinated to critical and theoretical scholarship.

Despite the widespread dissatisfaction, evidence suggests that teachers in the past held no monolithic theory of writing instruction. It seems a likely hypothesis that there simply wasn't enough systematic thinking about the nature of composing and composition instruction to allow for the spread of any theoretical system. Yet, although the so-called "current-traditional paradigm" appears not to have been systematically endorsed, except for a few of its "principles" finding their way into some textbooks, the pedagogical activities that the label represents are no less real. The evidence adduced here simply suggests that teaching at all levels, now as then, varies considerably and that some writing teachers do things in class that modern composition scholars would consider obsolete while others seem to be ahead of their times. Thus the agonistic, heroes-and-villains approach to the history of composition instruction attending
the reports of a historical paradigm shift oversimplifies the situation. In fact, ample evidence points to political and social reasons for the adoption of "current-traditional" teaching techniques and ideas, reasons such as overly heavy teaching loads, large class sizes, and little, if any, teacher training. As Corbett says of requiring students turn in multiple drafts in most writing classes, "If you had three or four classes, you'd be constantly reading" with little time for much else (Oct. 4, 1989).

Evidence also indicates that teachers adopted current-traditional ideas of teaching as much out of imitation of the way they themselves were taught as out of any real conceptualizing of the ideas. Both Corbett and Emig mention the ways of their own composition teachers as their early models. Clearly, more research into what teachers actually do--and did in the past--in their classrooms, instead of our reliance on textbooks as historical sources, is needed. And more study into the origins of "current-traditional" notions of teaching is also needed.

The paradigm shift announced over the last ten years can be seen not so much as a rejection of any systematic theory of writing as a consciousness-raising of writing instructors. The paradigm shift represents a development in cognition that all responsible teachers of writing experience, not the suppression of a previous school of thought that once defeated will never rise again. Even today and probably for some time in the future, writing teachers will continue to go through an initiatory process of breaking with their pasts and remaking themselves anew. The battle for enlightenment, if we really want to continue with this metaphor, will continue to be fought with every generation at least in
the foreseeable future, until composition scholars have shifted entirely the public perception of what writing instruction should be and until the educational system makes the kinds of reforms needed to allow teachers a wider range of pedagogical options.

In the post-war history of composition studies, many responses to the past dissatisfaction with writing instruction can be found. Two major responses that have taken root in the discipline have been a revival of classical rhetoric and the growth of a rhetoric of cognition, a cognitive rhetoric. These two responses have generally been seen as very distinct developments. At times, they have even been viewed as being at odds. Yet, because their provinces are somewhat different, the areas where connections can be made become very clear.

Whether a revived classical rhetoric is universal for all cultures, I believe that it does provide not only a framework for written communication but one for all kinds of communication. Its province, as I suggested in the discussion of Corbett in Chapter III, can be expanded to include even non-verbal communication. Classical rhetoric assumes that any communicative action derives from a process of making choices, and it seeks to categorize these choices. For written communication, Corbett provides two sets of these categories: rhetorical norms or reference points (subject matter, purpose, audience, and personality and competencies of the writer) and the "canons" of rhetoric (especially invention, arrangement, and style). It is within these large categories that much of Emig's discussions can be located. And it is here that I find much agreement between these two subjects.
Emig argues convincingly that there is no one monolithic or universal, linear writing process but rather multiple, perhaps innumerable, processes, which are usually recursive and are all affected by a number of variables. The implication here is that the classical rhetorical canons do not represent a model of the writing process per se, and Corbett seems to agree. The canons are not meant to be taken as the chronological stages in a writing process; instead, they describe activities of thought and writing in which the writer must engage. There may be writers (Emig has encountered two in her different case studies) who appear to engage in these activities in the order in which classical rhetoricians typically presented them (invention, then arrangement, then style), but such cases appear to be rare. In order to engage in these rhetorical activities, the writer must perform certain mental operations and behaviors, and it is these acts of engagement connecting the rhetorical norms and canons with the dimensions of the composing process that Emig has outlined in detail in *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (prewriting, planning, starting, reformulation, stopping, contemplation of the product). A writer must find a topic. Sometimes, the topic exists before the process even begins; sometimes, it is the very motivation behind the desire to write; sometimes, the topic is not found until the writing is well under way. A writer must also plan. She must find support for an argument, information to report, memories of her personal experience, a perspective on her topic. She must decide on an audience, make decisions about tone and how she wants to present herself. A writer must also arrange what she has to say. Perhaps, she outlines ahead of the writing; perhaps, she arranges as
she writes; perhaps, if she is like Janet Emig, she writes sections and then arranges them like puzzle pieces into a meaningful whole. Finally, the writer must make stylistic choices. I suspect that most of us make these decisions as we write, but certainly, some stylistic choices may be made prior to writing. Often, they are made in revision or reformulation, perhaps after contemplation.

Emig also argues that many of these rhetorical decisions are made preconsciously. Corbett agrees. Although a major purpose of his overall project has been to make us more aware of the variety of conscious choices writers must make, he also recognizes the need to make many of these choices without being fully aware of them. He says that what students should do is to read about or listen to composing precepts, practice them, and then forget them and let them work subconsciously. Like Emig, he notes how little professional writers seem aware of their processes for composing:

One of the things I’ve observed--and maybe I noticed this most in the interviews that were published in the Paris Review--how little valuable introspection these people have about their writing. (Oct. 9, 1989)

Earlier, Corbett said:

I think there’s no question that you finally learn how to write by writing. You can listen to all the precepts in the world and observe practice, but unless you eventually go out and do it, you’re not going to get very skillful at it. (Oct. 4, 1989)

Certain variables affect the rhetorical decisions writers make. Emig discusses five categories of these variables: the writer’s sophistication of writing skills; temperament; "ego-strength;" mode of writing; and neurological competences. As I noted in Chapter IV, the first three of these categories imply a need to understand the writer’s cognitive development. Because composition
studies have been concerned especially with writing instruction, the emphasis here has been on the cognitive development of students. But Emig and Parker have pointed out that the development of the teacher is as important as that of the student when it comes to evaluation of the student's text. Clearly, adult writers as well as child and adolescent writers continue to develop cognitively and emotionally, and these developments affect their rhetorical decisions. Just as clearly, biological factors influence a writer's choices. And the very nature of the writing, its mode, involving purpose, aim, form—the elements that James Kinneavy and Walter Beale have sought to describe—place certain constraints upon the product and therefore to a certain extent constrain the process by which that product is produced.

Although improvement of writing instruction, not simply describing the nature of writing, appears to have been, at least for the earliest post-War generation of composition scholars, the primary motivation behind much research in the field, the discussions of pedagogy by Corbett and Emig rarely overlap. Corbett's pedagogical discussions typically have involved suggestions for the content of classroom activities, a "here's-what-to-teach" approach. Take, for examples, his extensive discussions on imitation exercises and his discussion of the distinction between *pose* and *posture*. Emig, on the other hand, more often takes a "here's-how-to-teach" approach, providing full descriptions of writing instruction, including a definition of teaching as "intervention," a description of the two modes of intervention (proffering freedoms and establishing constraints), a formulation of the various effective roles teachers can
play, discussions of the different variables involved in the teaching of writing, which correspond largely with those of the writing process she describes, and finally, evaluations of the various modes of teaching.

Despite their separate discussions of teaching, however, Corbett and Emig do reveal areas of agreement. One is that of the value of imitation, a technique developed by classical Greek sophists. As we have seen, Corbett has written extensively on imitation; Emig has not. But in "The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing," she speaks of "the subtle or not-so-subtle contagion from model" (51). And Emig in our interviews spoke of the importance of models which work on the writer subconsciously. She describes her introduction to imitation exercises like the ones Corbett regularly describes:

The first person who did that as a classroom activity was Priscilla Tyler, whereby we would have the key substantives taken out of a passage, and then we'd supply them to see how we had changed it, and then we would borrow and so on. (May 8, 1990)

However, Emig makes a distinction between models a writer thinks she ought to imitate and "affective models," writers one reads for enjoyment.

Corbett and Emig also agree on the effect of muscular movement in writing. Emig details the involvement of motor functions in several essays during the mid-1970's, notably "The Biology of Writing" and "Hand, Eye, Brain." Corbett speaks of the importance of muscular movement in his copying exercise; without such motor activity, the exercise is not effective. As Emig says, "The literal act of writing is activating, mobilizing" ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 111). Both also speak of the importance of sight. Emig charts the roles of vision in various writing activities (planning, drafting, revising) ("Hand, Eye, Brain" 113-17). In
our interviews, Corbett notes how important the invention of eyeglasses was to the increase of literacy:

Think how this has extended the productive life of scholars to be able to continue to read, to be able to continue to write. That invention that took place in the fourteenth century was just one of the great advances in the progress of literacy, because it just extended our productive life. (Oct. 4, 1990)

Both Corbett and Emig also have argued that writing teachers should write themselves. Corbett made his call for writers to "Do It Yourself" as early as 1960. Emig made a similar call in The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders in 1971. Both Corbett and Emig, in addition, have come to accept the effectiveness of newer heuristics such as tagmemic questions, and their discussions of the relationship between thought and language indicate a similar belief in the inseparability of the two.

In addition to making significant connections between these two models for writing and writing instruction, represented by Corbett and Emig, these two case histories also provide us an opportunity to look for similarities and differences in the experiences of these two subjects, similarities and differences that could be provocative. One of the most interesting areas of comparison is that of their family backgrounds. Both Corbett and Emig describe their families as "poor," but poverty was not unusual during the Depression of the 1930's. More significant may be the important roles that women played in both families. Being from a broken home, with their father frequently out of work, the Corbett children were brought up in part by their paternal grandmother. With the loss of their house, the Emig family moved in with their Aunt Nora, who for a while
provided for all of them. And, in fact, as discussed in Chapter III, the women in the Emig family of that generation all worked. While Emig attended public schools and Corbett private, Catholic schools, they were both fortunate to have gone to apparently outstanding schools. The effect of these schools cannot be denied; both subjects remember their educations and some of their outstanding teachers vividly. It was at Marquette University High School that Corbett's classical education began, and the strongly Dewey-influenced Williams Avenue Elementary School, with its unusually arts-oriented "Auditorium" class, provided Emig with a model of education that probably has remained with her. Mike Rose's experience at getting "hooked" on education may well be representative generally of the good that good teachers can do:

There were some lives that were already beyond Jack MacFarland's ministrations, but mine was not. I started reading again as I hadn't since elementary school. I would go into our gloomy little bedroom or sit at the dinner table ... , and work slowly back through Heart of Darkness, trying to catch the words in Conrad's sentences. I certainly was not MacFarland's best student; most of the other guys in College Prep, even my fellow slackers, had better backgrounds than I did. But I worked very hard, for MacFarland had hooked me. He tapped my old interest in reading and creating stories. He gave me a way to feel special by using my mind. And he provided a role model that wasn't shaped on physical prowess alone, and something inside me that I wasn't quite aware of responded to that. Jack MacFarland established a literacy club, to borrow a phrase of Frank Smith's, and invited me--invited all of us--to join. (Lives on the Boundary 33-34)

The strong influence of teachers and schools on the lives of these scholars indicates a great need to make such experiences available for all students—that is, it indicates a great need for educational reform in America. For if schools can have such positive effects, they can also have equally strong negative ones.
Other important areas that deserve more research are scholarly attitudes toward the relationships between creative writing, the study of literature, and the study of composition. Both Corbett and Emig reveal little stress in moving among these three areas of English studies. Both began as creative writers, novelists and poets; Emig remains a widely published poet and has plans for one or two novels upon retirement. Both have done work and remain knowledgeable about trends in literary criticism. Corbett has published a book on rhetorical criticism of literary works, *Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works*.

Perhaps the most surprising similarity between Corbett and Emig lies in their epistemological views. Chapter IV discussed in some detail Emig's "constructivism." The basis of that philosophy is the notion that human beings do not have direct access to knowledge of an absolute reality, that humans therefore create versions of the world, which exist as the only "realities" or "worlds" that we can know directly. In order to counter any suspicion of relativism, Emig stated her belief that the world does exist "out there" somewhere; we just cannot know it. In her writing, this belief in the possibility of an absolute reality is very muted. She emphasizes instead the creativity of the human mind, especially its ability to create worlds through language.

Rather surprisingly perhaps, given his strong Catholic religious views, Corbett also expresses a belief in pluralistic "realities." I would be misrepresenting Corbett if I claimed that he fully accepted the notion that we cannot directly know this fixed reality; his emphasis is placed squarely on a belief in a fixed reality. Still, his recognition of the difficulty humans have in perceiving
that reality and his acknowledgment of plurality of acceptable perceptions of reality demonstrate a discernible movement toward a constructivist epistemology. For instance, his discussion of reader response criticism suggests just such a movement:

I haven't really made up my mind about where I stand on reader response. I think that there's no question that we read and apprehend differently, that various people reading the same text or seeing the same thing are going to get different things from it. I would agree that it's because either one's powers of observation are keener or we're looking for different things or we're predisposed to see different things or our educations are different or our philosophy of life is different. So I think that if that's what reader response is saying—that, yes, there is a meaning in the text, but various people are going to get different meanings out of that text—I suppose I'd have to agree to a degree. (July 9, 1990)

In answer to a question about whether truth is relative, Corbett describes this position:

I've always believed—and maybe because of my Catholic upbringing—that there is a Truth out there; there is an objective reality, and that one of my functions as a reasoning human being is to open my senses and my mind to what's out there and discover what is Truth. But I'm trying now to think of a way in which I would say that I believe that truth is relative. There certainly must be some senses of that I agree to.

I would certainly believe that [there is a pluralism of ways of getting at truth]. There is more than one avenue to arrive at that truth. But I don't think that's the same thing as saying that the truth is relative. (Oct. 11, 1989)

In our interviews, as reported in Chapter III, Corbett cited the analogy of the witnessing of a car accident. He expressed no doubt that ten witnesses could produce ten different accounts of the accident, but he also asserted that that multiplicity of versions of the accident does not mean that the accident did not happen and did not happen in a fixed way (July 9, 1990). I suspect that Corbett and Emig differ in their notions of just how fixed a fixed reality is and in how
perceivable such a reality is. It may be that for Emig a fixed reality is simply a historical phenomenon, long since transformed into other realities. For Corbett, a fixed reality is an absolute reality, still "out there," still possibly accessible.

The thought and experiences of Corbett and Emig, of course, are not the same, and their differences can be illuminating, too. The most important differences involve the circumstances of their professional lives. Corbett, for instance, has taught only at the college and university level; Emig has taught high school as well as college students. Corbett’s progression through the ranks of English departments has been smooth and generally unobstructed. Emig’s progression through similar ranks of English Education departments has been anything but smooth. Although Corbett had some difficulty finding an advisor for his dissertation in rhetoric, his department at Loyola was apparently very amenable to his dissertation topic. Emig’s graduate school experience at Harvard was to her a nightmare. While Corbett never had difficulty being tenured and was even pursued and hired away from Creighton by Ohio State, Emig was not renewed at two schools; and in order to gain tenure and a "Professor II" rank at Rutgers, her own School of Education’s decisions against her had to be overruled by University Committees. Emig does not attribute all of her difficulties moving up in academia to sexism, but it does seem clear that sexism has been operative in her case. The ease with which Corbett was able to become degreed at the same time that Emig was being denied entrance to graduate school suggests the sometimes sexist consequences of the G. I. Bill. It paid for Corbett’s and many other soldier-scholar’s educations and thus
encouraged soldiers to return to school, many to graduate programs, thereby glutting colleges and universities with male applicants. Certainly, women who had served in the armed forces during the war also benefited from the G. I. Bill, but the sexism that denied women combat roles also worked to deny women who had chosen to remain at home or who (like Emig) were too young for service access to graduate educations.

Composition historians need to research the long-term effects of such situations on writing instruction and on education in general. Any claim that women did not desire graduate educations because they had assimilated cultural mores about the roles women could play in the workforce of the time is belied by the experiences of Emig and other women academics of her generation who did desire such educations but were denied them.

The comparisons of these two scholars, especially the attempt to find junctions in their thought and experience, represent a different approach to composition history than that of more notable recent histories and commentaries of the field. Taxonomies of composition studies, especially those of James Berlin and Stephen North, have sought to divide theories of composing and composition instruction and the field itself into separate groups or communities of thinkers, typically putting its members at odds with each other. Certainly, scholars in this or any field differ, but those differences are easily traced, and while the charting of them may help in describing research in the field, attempts to demonstrate ideological or sociological or even psychological origins of such differences do little to advance our understanding of how people compose or
how to improve people's composing processes; rather, it tends to promote
dissension and controversy, which inhibits communication among researchers.
Composition scholars need instead to pursue how to reconcile and perhaps even
synthesize different concepts, theories, and techniques in order to create more
adequate models of composing and find better ways of teaching composition.
We ought to note where systems overlap and ideas connect as well as marking
borders and disjunctions.

The comparisons of the two case histories presented in this dissertation
suggest a variety of more specific paths historical research in the field of
composition studies needs to follow. Clearly, more work on the professional
experiences of this same generation and other generations needs to be
conducted, especially with an eye on the effects that such experiences have had
on the instruction of college and high school writers. Historians also ought to
begin questioning the extent to which scholars in all fields hold constructivist
epistemologies. Are we seeing, here at the end of the twentieth century, the
emergence of a worldview for the next century? What effects can such a
worldview have on education and writing instruction in particular? More of us
need to recall and record our own school experiences, and historians need to ask
more about the school experiences of the past.

Finally, I found connections between the revived classical rhetoric and
cognitive rhetoric, but what about other traditions within composition studies?
For instance, can features of the so-called Expressionistic movement be
integrated with the other two? By finding connections among individuals who
represent different traditions of composition theory and composition learning theory, historians may make significant contributions to developing more unified and coherent theories of how human beings compose and how to improve their composing in school classrooms, theories that allow for the diversity of composing processes, yet find ways to accommodate that diversity in the classroom.

In the end, this study strongly suggests that taxonomies of composition studies, especially those of the post-war period, are premature. Composition historians have only just begun work on the history of literacy and writing instruction during the nineteenth century, when composition first emerged as an academic field of study. Work on the twentieth century, including the post-war period, is even less advanced. Clearly, much more research is needed in every period of composition history, but it needs to be research that first accommodates the diversity of thought and experience in composition studies.
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