

VISIBLE LANGUAGE

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THE RENASCENCE OF DIE HERMENEUTE

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Introduction: *The Renaissance of die Hermeneute*

Charles Robert Kline, Jr.

"Hermeneutics," as Hans Georg Gadamer put it (*Wahrheit und Methode*), is "the classical discipline concerned with the understanding of texts." Hermeneutics is in some ways, then, a talisman for interpretation. Interpretation has been studied for a long time and will continue to be--why then a title with the phrase "the renaissance?"

In recent years there has been a great re-kindling of interest in how we interpret texts as we read; this new interest has been fueled by tremendous advances in knowledge about language, reading itself, neurophysiology, psychology, and rhetorical theory especially in its more concrete form: composition theory. It is perhaps this last element in the series which is most unusual; put another way, one of the key fields providing input to interpretation theory is composing theory. And from these two comes a series of interesting questions for study: What are the interconnections of reading and writing? How are readers like writers? Writers like readers? Are there models of either which have needed information for the other? What is "authentic" meaning? Can a reader ever truly discover the author's meaning (*mens auctoris*)? Should he? In fact, can the author ever truly know her (his) meaning? Is there a system for crafting more astute criticisms of a text? Systems? How could we teach well such systems?

In this issue we do not pretend to attempt to answer all these questions, but the authors tackle many of them. In the opening essay James Kinneavy lays out for readers a model for considering various levels of discourse, and he discusses these levels from the writing (composing) and the reading (interpreting) sides of the issue. He also introduces one of the most intriguing and debated points in current theory: the hermeneutic circle, which portrays a recursive and expanding relationship between parts of a text and the whole text.

Michael Hyde essays the concept of "authenticity" in the second piece of this collection. The relation of *author*, *authentic*, and "there-being" is his focus as he draws upon Heidegger's (and others) discussions of *Dasein* ("there being"). The "there-being" of a text consists in the text's essence becoming known by a reader; the reader's perception of the text is a unique

combination of reader and text and meaning. So where in all this then is the authentic meaning? Read Michael Hyde's article.

The Kline and Huff essay picks the problem of discovering the radical point of connection between reading and writing. They advance three hypotheses of connection. First is an hypothesis which follows Kinneavy's "situational context" ideas; in this discussion Kline and Huff discover evidence for the hypothesis in several models of reading and present a model (in an unusual visual) which could produce (written) text at one point and interpretation (reading) at another point. Another hypothesis involves the activity of framing questions (by both readers and writers) as the *conceptual radix* of reading and writing. The third is a controversial hypothesis in which the radix is posited at the connection of hypothalamus and higher cortex.

The fourth essay is a report of an empirical investigation of what parts of a text seem to influence a reader's judgment. Stephen Witte brings to bear in this report the background, precision, and specificity for which he has become so well known. The result is a piece which, as Kinneavy's, provides not only a report of his study but a detailed review of the various hypotheses posed by earlier researchers as they attempted to discover what syntactic or (syn)tagmemic elements in a text predict readers' opinions of the text.

The final essay asserts the framework for the renaissance: all of interpretation is criticism involving all of our knowledge of the world. In this essay critic Adrian Marino reviews the terminological problems in the distinction between interpretation and understanding; Marino puts the reader squarely into the meaning making of the text, and defines the reader's role as meaning making through the attempted understanding of the text *and* participation in the development of the supra-textual model of interpretation.

These five essays are put together to whet the reader's appetite. *Die Hermeneute* is again under discussion because of the interesting problems its discussants have always pondered. The rhetorician/critics (as Kinneavy) have asked hermeneuticists to clarify the circle and the part-whole problem. The rhetorician/communication specialists (as Hyde) have wondered about authenticity of discourse--how to define it and how to study it. The reading and writing specialists (as Kline and Huff) have sought in *die Hermeneute* a way of visualizing a unified model of language production and reception. The composition researchers (as Witte) have been tracking the causes of a reader's responding in a certain, predictable way to a given text. The critic/hermeneuticists have been saying (as Marino does) that the way we participate in the world is criticism, that interpretation has as its goal understanding which in turn allows more precise interpretation, that

to read a text is to participate fully in that text's becoming, its "there being."

This project would not have been completed: if Merald Wrolstad were not assertive and critical while being open to new authors and "wild" proposals from folk he did not know; if Pattie Rose and Susan Milburn were not typists as well as close reading critics--only they know how many times some of these *mss* were typed; if four authors in three states and one author in another country were not talented and receptive to yet another request for some more work. Thanks to Keith Walters and Anna Skinner for their close, constructive reading of these manuscripts. Especial thanks, too, to Marilyn, a great interpreter.

The Relation of the Whole to the Part in Interpretation Theory and in the Composing Process

James L. Kinneavy

Key problems in modern hermeneutics are explored: part-whole relationships and the correlated merism-holism debate, the importance of situational context in Greek and Roman rhetoric and its relation to current interpretation theory as well as composition theory, and the problems with the (dominant) sentence and theme emphases of much theory and teaching. The range of materials, of authors, and of ideas being discussed in the "new" hermeneutics is surveyed.

If I were a committee, this study would be labeled a "progress report." Indeed, it is an example, if not a model, of "exploratory discourse." For it presents an important problem and an ongoing attempt to arrive at a solution. There is a hypothesis, but not yet a thesis.

The hypothesis has a very practical origin. It is concerned with the failure of our attempts to integrate several "parts" of the composition to the whole. There are 70 years of research which demonstrate overwhelmingly that the isolated teaching of grammatical skills has little or no transfer to use in actual composition.¹ There are parallel studies in library science which demonstrate that library skills taught in isolation also fail to transfer to real situations.² There are similar studies in mathematics education which demonstrate that a curriculum which is too oriented to the teaching of mere computational skills produces fewer problem solvers than a curriculum which forces students to use computational skills in verbal and more abstract settings.³ I suspect that the same can be said of the insulated teaching of logical skills.

My question about all of these skill operations is the same: "What catalytic agent enables the student to see the relevance of skill exercises to actual writing situations?" I can sympathize with those who, in the present literacy crisis, fault us with neglecting these skills. Students do need vocabulary development, sentence maturity, paragraph instruction, introduction to library techniques, etc. Yet I know that isolating the skills

and teaching the skills to the neglect of the act of writing is almost certainly a waste of time--as much of this research tells us.

On the other hand, there is much evidence that beginning with the whole and moving only incidentally to the parts (mechanical skills of punctuation spelling, sentence skills, paragraph skills) does not seem to be entirely successful either. At the University of Texas, where I teach, there has been a rhetorically based program for years, with emphasis on writing or nine fairly long themes a semester. For quite some time there was not even a handbook for grammar and usage employed. Yet several tests recently have convinced us that these skills were being ignored, that the whole does not necessarily take care of these kinds of parts. Our experience is not at all unique.

We need the parts and we need the whole. Beginning with the skills, the parts, and moving to the whole does not seem to work. Beginning with the whole and moving only incidentally to the parts seems to be not entirely successful either. Is there a way out of the dilemma?

I had, in earlier work, been concerned with the relationships of part to whole, but had not found a satisfactory model for explanation of the composing process. However, I now believe that the treatment of whole and part in interpretation theory seems more promising than the model of Piaget which I had used in handling the nature of description or the model of mereology of Lesniewski, which I had tried and rejected in the same circumstances, but for different reasons.⁴

The treatment of the whole-part relationship in interpretation theory is embodied in the notion of what is usually called the hermeneutic circle. One writer succinctly explains the circle as follows:

We understand the meaning of an individual word by seeing it in response to the whole of the sentence; and reciprocally, the sentence's meaning as a whole is dependent on the meaning of individual words. By extension, an individual concept derives its meaning from a context or horizon within which it stands; yet the horizon is made up of the very elements to which it gives meaning. By dialectical interaction between the whole and the part each gives the other meaning; understanding is circular, then. Because within this "circle" the meaning comes to stand, we call this the "hermeneutic circle."⁵

By rhetorical, if not poetic, justice, the hermeneutic circle had its origins in rhetorical theory, particularly in the organic metaphor of the head and limbs of Plato's *Phaedrus*. Gadamer tells us that Luther and his successors . . . applied this image, familiar from classical rhetoric, to the process of understanding and developed the universal principle of textual interpretation that all of the details of a text are to be understood from that contextus (context) and from the scopus, the unified sense at which the whole aims.⁶

Others go even further back in their search for the origins of the hermeneutic circle and find it in Heraclitus, Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Celsus (the jurist), and later in Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling. It crystallized in Frederick Ast, was developed by Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and was expanded to all understanding by Heidegger.

This notion of interpretation or understanding is obviously the inverse of rhetoric, as Schleiermacher remarked.⁸ In fact, the processes of producing or composing a text and of interpreting it are very similar, a similarity to which some have called attention.⁹

Both involve the act of interpretation. The writer interprets the world to the reader by means of a text; the reader interprets the text of the writer in order to interpret the world. The world, the text, and the act of interpretation are all involved in both activities, though in the reverse order.

It is not therefore surprising that, as Gadamer has pointed out, Melancthon set out to write a rhetorical treatise on the *commonplaces* (a rhetorical term) of Christian doctrine but ended up writing a treatise on how to interpret the Scriptures.¹⁰ It seems only proper, then that the hermeneutic circle, having originated in rhetoric, having subsequently been enriched in interpretation theory, now return, like Joseph from Egypt, back to the promised land and help the homefolk.

One of the most important tenets of the circle creed seems particularly promising for composition theory. There is a strong concern for the continually changing relation between whole and part,¹¹ the relative notion of what is whole and what is part,¹² the dialectic that continually functions between whole and part,¹³ and the reciprocal interdependence of each on the other.¹⁴

Now I believe that this model of the composing process is consistent with what we know about the habits of professional writers as well as students. Indeed, while reading about the dialectic of the hermeneutic circle, I was continually reminded of passage after passage in the *Writers at Work* series of interviews by the *Paris Review* of professional writers. The interviews focussed specifically on the working habits of composition. The changing notions of part and whole, the taking over of a plot by a character who was initially a minor personality, the additions and deletions of small and large segments, the provisional writing and rewriting in order to achieve an elusive whole, etc., all seemed to me to be accurate instances of the hermeneutic dialectic.¹⁵

One way of looking at the part-whole relationship is to distinguish among levels. Linguists, rhetoricians, structuralists, and interpretation theorists are among those who have successfully used this technique. Thus linguists often view the sentence as the whole and the lower level components as parts. On the other hand, the sentence, as such, is not a major concern with many literary critics. Thus what is a whole at one level of

analysis or production may be viewed as a part at another level, and the relationship of a part to a whole at one level may be completely different from the relationship of the same part to a whole at another level.

As has already been pointed out, level differences are not new to language theory, either in rhetoric or in interpretation. Much exciting work has been done at different levels by modern scholars. Part of this success has been brought about by applying the same model to different layers and analyzing for similar component relationships. In rhetoric I think immediately of the success of the tagmemic "particle-wave-field" model, which Pike and others apply very successfully at the phonemic level, at the morphemic level, at the paragraph level, at the utterance level, and at the full conversational and behavioral levels.¹⁶ I have tried to do the same with the semiotic structure of "component-reference-use" at different levels of interpretation and composition.

In some respects, both models work effectively at different levels. But we are also learning that, in important respects, the levels are not symmetrical. Hirsch, quoting Bazell, has insisted on this and has suggested that the more we move into the larger rhetorical patterns of composition, the more asymmetrical the levels become.¹⁷

Although there is some evidence to support this position, more investigation must still be made at many of the levels, and comparisons among the levels have also to be made. In an attempt to compare (and contrast) some emphases at quite different levels, I have assembled the chart in Figure 1. Emphases in composing theory are represented on the left and emphases in interpretation theory are given on the right. These names or movements are only intended to be suggestive, not at all to be exhaustive.

It is, however, a curious fact (for which I have no adequate explanation), that theories of producing and theories of interpreting emphasize quite different aspects of the two processes. For this reason, it will be necessary to switch back and forth between the productive and the interpretive processes, given the scholarly emphases.

At the lowest level of the chart, it is possible to find some who have viewed the structure of the phoneme as the micro-structure which can be used as the model of all higher level analyses. The success of de Saussure at the phonological level has indeed left a distinct impression on much subsequent study, particularly with structuralists and post-structuralists in France. Thus Derrida in *Of Grammatology* says:

Linguistics thus wishes to be the science of language Let us first simply consider that the scientificity of that science is often acknowledged because of its *phonological* foundations.

Phonology, it is often said today, communicates its scientificity to linguistics, which in turn serves as the epistemological model for all of the sciences of man.¹⁸

Lévi-Strauss has, on the other hand, warned of the dangers of a simplistic analysis of all levels of culture in terms of phonemic and distinctive features.¹⁹ As will be pointed out later, he categorically rejects the notion that the myth is made up only of linguistic structures. However, he cannot resist comparisons. Having suggested that the myth is the sum-total of all of the individual variants of a myth (a criterion beyond the individual text, therefore) he concludes, "To put it in even more linguistic terms, it is as though a phoneme were always made up of all its variants."²⁰

Sentence Emphases

However, it is the work of Lévi-Strauss himself using the sentence as a basis for analyzing myths that has attracted much of the attention of the structural and post-structural French thought in this connection. Paul Ricoeur, a contemporary hermeneutic theorist, is impressed with the centrality of the sentence. Writing in 1969, he states:

COMPOSING		INTERPRETING
	Universal History	Dilthey, Droysen, VonRanke, Hegel, Gadamer
	Cultural Situation	Bultmann, Jonas, Dilthey
Sophists, Plato, Aristotle, Burke, Britton, Booth, Kinneavy	Situational Context	Schleiermacher, Hirsch, Bitzer, Black, Speech act theory, Tillich
D'Angelo, Moffett, McDrimmon	Text	Luther, Many new critics, Derrida
Christensen	Paragraph	
Christensen, Morenberg, et al. Many generative linguists	Sentence	Ricoeur, Genette
	Word	
	Morpheme	
Some structural linguists	Phoneme	(Derrida)

Figure 1. Persons and movements emphasizing different levels.

The question is to know if all the levels are homologous. All of my investigations will rest on the idea that the passage to a new unity of discourse, constituted by the sentence or the utterance, represents a cut, a mutation, in the hierarchy of levels. I will not moreover, exhaust the question of levels. I will even glimpse at possibly other strategic levels such as the text, the internal coherence of which calls for a different sort of intelligibility than the sentence or than the word in its position in the sentence.²¹

It is at the level of the text that the hermeneut usually operates, he maintains.²²

However, writing a year later, he returns to the centrality of the sentence. Despite the fact that the written text is not *langue* but *parole*, he says, using the terminology of de Saussure,

. . . the specificity of writing with regard to affective *parole* rests on traits susceptible of being treated as analogous to *langue* in discourse. This hypothesis of work is perfectly legitimate; it consists in saying that under certain conditions the large unities of *langue*, that is to say the unities of a degree superior to the sentence, offer organizations comparable to those of small unities of language, that is to say those of a degree inferior to the sentence, those precisely which are the *result* of linguistics.²³

He cites the analysis of the Oedipus myth by Lévi-Strauss as an example of such a procedure and adds that Roland Barthes and A.J. Greimas follow the same technique. He summarizes:

One finds in these authors the same postulates as in Lévi-Strauss. The unities above the sentence have the same composition as the unities below the sentence.

.....
For the cluster of relations for which Levi-Strauss carries back the mytheme is again of the order of the sentence and the play of oppositions which are located at the very abstract level of the mytheme is still of the order of the sentence and of meaning.²⁴

The reason he gives for this is that the relations between the components of the myth (and other sociological relations, such as those of blood relationships) can be expressed in "the form of the sentence."²⁵ This is a strange argument, the validity of which I shall return to later after looking at the other analyst who is often credited with finding in the sentence the structural model for higher level analyses.

Beginning his analysis of narration in "Discours du récit," Gérard Genette poses the foundation of his analysis as follows:

Since every narrative . . . is a linguistic production assuming the relation of one or of several events, it is perhaps legitimate to treat it, as monstrous as this may seem, as the development given to a *verbal* form, in

the grammatical sense of the term, the expansion of a verb. *I walk*, *Peter has come* are for me minimal forms of the narrative, and inversely the *Odyssey* and the *Remembrance (of Times Past)* do nothing more than amplify (in a rhetorical sense) statements such as *Ulysses returns to Ithaca* or *Marcel becomes a writer*. This authorizes us, perhaps, to organize, or at least to formulate, the problems of analysis of narrative discourse according to categories borrowed from the grammar of the verb, and which here can be reduced to three fundamental classes.²⁶

He then calls his three classes those of time (tense), mood, and voice, terms borrowed, he says, from grammar. He concludes the long paragraph by repeating:

Once again it must be said that there is here only a borrowing of terms, but that there is no pretense to a rigorous homology.²⁷

His *time* has to do with the order of events, the duration of events, and the frequency of events. His *moods* concern, he says, problems of distance which American critics of the Jamesian tradition generally treat in terms of the opposition between *showing* and *telling*. The third category of *voice* treats problems of first and third person narration and their interrelationships.²⁸

There is, therefore, something of a grammatical framework of analysis erected by Genette for his lengthy investigation of narrative structures. Nonetheless, for instance, in his analysis of the order of events there is no recourse to technical issues of tense at all. Nor is there any attempt to reduce structures to the order of the sentence. His typical micro-analyses of short passages from the *Odyssey* and *Jean Santeuil* use, for example, 5 sentences which are *not* equivalent to the 5 events being analyzed, then 3 sentences embodying 9 events but with only 2 temporal units involved, and then a passage of 14 sentences embodying 15 events but only 7 temporal units. The macroanalysis of the *Remembrance* uses 10 segments for the entire novel, a few comprising only a page or so of text and several comprising hundreds of pages.²⁹

In fact the structures he finds within these micro and macro-structures are not patterned like sentences at all, nor do they reflect any *tense* design either. The same may be said of his mood and voice analyses. Consequently, though Genette begins with a framework that seems analogous to one drawn from grammar, the superstructures he discovers are not grammatically homologous at all.

The same must be said of the myth structures of Lévi-Strauss. It is true that he plasters his walls with single sentences drawn from the many versions of a myth. He then arranges, deranges, and rearranges these sentences in clusters to arrive at the structure of the myth, the clusters being certain repeated thematic patterns. Relating this work to linguistic structures, he says,

To sum up the discussion at this point, we have so far made the following claims: (1) If there is a meaning to be found in mythology, it cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way in which these elements are combined. (2) Although myth belongs to the same category as language, being, as a matter of fact, only a part of it, language in myth exhibits specific properties. (3) Those properties are only to be found *above* the ordinary linguistic level, that is, they exhibit more complex features than those which are to be found in any other kind of linguistic expression.³⁰

The basic constituent units of myths he calls mythemes and he uses sentences to serve as the mythemes with which he builds his mythic structures. However, these isolated units do not constitute the myth.

From this springs a new hypothesis, which constitutes the very core of our argument: The true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but *bundles of such relations*, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning.³¹

Indeed the final formula for myth which he gives in "The Structural Study of Myth" has no grammatical or sentence parallel at all. Therefore it is difficult to see that either Genette or Lévi-Strauss have postulated a sentence structure for the study of discourse. In fact, Ricoeur's argument that myths and blood relationships have sentence structures because they can be written about in sentences would make all structures in all disciplines sentential. And the argument that because Lévi-Strauss starts with sentences as mythemes, the large structure is sentential is also fallacious. One could also argue that the Cathedral at Rheims has the architectural structure of a molecule of stone because it is made of stone.

In one sense the most unabashed sentence emphasis in the analysis of language has been that of many of the speech act theorists. The work of Austin and Searle exemplifies this emphasis. Searle is very aware of this stress. He is also aware of the objection that might be made to such a technique. He says,

It still might seem that my approach is simply, in Saussurian terms, a study of "parole" rather than "langue." I am arguing, however, that an adequate study of speech acts is a study of *langue*.

.....

There are, therefore, not two irreducibly distinct semantic studies, one a study of the meanings of sentences and one a study of the performances of speech acts. For just as it is a part of our notion of the meaning of a sentence that a literal utterance of that sentence with that meaning in a certain context would be performance of a particular speech act, so it is a part of our notion of a speech act that there is a possible sentence (or sentences) the utterance of which in a certain context would in virtue of its (or their) meaning constitute a performance of that speech act.

.....

Therefore, it is in principle possible for every speech act one performs or could perform to be uniquely determined by a given sentence (or set of sentences), given the assumption that the speaker is speaking literally and that the context is appropriate.³²

Searle is attempting to justify his study of discourse (*parole*) to linguists interested in the kind of language analysis which linguists usually make (*langue*). However, his technique is open to objection from the opposite position, that of scholars interested in the full text. From this point of view he might just as well be accused of reducing *parole* to *langue*. And this is what he actually does--analyze a speech act by analyzing an equivalent sentence. For example, Searle's analysis of a *promise* speech act is made by analyzing sentences like "X made a promise."

I really don't know of any evidence that enables an analyst to reduce a whole discourse to a single equivalent sentence, or even a few of them; Searle doesn't even give an example. Actually, Searle ordinarily limits himself to the single sentence. Most discourse analysts would respond that a good deal has been lost when one tries to so abstract a discourse. As Paul Valéry has said, "Résumer une thèse, c'est en retenir l'essentiel. Resumer une oeuvre d'art, c'est en perdre l'essentiel."³³

In literary criticism, such a reductionism was called by one famous critic the heresy of paraphrase. But Searle exempts literary discourses from his analysis--though for different reasons than those which prompted Cleanth Brooks' condemnation of such summarizing.

However, many scientists would not even concede the first half of Valéry's statement. The summary of an elaborate proof is not equivalent at all to the proof. And no logician would grant the position that a given particular proof can be analyzed by analyzing the nature of proof itself. Yet that is what Searle is doing. Such a position ignores the individuality of any given speech act. On this account all proofs are the same, all promises are the same, etc. No one would deny that they have something in common, but they also have something individual.

Searle, however, in the process of analyzing his isolated sentences, finds it necessary to posit "appropriate conditions" in the speech act situation in order that a promise, a request, a command, etc., be meaningful. A promise, for example, predicates a future act of the speaker, the listener must prefer that future act over its opposite, the act must be one that the speaker would not normally do anyway, the speaker must sincerely intend to do what he promises, and the promise "counts as the undertaking of an obligation to do the act."³⁴

In other words, although Searle bypasses text in his analysis, he does not bypass situational context. Indeed, he continually refers to something like a

"suitable context," or an appropriate context.³⁵ Promises, in fact, extend beyond the situational context into the cultural context.³⁶ This analysis, it might be added, has proven extremely useful. A possible source for this emphasis on the context of situation in the ordinary language philosophers may well have been Malinowski, especially as he was transmitted through Firth. Langendoen remarks in this connection,

It is interesting to observe that the Oxford philosophers have maintained an outlook on semantics that bears great resemblance to that of Malinowski, Firth, and their linguistic followers, although there does not seem to have been much exchange between these two groups.³⁷

Mary Louise Pratt, writing eight years after Searle, recognizes the danger of reducing texts to single sentences. She writes,

Searle claims that "the characteristic grammatical form of an illocutionary act is the complete sentence" (it can be a one-word sentence) (1969:25), and indeed, speech acts have been discussed mostly in terms of single sentence utterances. Nevertheless, it is clear that the appropriate conditions for explaining, thanking, or persuading, for example, must at some level of analysis be seen as applying to explanations, thankings, or persuadings that are many sentences long. This is an issue to which few speech act philosophers (and few linguists) have addressed themselves, and to which I shall return in the next chapter.³⁸

In the next chapter she continues,

More broadly, the question is whether and to what extent the terms and categories designed to describe language at sentence level can be applied at the level of discourse, that is, to utterances of more than a single sentence. (In some cases, the real question seems to be whether terms originally developed by sentence theory actually belong to discourse theory.) These are questions that no one has so far answered, and that most linguists and language philosophers lamentably tend to avoid by choosing one-sentence examples.³⁹

She rejects Ohmann's attempt to get around this difficulty.⁴⁰ She herself uses several full texts and a good number of multi-sentence parts of texts in attempting to establish more clearly the appropriate conditions of "The Literary Speech Situation," as the largest and most important chapter of her book is called. She recognizes that both Searle and Grice were, in effect, working out the components of the situational contexts for different kinds of utterances.

Speech act theory, then, early emphasized sentence, bypassed text, and moved into situational context. In Pratt, at least, there is a respect for sentence, partial text, full text, and situational context. And occasionally Searle but especially Grice and Pratt insist on the operation of cultural or institutional norms in order to understand some kinds of utterances. Thus they range in emphases from sentence to cultural context.

On the production side of the chart, Bazell has shown convincingly that the phoneme level is a very different structure from the morpheme level, and both of these are quite different from the sememe level (roughly the word level).⁴¹ He does not discuss higher levels in any detail at all except to remark that each situation is so different that the structure would have to be distinct.⁴² Generative grammar, though not ordinarily considered a part of composition theory, yet does imply a production technique.

Still on the production side of the chart, I have placed the names of Christensen, and then those of Morenberg, Daiker, and Kerek. These represent the scholars who believe that the sentence is the basic structure of the composition as a whole and that to teach the sentence is to teach the theme. I will return to Christensen later. In the meantime let us turn to the recent experiment in Miami, Ohio, by Max Morenberg, Donald Daiker, and Andrew Kerek.

The analogue in classical rhetoric, incidentally, for such a position would have to be that of the Sophists ridiculed by Plato in the *Phaedrus*. Some Sophists presumably reduced all persuasion to matters of style, such as figures of speech and of thought, and structures of prose rhythm. For this reason, some historians have practically equated the sophistic concept of rhetoric to the stylistic. Yet this analogue, I shall attempt to show later, is not even fair to the Sophist most frequently accused of such a position--Gorgias.

Morenberg and his colleagues, however, have proposed a version of the centrality of the structure of the sentence to the structure of the composition as a whole that claims more than the wildist sophist or stylist ever did in the history of classical rhetoric. Working with 12 classes of about 25 students each, Morenberg and his colleagues taught *only sentence-combining* to the 6 experimental freshman composition classes for a semester. By sentence-combining I mean the joining of several simple sentences together into more involved sentences using phrase or clause embeddings. The control classes read and discussed anthologized essays on current topics, engaged in some grammar work, and studied rhetorical principles. Both groups wrote 8 compositions as the term assignments, the first serving as the pretest and the eighth as the posttest.⁴³

Variable controls were very rigid, possibly more so than in any other major study in composition research of which I am aware. The pre- and posttests were graded by three different groups operating with different norms. The first grading was by English teachers who simply gave a holistic grade (on a scale of 1 through 6) to the essays. The second grading was by another set of English teachers who gave a final score based on a consideration of six component factors: ideas, supporting details, organization, voice, sentence structure, and diction. This second scoring was called the analytic grade. The third set of graders scored the themes on

syntactic maturity only. Syntactic maturity scores are based on the number of words per clause, the number of clauses per thought unit, and the numbers of words per thought unit; a thought unit is defined as a main clause with all of its modifiers, clausal and non-clausal.

The results obtained after one semester's work were spectacular. The experimental group's scores on all three ratings were significantly greater than the control group's (in some instances in the .001 degree of significance). Despite the fact that the experimental group had read no anthologized essays and had engaged in no reflective discussions on current topics as had the control group, the experimental group scored significantly higher in "ideas," "supporting details," "voice," and "syntactic maturity" than did the control group. Let me quote the authors in their announcement of the most interesting finding.

The results of the multiple regression indicate that the single best predictor of the holistic score is the quality of a paper's structure. More specifically, the single analytic factor of sentence structure predicts 64.6% of the variance of the holistic rating.⁴⁴

What this means is that the ordinary English teacher, whatever he says he grades for, really seems to grade a theme by the quality of its sentence structure. The other eight factors, it might be remarked, accounted for only 6.7% of the variance. All of these findings would seem to support the centrality of the sentence in the composing process.

Now there are some interesting speculations that might be made about these findings. One of them is the ominous suggestion in rhetorical production that the structure of the sentence is central to the essence of the theme itself. This would seem to parallel the structuralist statements of Ricoeur and others.

There are some serious reservations that must be made about this study before such a claim could be made, however. It must be pointed out that the control group did not do nearly so much writing as the experimental group (counting daily sentence combining as writing). Secondly, maybe English teachers are not the great judges of a theme's values that they are usually assumed to be. Conceivably by quite specific norms, such as, for example, factual and organizational criteria such as are used to judge the usual newsstory in journalism, or the rigid evidence that a scientist might require, or the careful definitions that a logician might demand in a classification paper, these papers might rate as vacuous, illogical, and undefined. Thirdly, another parallel structured writing program with equivalent writing practices might account for comparable results.

One final reservation that must be made about the Miami study, however, is probably the most serious one. Unlike all the other sentence combining research studies, Morenberg and his colleagues insisted on put-

ting the sentence into a context, often a paragraph or an entire theme. The sentence, therefore, was incorporated into the whole. O'Hare had recommended such a rhetorical incorporation, although he had not carried it out in his work;⁴⁵ but Mellon had designedly avoided such an incorporation as had Hunt before him.⁴⁶

Consequently, the Miami study represents a combined text and sentence emphasis.

An interesting phenomenon common to all four of the sentence theories of discourse which have just been reviewed is that in each case there was an initial commitment to the sentence and then the gradual working up toward a partial text, whole text, or situational context level in order to make sense of either the production or the interpretation. The sentence combiners begin with only isolated sentence combinations in Hunt and Mellon, suggested the desirability of a rhetorical context in O'Hare, and supplied the paragraph or text in the exercises of Strong and the research work of Morenberg and his colleagues. Although Lévi-Strauss begins with sentences, he works through the level of motifs (partial texts) to whole texts and many-text versions of the same myth, all for the purpose, of course, of analyzing the culture of the group under consideration. Genette, beginning below the level of the sentence with the verb, occasionally considers single sentences, but usually works at the level of part text (the large segments of Proust, for example). Speech act theory has followed a similar progression. Searle and Grice, attempting to account for individual sentence meanings, have ended up positing appropriate conditions in the situational context. And, Pratt, the most recent theorist in the speech act tradition, is really much more concerned to delineate the conditions of the literary speech act situation than she is to analyze individual sentences. In addition, she also investigates full and partial texts.

Some sentence patterns, in particular those of Francis Christensen, have been imposed on the paragraph with some success. However, Alton Becker, taking a tagmemic approach, criticizes Christensen for this imposition.

I think Rodgers is right when he criticizes Christensen (and, indirectly, Josephine Miles, and, I might add, a number of "generative" linguists) for seeing the paragraph as a "macro-sentence or meta-sentence."⁴⁷ Rodgers, in fact, accuses Becker of precisely the same illicit procedure.⁴⁸ It certainly does seem true that not all paragraphs can be analyzed by the structures of the Christensen sentence (indeed he never claimed that they could). It is also obvious that other than presently known sentence norms are necessary to account for certain literary paragraphs (i.e., stanzas) or expressive paragraphs. In fact Christensen's basic structure seems to be a classificatory one, ill suited to other than classification kinds of paragraphs.⁴⁹

It is interesting to note that the Christensen formula was not applied to the entire theme in the Nebraska Curriculum Demonstration Center materials, although I have heard that the attempt was made. However, there are those who maintain that a theme is just an extended paragraph, although there is no evidence of which I am aware that supports this notion. Given the limitations of the Christensen paragraph, it might be said that to attempt to expand it into a full theme would be like blowing up a tire and expecting an automobile to result.

There are no interpretation theories coordinate to the composition theories at the middle levels of the hierarchy--as far as I am aware--although some reading theories (especially Goodman) reach up into those levels, but without specifying the paragraph as such, for example.

Text Emphases

At the level of the full text, from the standpoint of interpretation theory, there are certainly those who have insisted on the autonomy of the text. In one sense that is what the Luther revolution in interpreting the Bible was about. For him, outside norms were irrelevant--the Bible was the "whole" and the parts were to make sense within it as a unity.⁵⁰ All scripture was for him "*sui ipsius interpres*," its own interpreter.⁵¹

A good many practitioners of the new criticism were, in a sense, literary protestants. Their creed might well have been summarized in "the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text." They were equally afraid of being contaminated by the intentional or the affective fallacy. Their position, it might be defended, was justified at the time because of the inordinate importance given during the preceding period of literary criticism to the historical context and the life (situational context) of each author. This is a movement in the opposite direction from some of those which we have analyzed above. Their counterparts, in composition theory, I have suggested are theorists like D'Angelo, McCrimmon, and (with reservations) Moffett. Indeed, most freshman English texts with the deification of "theme" present almost a solid front for the autonomy of text. The freshman English theme as it is usually taught is most frequently written without an explicit aim, takes no particular view of its subject matter, is oriented to no particular medium, and is preferably done with no serious thought preparation. In other words, it is aimless, modeless, mediumless, and unprepared. No serious professional writer would dream of producing a text under any of these conditions.

There are a few exceptions to this view, both in English and speech communication, as we shall see later. But the typical English teacher in composition as the typical English teacher in interpretation of literature is a true blue believer in the autonomy of text.

Situational Context Emphases: Antiquity

Nevertheless the dominance of the autonomy of text has not always been the rule in the history of rhetoric. In antiquity, at least, three (or four) important doctrines militated against it. The most important of these was the notion of *kairos*. If I hesitate to translate the word, I have the authority of S.H. Butcher, who says that *kairos* is a word which has no "single or precise equivalent in any language."⁵² Liddel and Scott give four basic meanings to the word, three of which are relevant here: (1) fitness, proportion, due measure; (2) the critical time or occurrence, the right time; (3) the state of affairs. Actually in the Presocratics, in Socrates and Plato, in Aristotle and as late as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the word usually meant a combination of these three meanings. Funaioli defines *kairos* as follows:

The *kairos* when resolved into the rhetorical skill...can be defined as that which is fitting in time, place, and circumstances', which means the adaptation of the speech to the manifold variety of life, to the psychology of the speaker and hearer: 'variegated, not absolute unity of tone'.⁵³

This notion runs through Hesiod, Pindar, Philolaus, the Pythagoreans, nearly all of the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and later Greek writers.

English and American classical scholarship has not given as much attention to this notion as has German and Italian scholarship. Guthrie, an English historian of Greek culture, remarks on this: "Some have made a great deal of this *kairos-Lehre*, in which among other things they see medical influence."⁵⁴ In strictly rhetorical scholarship it has, to my knowledge, been almost completely overlooked.

Protagoras represents one interesting variation in the theory. He saw in the "situation" or the "experiences" the elements of a strife which had to be mastered. By mastering these elements of experience, man becomes the master or measure of experience of all things (*panton chrematon metron estin anthros*)-- I am here following Untersteiner's translation.⁵⁵

The element of strife in experience represented a concern of nearly all of the Sophists. They were well aware that what was just in one situation was not just in another, that justice had an element of the probable in it that could go either way in a given set of circumstances. Consequently Protagoras maintained that it was man who mastered this indeterminacy. By looking at things differently man could put different values on them and could *by persuasion* make it possible for something of a lesser grade of knowledge to take on a higher level of knowledge.⁵⁶

To adapt to these different situations, Protagoras seems to have been the first to devise the notion of the topics and to have extended the ambivalence of the opposites to all spheres of practical activity (there are two sides

to everything).⁵⁷ Scott Consigny, in his article, "Rhetoric and Its Situations," rightly recognizes that the topics were an attempt to get at the diversity of situations.⁵⁸ But it should be pointed out that the topics in classical rhetoric only took care of the subject matter issue in the situation--the *kairos* involved much more than subject matter.

Gorgias, however, was the Sophist who centered his entire system of thought around the *kairos*. Zeller lists among the major rhetorical works of the Sophist a questionable *peri Kairou* by Gorgias.⁵⁹ In contrast to Protagoras, Gorgias felt that the *kairos* was the irrational power that broke up the opposition of the antitheses in the situation and made possible *by persuasion* of self and of others the perception of something as objectively knowable, the ability to decide between right and wrong, and the capacity to discern the ugly from the beautiful.⁶⁰ This irrational power of the situation in effect made the decisions. There is thus an important distinction from the position of Protagoras. Whereas in Protagoras, man mastered experience, in Gorgias experience was the master--the situation determined whether something was ugly or beautiful, whether the act was just or unjust.⁶¹

This is true of all fields which Gorgias investigates. Untersteiner examines the application of this doctrine in several areas. He then concludes, "The ethic, esthetic, and rhetoric of Gorgias are all based on *kairos*."⁶² This statement comes after he had devoted some 76 pages to examining the epistemology of Gorgias, also based on *kairos*. In other words, Gorgias had a situational epistemology, rhetoric, ethic, and esthetic--all founded on the persuasive power of the logos. In each area the situation (*kairos*) could make one element in the antithesis appear more probable (and therefore more persuasive) than the other element by forcing the decision--remember that the word *pithanon* in Greek meant both probable and persuasive.

The contingent nature of such a morality, epistemology, and ethics struck Socrates as particularly harmful, says Guthrie.⁶³ To place the basis of virtues in conventions, varying from place to place, was dangerous. As Guthrie says, outlining Socrates' position:

Serious thought about the laws of human behavior had begun with a radical skepticism, which taught that it rested on no fixed principles but each decision must be made empirically and *ad hoc*, based on the expediency of the immediate situation (*kairos*). From this theoretical soil grew the pride of youthful rhetoric in its ability to sway men to or from any course of action by mastery of the persuasive use of words.⁶⁴

Socrates and Plato repudiated such an epistemology, such an ethic, and such an esthetic. Indeed, Plato's world of ideas where justice, beauty, goodness, and courage were immutable and true and not subject to the

vagaries of situational probabilities can be considered 'the response of Plato to the Sophistic, especially Gorgian, relativism.

But Plato did not, interestingly enough, reject a situational rhetoric. Near the end of the *Phaedrus*, when Socrates has outlined what the study of an ideal course in rhetoric should entail, he concludes:

But it is only when he [the student of rhetoric] can state adequately what sort of man is persuaded by what sort of speech; when he has the capacity to declare to himself with complete perception, in the presence of another, *that here is the man and here the nature that was discussed theoretically at school--here, now--present to him in actuality--* to which he must apply *this* sort of speech in *this* sort of manner in order to obtain persuasion for *this* kind of activity--it is only when he can do all this and when he has, in addition, grasped the concept of *propriety of time*...it is only then, and not until then that the finishing and perfecting touches will have been given to his science.⁶⁵

The climactic words in this translation, *propriety of time*, are the English rendition of *kairos* in Greek. And the whole passage is a fair summary of one important facet of *kairos* doctrine.

Aristotle uses the notion of *kairos* in many of his works,⁶⁶ and sees medicine particularly as a typical illustration of the necessity to adapt to the individual situation.⁶⁷ The concept, if not the word, pervades the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle, while agreeing with Plato on the importance of *kairos*, nonetheless disagrees with Plato on the dangers of the mere probabilities in such situations. Aristotle feels that the existence of a probability at least precludes the determinism of a certainty. The probable allowed the intervention of man and permitted man to achieve some mastery over the situation. Thus the sciences and the areas of the probable are the sciences of the free.⁶⁸ In a sense, Aristotle reverts to something like the position of Protagoras: man is the master of the situation.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, teaching in Rome 20 years after the death of Cicero, states that nobody until his time, not even Gorgias, had defined the notion of *kairos* adequately.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the word passed into the *koine*, the Greek common language used throughout the Mediterranean world from Syria to Gaul in the Hellenistic and Roman period. It is an important word in the *koine* of the New Testament, used 86 times (a significant number)⁷⁰ and in some very notable passages. For our purposes maybe one of the most revealing uses is in Mark I, 15, where Jesus, having just come out of the desert after his forty-day fast and temptation, inaugurates his public ministry. Jesus' first quoted words are: "The time [*kairos*] is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel." This is a very rhetorical statement, both practically and theoretically. The words for believe and belief are derived from the noun *pistis*, the word used

throughout Greek rhetoric for the rhetorical appeals or proofs (ethical, pathetic, and logical, in Aristotle). Mark's choice of two words with long rhetorical traditions in Jesus' first recorded statement to the Mediterranean world is significant. And, of course, the emphasis on situational context is obvious. Throughout the New Testament, persuasion to belief is made to depend on the rightness of the time: *pistis* depends on *kairos*. This idea is so pervasive in the New Testament that the theologian Tillich maintains that the word *kairos* reached its deeper meaning of a fullness of time, or a decisive time only in the early Christian period.⁷¹ In Tillich, the *kairos* is so important for the fundamental receptivity of both individual and whole cultures to the kingdom of God that he makes the notion the cornerstone of his entire theology, as another eminent theologian, Erich Przywara, has remarked.⁷²

In any case, the Greek New Testament certainly continued the relationship between persuasion and *kairos*.

Among the Romans the notion seems to have been almost dissolved into that of fitness or propriety (*prepon*). Even among the Greeks the two notions were very closely allied. Consequently, when we are looking for a version of the importance of the situation in Cicero or Quintilian, we should ordinarily look at the associations made with the concept of fitness, which Cicero usually translated as *decorum*. Since this notion has received much more attention in rhetorical and ethical circles than has the notion of *kairos*,⁷³ I won't delay long this second important depository of the situational context. It might be pointed out, however, how much Quintilian expanded the areas to which fitness applied compared even to Cicero where the concept is almost ubiquitous. The difference is in the explicit specification of areas. Pohlenz remarks that Cicero, like Isocrates and Gorgias before him, had joined the *kairos* and the *prepon* in such passages as *De Oratore*, III, 210: "id quidem perspicuum est, non omni causae nec auditori neque personae neque tempori congruere orationis unam genus," and he also refers to *Orator*, 21 and 74. In addition he cites from Quintilian, in what he calls a summary statement combining *kairos* and *prepon*. It concerns:

. . . quid dicat (31), cur (39), apud quem (43), quando (46), locus et tempus (48), causae (57), apud iudicem (75), whereby one can also bring in other things.⁷⁴

The third notion in Hermagoras, Cicero, and Quintilian in which the notion of situational context is embodied is in the distinction between the hypothesis and the thesis in the *statis-doctrine*. The hypothesis was an actual issue embodied in a real situation; the thesis was an abstract and general discussion of an issue. Cicero rejected the thesis as being irrelevant

to rhetoric. Here, as in the notion of decorum, Cicero insisted on a real situation.⁷⁵

Thus, if we separate the notion of the topics from that of the general *kairos*, there are four major concerns in antiquity attempting to cover the problem of the situational context: *kairos*, *topoi*, *prepon*, and *hypothesis*.

Situational Context: Modern Emphases

The full history of the disappearance of the concept of *kairos* from the subsequent rhetorics has yet to be written. And the ascendancy of the notion of the autonomy of text is a historical trend that has yet to be documented. Religious authority, the rise of print, and other influences probably have something to do with these two competitive tendencies.

At any rate, at the present time the autonomy of text is challenged by many who argue beyond the text to some norm for understanding. In law, of course, legislative intent and legal precedent are norms beyond the text. In rhetoric, there are those who, like Black and Bitzer, argue for the preminence of the rhetorical situation and tend to minimize the text in favor of history.⁷⁶ In Biblical criticism the Catholic Church has always asserted the norms of tradition and authority in interpreting the Bible. Today in Biblical criticism and in general hermeneutics there are the demythologizers who maintain that the message of the Bible must be separated from the local and temporal cultural myths in which it was necessary to embody the message. All of these movements challenge the autonomy of the text. Their parallels in composition theory are the people who assert the importance of the dramatic situation (Burke), the importance of a specific audience and purpose (Booth, Britton, and Kinneavy).

One important voice who repeatedly called for consideration of the situational context and whose voice is often ignored even by some of his closest followers is that of Freud. Incidentally I prefer the term *situational context* because it is more general than *rhetorical context*. Besides a *rhetorical context* there could be distinguished a *literary context* (as Pratt has done), a *religious context* (as Tillich has done in *The Religious Situation*), a *political situation* (Nazis used the term *kairos* for the idea that the *political situation* was right for the adoption of their ideas⁷⁸), a *scientific context*, etc. Consequently, it seems better to revert to the general term of Malinowski, accepted generally by anthropologists today.

A typical warning can be seen from this quotation from *The Interpretation of Dreams*:

At the same time I must expressly warn the investigator against overestimating the importance of symbols in the interpretation of dream-translation to the translation of symbols, and neglecting the technique of utilizing the associations of the dreamer. The two techniques of dream-

interpretation must supplement one another; practically, however, as well as theoretically, precedence is retained by the latter process, which assigns the final significance to the utterance of the speaker, while the symbol translation which we undertake plays an auxiliary part.⁷⁹

The message of this admonition is seen again and again in Freud.⁸⁰

Beyond text are levels like the entire corpus of a particular writer, or his complete life, or the complete culture within which the work was produced, or even universal history.⁸¹

Given all these levels and the possibilities of asymmetrical systems within them with different whole-part relations, the important question for the teacher of discourse composition is: At what point(s) does transfer of grammatical, library, usage, and even logical skills take place so that they are effectively used in composing? In other words, how are parts woven into the whole?

The long discussion of levels and varying emphases, both in rhetoric and interpretation, may enable us to return to the first tenet of the hermeneutic circle creed in order to see the operation of the whole-part relationships of a discourse and its components posited in a situational and a cultural context.

This paper, in fact, can serve as a vivid illustration of the four relationships between whole and part: their continual changes, the relative notion of what is whole and what is part, the dialectical relation of each to the other, and the reciprocal interdependence of each on the other. At first let me consider some of the higher levels in the chart and then I will turn to some of the lower levels.

The first version of this paper was at the 1974 Conference of College Composition and Communication. Against the background of the "Back to Basics" movement in the situational context, I was protesting a tendency to equate "basics" with mechanics; my emphasis was on the entire text of a theme, not just on its mechanics, as I delivered a talk on "Holism and Merism in Composition Theory." In 1977 at the same conference, my talk was part of a panel on hermeneutic theory and the composing process (situational context). As a result I added the hermeneutical circle as a rationale and method for integrating the relationships of whole and part. I also added the long section on levels, and talked briefly about the intermediate levels, to which I had paid little attention in the 1974 talk.

In November, 1977, at the Western Speech Communication Conference in Phoenix, I gave the third version. I felt that a speech audience would be understanding of an emphasis on situational context (in view of the stand on rhetorical situation by people like Bitzer and Black). Therefore I emphasized situation more and pointed out to that audience the extreme importance of *kairos* in early classical rhetoric (an importance speech writers have ignored). In addition, I enlarged the speech (I was allowed an hour in

that situational context) and consequently I added some emphases at various levels which I had not hitherto included, particularly the three theories of Morenberg et al., of Genette, and of post-structuralists interpreting Lévi-Strauss as supportive of this position. In front of a speech audience I felt that I could also make some derogatory remarks about the text emphasis on the part of both the English composition teacher and the English literature teacher. Consequently the operative *parts* within the speech changed radically and the notion of *whole* moved solidly into situational context. In brief, the notion of parts had moved from a grammatical and mechanics concern to the sentence and the notion of whole had moved from text to context.

Just before Christmas, 1977, I was asked by Donald McQuade if I had anything that might be publishable in a forthcoming special issue of *Language and Style*. I sent him a copy of the Phoenix talk, offering to spruce it up for final publication if he was interested. He asked me to make several minor adjustments to the larger audience of *Language and Style*. I felt that the more linguistic audience of *Language and Style* might seriously criticize the paper if it ignored speech act theory, especially since Pratt's application of speech act theory to literary discourse had just appeared. Notice that both of these considerations derive from situational context. Consequently I added the section on speech act theory and attempted to make the paper more intelligible to a larger audience than the typical CCCC crowd.

Although the entire manuscript had now almost doubled from even last year's size, I excerpted the sections on sentence theories of discourse (Miami, Genette, Lévi-Strauss) and juxtaposed them to the historical notion of *kairos* at a talk in Denver this year. Nearly all of that was new material for the CCCC audience.

This printed version, therefore, represents a fifth whole with different parts of a developing, continually changing, reciprocally dependent dialectic between various notions of whole and part, limiting the notion of part to a larger segment of discourse--something between paragraph and text.

The lower levels have also been strongly influenced by the various situational contexts. The terms "holism" and "merism" have given way to whole and part. In the 1977 CCCC talk Mr. Hirsch, rightly, I believe, felt that "hermeneutic" would be a more frightening word than "interpretation" theory. I used "rhetorical situation" for the speech audience in Phoenix (because that is the term used by speech scholars), but reverted to "situational context," Malinowski's earlier and more general term.

All of this seems to suggest that the proponents of situational context are right--situational context seems to be the critical level. Only in the dialectic with the situational context do the word, then the sentence, the section,

and even the text encounter the real tentativeness, changing relationships, relativity, and reciprocal interdependence which are determinative. This corresponds to what we know about the learning of a foreign language: we learn it rapidly and efficiently when we have to use it in Mexico City, or Bordeaux, or Freiburg in order to buy plane tickets, or order food, or find lodging, etc.

In the classroom then, when we can pose real communication situations there is the highest likelihood of transfer of skills. Otherwise the situational context has to be simulated. And the further away the level is from the situational context, the less likely is there to be the motivation to transfer. This is my hierarchy hypothesis.

1. See Ingrid Strom, "Research in Grammar and Usage and Its Implications for Teaching Writing," *Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University* (1960), pp. 1-21. Also see Richard Braddock et al., *Research in Written Composition* (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1963), p. 34; Frank O'Hare, *Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction*, Research Report No. 15 (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1971). For a British view see Andrew Wilkinson, *The Foundations of Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 32-34.

2. Patricia Senn Brievik, "Effects of Library-Based Instruction in the Academic Success of Disadvantaged Undergraduates," in H.B. Rader, ed., *Academic Library Instruction: Objectives, Program and Faculty Involvement* Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Press, 1975), pp. 45-55.

3. L. Ray Carry and J. Fred Weaver, *Patterns of Mathematics Achievement in Grades 4, 5, and 6: x-population* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University School Mathematics Study Group, 1969), especially Chapter 6 and Appendices B and D, pp. 167ff., and 201 ff.

4. See James L. Kinneavy, John Q. Cope, and J.W. Campbell, *Writing--Basic Modes of Organization* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 30-34, for a use of the Piaget model in teaching description. See Eugene C. Luschei, *The Logical Systems of Lesniewski* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 151 ff., for a summary of Lesniewski's theory of mereology. The defect in Piaget's model, for my purposes, is that his three matrix structures do not seem to include some obvious non-mathematical structures, such as plot. The drawback in Lesniewski's theory, for my purposes, is that he reduces parts of a whole to subsets of a set. But the part-whole relationship is often not that of a subset-set relationship; that is, a door-room relationship is not that of a kind of a room to a room.

5. Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 87.

6. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Tr. G. Barden, J. Cumming. (New York The Seabury Press, 1969), p. 154.

7. See John C. Maraldo, *Der Hermeneutisch Zirkel* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1974), p. 13; Gadamer, pp. 154 ff.; Emilio Betti, *Allgemeine Auslegungslehre als Methodik der Geisteswissenschaften* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1976), pp. 219-220.

8. Gadamer, p. 167.

9. See Betti, comparing the *iter geneticum* with the *iter hermeneuticum*, pp. 179 ff., 222; Gadamer, 19 ff.; for more lengthy considerations on the relation between rhetoric and hermeneutics, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, tr. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 20-26; see further Klaus Dockhorn, "Gelehrten-Anzeigen," *Göttingen*, 213, Heft 3/4 (1966), 169-206.

10. Hans-Georg Gadamer, in a talk at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter's, Minnesota, Dec. 2, 1977, mentioned that Melancthon, starting a book on rhetoric, ended up writing one on the interpretation of written texts. I assume he refers to *Loci communes rerum theologicarum seu hypotoposes theologicae*, Luther's (and Protestantism's) first important theological treatise. The rhetorical origin is obvious in the first two words of the title--the abbreviated form by which the work is usually known.

11. See Betti, pp. 220, 221, 222, 224.

12. See Gadamer, p. 167, discussing Droysen; pp. 236, 237, 268 ff., discussing the concept of horizon, especially p. 273.

13. See Gadamer, p. 163, Maraldo, pp. 33-50; and the two volumes *Hermeneutik und Dialektik*, ed. Rudiger Bubner, Konrad Cramer, and Reiner Wiehl (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1970), *passim*, especially I, 167 ff. and II, 273 ff.

14. See Maraldo, explaining Schleiermacher, p. 31; Betti, p. 224.

15. See Malcolm Cowley, ed. *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* (New York: The Viking Press, Inc. 1958). There are two additional volumes in the series.

16. For applications of these concepts at various levels, see Kenneth Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Human Behavior*, 3 vols., (Glendale, Calif.: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1960); for the discourse level, see Richard Young, Samuel Becker, and Kenneth Pike, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1971); for the paragraph level, see below.

17. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 66.

18. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, tr. G. Spivak (Baltimore, Md.: The John Hopkins University, 1976), p. 26, his italics.

19. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, tr. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), p. 33.

20. Lévi-Strauss, p. 208

21. Paul Ricoeur, *Le conflit des interpretations* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), p. 81.
22. Ricoeur, p. 81.
23. Paul Ricoeur, "Qu'est-ce qu'un texte?" in Bubner, *Hermeneutik*, II, 190.
24. Ricoeur, *ibid.*, p. 191, p. 196.
25. Ricoeur, *ibid.*, p. 196.
26. Gérard Genette, *Figures III* (Paris: Editions due Seuil, 1972), p. 75.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 76
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 80, p. 81, pp. 84-5.
30. Lévi-Strauss, p. 206.
31. Lévi-Strauss, p. 207, his italics.
32. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 17-19.
33. Paul Valéry, *Variété, III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1936), p. 158. "To abstract a thesis is to retain the main point. To abstract a work of art is to lose its main point."
34. Searle, pp. 62-63.
35. See pp. 84, 85, 86, 90, 91, especially p. 92; on p. 94 the context becomes part of the formula; see also pp. 116, 117, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 152, 186.
36. See Searle, p. 152.
37. D. Terence Langendoen, *The London School of Linguistics: A Study of B. Malinowski and J.R. Firth* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1968), p. 19, note 1.
38. Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 85-86.
39. Pratt, p. 141.
40. Pratt, pp. 141-142.
41. C.E. Bazell, *Linguistic Form* (Istanbul: Istanbul Press, 1953).
42. Bazell, p. 88 f.
43. Donald Daiker, Andrew Kerek, Max Morenberg, "Sentence Combining and Syntactic Maturity in Freshman English," *CCC*, 19 (February 1978), 36-41.
44. Daiker, p. 14.
45. O'Hare, p. 69, p. 76.
46. John C. Mellon, *Transformational Sentence Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition*, Research Report No. 10 (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1969), p. 2; Kellogg Hunt, *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels*, Research Report No. 3 (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1965), p. 151.
47. A.L. Becker, "Symposium on the Paragraph," *CCC*, 17 (May, 1966), 71.
48. Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., "Symposium on the Paragraph," *CCC*, 17 (May, 1966), 73.

49. *Ibid.*
50. Gadamer, p. 153.
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52. Quoted in Rhys Roberts, ed., *Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, tr. Rhys Roberts, *On Literary Composition* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1919), p. 304. He refers to S.H. Butcher, *Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects*, pp. 117-120.
53. Mario Untersteiner, *The Sophists*, tr. from the Italian by Kathleen Freeman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), quoting Gino Funaioli, *Studi de letteratura antica*, (Bologne, 1946), I, 176, Untersteiner, p. 197
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55. Untersteiner, p. 41.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 47, pp. 52-53.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
58. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, VII (1975), 175-186.
59. Eduard Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, tr. S.F. Alleyne (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), II, 485n.
60. Untersteiner, pp. 116 ff.
61. Untersteiner, p. 161.
62. Untersteiner, p. 161.
63. Guthrie, p. 431.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Plato, *Phaedrus*, tr. W.C. Helmbold and W. G. Rabinowitz (Indianapolis, Ind.: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958), 272 E. ff.; the italics under the several occurrences of *this* are the translators' and the other italics are mine.
66. See Herman Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* (Berlin: Akademische Druck, U. Verlagsanstalt, 1955), p. 358a.
67. *Nich. Ethics*, 1104a, 8-9.
68. See H. H. Joachim, *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. D.A. Rees (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 2, 14-18.
69. *On Literary Composition*, tr. W. Rhys Roberts (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1910), 12, 84.
70. The number depends on the concordance consulted. This figure is from J.B. Smith, *Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament* (Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1955), p. 187; George Wigram, *The Englishman's Greek Concordance to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 9th ed., pp. 398-399, gives 83. At any rate, the number is high.
71. Paul Tillich, "Kairos and Logos," *Philosophie und Schicksal: Schriften zur Erkenntnislehre und Existenzphilosophie*, Gesammelte Werke, IV, 46; cf. also "Kairos I," *Der Widerstreit von Raum und Zeit: Schriften Zur Geschichtsphilosophie*, Gesammelte Werk, VI, 10. For further lengthy statements of Tillich on *kairos*, see "Kairos II, Ideen zur Geisteslage der Gegenwart," 29-41, "Kairos and Utopie," 149-156, both in *Gesammelte*

Werke, VI; and "Kairos and Karoi," *Systematic Theology*, (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), III, 369-72.

72. "Christian Root-Terms: *Kerygma, Mysterium, Kairos, Oikonomia*," in Thomas A. O'Meara, O.P., and Celestin D. Weisser, O.P., eds., *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought* (Dubuque, Iowa: Priority Press, 1964), 202-204, quoted in Carl J. Armbruster, S.J., *The Vision of Paul Tillich* (New York: Sheed and Ward), 1967, p. 270.

73. See Max Pohlenz, "To Prepon," *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. II, ed. Henrich Dorrie (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1965), pp. 100-139.

74. Pohlenz, 109.

75. *De Inventione*, I, 6, 8. Different terms are used by different authors for these concepts. Yon believes that Cicero may have repudiated the position of the *de Inventione* in the *de Oratore*, I, 31, 138 and II, 24, 104 and in the *Orator*, XIV, 45, 46. See Albert Yon, ed., *Cicero, L'Orateur, Du meilleur genre d'orateurs* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1974) pp. XLVII-XLVIII.

76. Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, I (1968), 1-14; Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

78. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 371.

79. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, tr. A.A. Brill, in *The Major Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago, Ill.: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), p. 285.

80. See pp. 180, 181, 182, 200, 201, 202, 205, 206, 209, 210, 211, 212, 237, 240, 332, 336, 338; on the dangers of interpretation of fictional dreams of poets and novelists, see p. 327.

81. See Gadamer, pp. 167, 174, 190, for Dilthey and Droysen; see Maraldo, p. 74.

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The Hermeneutic Phenomenon and the Authenticity of Discourse

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Since the publication of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, hermeneutical theory has played an important role in investigations of language use. A major issue in these investigations is the question of "authentic discourse." This term points to the ability of a writer or a speaker to perform communicative acts whereby language is used to reveal Being in a truthful manner. The purpose of this essay is to suggest what such an act of revelation entails and how the meaningfulness of this act is a function of a person's poetic and rhetorical abilities.

The phenomenon of understanding and of the correct interpretation of what has been understood is not just a problem proper to the methodology of the human sciences....The hermeneutic phenomenon is basically not a problem of method at all.
Hans-Georg Gadamer

The above quotation from Gadamer's *Truth and Method* reflects the well-known shift in hermeneutical theory that occurred with the publication of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*.¹ This shift takes form in the recognition that hermeneutics is more than a theory and a corresponding method of interpretive understanding, a conception associated with textual-philological analysis and made famous in modern times by both Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey. Rather, hermeneutics shows itself primarily on an ontological level; it defines the process of interpretive understanding itself wherein human beings construct a linguistic and historical relationship with the experiential world. The nature of this relationship, especially as it marks out the tradition of historical consciousness that unfolds in and through language, constitutes the hermeneutic phenomenon *par excellence*. Displaced from its theoretical-methodological foundations rooted in the world of the literary text, hermeneutics now finds its origins in the primordial world of man's socio-historical existence, what Calvin Schrag has termed "the text of everyday life."² Within this textual milieu,

human communicative practices warrant special attention; for such practices both produce and display the unfolding of language and thus the tradition of historical consciousness. The hermeneutic phenomenon is revealed when the discourse characterizing these practices interprets and makes intelligible (i.e., meaningful) those past and present concerns which direct the performance of the discourse in its projection of future understanding.³

This relationship between the hermeneutic phenomenon and its revelation in the discourse of communicative practices has become today a focal point for various scholars (e.g., Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Jürgen Habermas, Karl-Otto Apel, and Jacques Lacan) who have concerned themselves with the status and utility of hermeneutics as both an ontological feature of human existence and a methodological (scientific) tool for critical reflection. Although important differences exist among these scholars regarding how the hermeneutic phenomenon should be approached for the purposes of assessing the discourse of communicative practices, each of their approaches shares a major interest in the investigation of what Heidegger termed the "authentic" (*eigentlich*) function of discourse.⁴ As suggested throughout Heidegger's writings, authentic discourse is exhibited in communicative acts that are able to disclose and thus make-known the truth of an intended object's Being. To comprehend fully how discourse performs this function requires that the notions of Being, truth, and authenticity be examined and appreciated first from the perspective of hermeneutic ontology. Later in this essay I will offer such an examination. For now, I wish only to point to the ontological nature of these notions as they relate to the performance of discourse: Being reveals itself to a person as the presencing of that which is experienced in a person's existence. The truth of this presencing is set forth when presencing is disclosed, that is, interpreted and made meaningful through discourse. In this making-known of meaning discourse functions authentically as it succeeds in performing the following two related tasks: 1) The discourse shows that the meaning of an intended object (i.e., the truth of its Being) is more than what historically it was thought to be. Here, discourse functions poetically; it creates a new and original understanding of what is. 2) The discourse prevents the meaning of an intended object from becoming forgotten or distorted in present understanding. Here, discourse functions rhetorically; it preserves the truth of what has been disclosed.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the role played by authentic discourse in the hermeneutic phenomenon. At least three reasons for the worth of such a study can be offered: First, as suggested above, the topic is receiving special attention in the contemporary literature of hermeneutics. Second, the topic is associated with specific notions (i.e., Being, truth,

authenticity) that necessarily are germane to all forms of hermeneutical experience. Finally, the notion of authenticity and its occurrence in discourse continues to be misinterpreted by those who are critical of the ontological shift in hermeneutical theory and whose criticism, I believe, reflects an invalidity (by their own standards) because of this misinterpretation.⁵ In what follows, then, I first elucidate the specific sense of authenticity found in Heidegger's hermeneutic ontology. I next examine how discourse functions in accordance with authenticity to create and to preserve meaning and thereby to display the hermeneutic phenomenon in an authentic manner. Issues raised throughout this examination are summarized in the concluding section.

Authenticity

Approached from the perspective of hermeneutic ontology, the notion of authenticity describes the fundamental way that human beings acquire an understanding of their existence (i.e., of what it means *to be*). The fact that human existence and the question of Being are so related must not be taken for granted; as will be indicated below, their relationship constitutes the primordial phenomenon of truth. Only by maintaining an authentic awareness of the relationship can one learn to experience, to interpret, and to express this phenomenon in a responsible manner. That such responsibility is a prerequisite for sustaining whatever potential human beings possess for promoting the survival of their race through the performance of discourse is a point that must be emphasized time and again.⁶ Hence, the notion of authenticity to be discussed here takes on a crucial importance. As background to this discussion I present an examination of the relationship between human existence and Being, for in examining this relationship I am at the same time offering a description of authenticity--the fundamental way that human beings acquire an understanding of their existence.

The relationship between human existence and Being, as Heidegger made clear, is not metaphysical in origin. Rather, the relationship constitutes the ground from which all metaphysical thinking develops, a ground that the tradition of metaphysics left unthought. Metaphysics approaches the question of Being by restricting its thinking to an investigation of thing-like beings and what these beings consist of in their present existence. Simply put, metaphysical thinking adheres to the following conception for understanding the relationship between existence and Being: As a thing exists, so it is. Being presents itself in this "it is" of the thing's existence. To experience, to interpret, and to express something about the thing's existence is to determine not only what type of being "it is" but also to denote its present status (i.e., its truth) in the order of Being. Metaphysical thinking stops

here. Being is granted the status of the most universal concept, reified as the ultimate ground of all beings, and often times transformed into the concept of God. Metaphysics thus defines Being as something indefinite yet self-evident (i.e., as continuous presence); it thereby leaves the question of the meaning of Being unexamined by terminating its inquiry with the belief that Being is that which determines beings as beings.⁷

In his critique of the metaphysical tradition, Heidegger agreed that the meaning of Being lies in its occurrence as "presencing." For Heidegger, however, this occurrence presupposes a conception of temporality that eludes metaphysics and its emphasis on the present existence of thing-like beings. If the meaning of Being is to achieve clarification and not merely to be accepted as an *a priori* enigma, then one must account for its temporality by investigating how Being becomes present and therefore truthful. Heidegger offered such an account by analyzing the Being of that being who necessarily experiences and thinks its existence in and through time. This being, as Heidegger explained, is "man":

Man obviously is a being. As such he belongs to the totality of Being--just like the stone, the tree, or the eagle. To "belong" here still means to be in the order of Being. But man's distinctive feature lies in this, that he, as the being who thinks, is open to Being, face to face with being; thus man remains referred to Being and so answers to it. Man is essentially this relationship of responding to Being, and he is only this. This "only" does not mean a limitation, but rather an excess. A belonging to Being prevails within man, a belonging which listens to Being according to its original meaning, as presence. Being is present to man neither incidentally nor only on rare occasions. Being is present and abides only as it concerns man through the claim it makes on him. For it is man, open toward Being, who alone lets Being arrive as presence. Such becoming present needs the openness of a clearing, and by this need remains appropriated to human being.⁸

This explanation of man's relationship to being provides important directives for realizing how authenticity enables human beings to acquire a fundamental understanding of their existence; for, authenticity is displayed in how human beings are open to Being and how this openness makes possible a responding to the claim of Being. To respond to this claim authentically is to realize and abide by the primordial phenomenon of truth. A clarification of these brief remarks concerning authenticity can be achieved by placing and deciphering the above quotation from Heidegger within the context of his hermeneutic ontology.

Human Being "Is Open to Being"

Human being is always in the temporal and historical process of understanding its existence and thus its Being: What it means to be is an issue that only human beings can and necessarily do raise as they live-out, confront and think about the future possibilities of their existence. For human beings, to be is to become that which they are, their possibilities. This potentiality-for Being, a potentiality that constitutes the not yet of one's futural development, is what opens and refers a human being to Being.⁹ Of all the beings that exist in-the-world, only a human being can question its existence and decide whether or not what was and/or what is will continue to be. When answering this question, human being reveals itself as the place (the there) wherein Being is disclosed and made meaningful.

"Disclosedness" is the fundamental characteristic of human being; Heidegger designated this privileged ontological status of human being: *Dasein*.¹⁰ In its disclosedness *Dasein* is first and foremost authentic. *Authenticity is the condition of being open to the possibilities of Being.* (As a way of simplifying the discussion from here on, I will use the term "Dasein" when referring to human being.)

The Relationship with Being: Responding and Belonging

Dasein relates itself to being in and through the disclosedness of its existence *Dasein* responds to Being as the only being that has a there and thus can use discourse to offer an interpretation of what is (Being). However, because this interpretation of Being always takes form in light of *Dasein's* temporal existence and because *Dasein's* temporality is marked by the not yet of its potentiality-for-Being, an interpretation of Being must be seen as but a possible disclosure of what is. *Dasein's* relationship to Being is one that exceeds the temporal limitations of present understanding. This excess characterizing the relationship between *Dasein* and Being denotes how *Dasein* authentically belongs to Being: *Dasein* is the *witness* for Being. *Dasein* is where the past, present, and future join together as a unitary phenomenon, where what is no longer and what is yet to come can be heard in an interpretation of what is thought to be now.¹¹ Here, Being shows itself and is understood by *Dasein* as "presencing."

Being as Presencing

Being presents itself in how beings exist in-the-world. Only that being having the character of *Dasein*, however, can experience this presencing; for *Dasein* is always in the temporal process of understanding its existence, of understanding what it means to be. *Dasein* is open toward Being in that it provides a clearing (i.e., the "there") wherein Being arrives and becomes present as something that can be interpreted and made-known in discourse.

That Dasein must engage in this hermeneutic phenomenon so that it can structure and know its world in a meaningful way is the claim that Being makes on Dasein. The truthfulness of this meaningful knowledge, however, is contingent on Dasein's responsibility to Being. Such responsibility shows itself when Dasein offers an interpretation that discloses the presencing of Being occurring in something that is. Truth, as revealed in the discourse of a specific interpretive act, happens as disclosure. From this association between truth and disclosure, it follows that *what remains concealed* (i.e., not seen or misunderstood) *in an interpretation's attempted disclosure of Being comprises the "untruth" of the interpretation.*¹² Dasein's relationship with such untruth will be explored in the next section of this paper.

Importantly, what has been said so far about truth presupposes the existence of another, more primordial phenomenon of truth. This phenomenon is characterized by Heidegger as the "authentic temporality" of Dasein's existence, the disclosedness found in that being who understands, who has a there, and who is thus open to the presencing of Being. Hence, in its disclosedness, its privileged way of belonging to Being, Dasein is ontologically already "in the truth."¹³ Only that being having the character of Dasein (i.e., disclosedness) can share in the primordial phenomenon of truth and make it known in the discourse of an interpretation that discloses some truth of Being. The following example taken from the literature of psychoanalysis is offered as a way of clarifying the distinction between the two senses of truth being examined here.¹⁴

A patient seeking a cure for perceived mental problems brings to a psychoanalytic interview a lived experience that the patient has thought about and made meaningful. In the process the patient is victimized by what the meaning suggests about the patient's being. Specifically, during some moment (or moments) in the patient's lived history, the patient's self was understood to be what at the moment was remembered as having-just-been-thus, having-been-thus for a certain period of time, or having-always-been-thus. The patient believes now that what has been will always be. This "what" can be anything disturbing to the patient, anything that suggests to the patient that the remembered behavior is symptomatic of some ailment that will continually be repeated and that the current social mores depict as devious or perverse. Hence, in seeking the help of psychoanalysis, the patient is seeking an answer to the question: Is this symptom my truth, what I desire to become (and to be) as a human being?

Such a question reflects the disclosedness of a Dasein who is experiencing the presence of Being, who is engaged in the process of making present the past while encountering the future. Presencing shows itself simultaneously in all three of these temporal modes: What is now reflects what has been in and through what is yet to come.¹⁵ This temporal process is the primordial

phenomenon of truth—the belonging together of Dasein (as disclosedness) and the presencing of Being (as temporality). Ontologically speaking, Dasein is always in this relationship and thus always in this truth. Dasein, therefore, is always potentially authentic; for, as noted earlier, authenticity is the condition of being open to the possibilities of Being. From this authenticity emerges those truths found happening in a given interpretation's disclosure of what is.

So far the discussion of authenticity has emphasized its ontological status: Authenticity describes the fundamental way Dasein relates to Being and how this relationship constitutes the primordial phenomenon of truth. In the next section of this paper I look at how authenticity manifests itself in the discourse of Dasein's everyday (ontic) life. This concern was alluded to throughout the first section when noting the role played by interpretation in the making-known of Being. Dasein's use of discourse to interpret Being and make it intelligible reveals Dasein's practical involvement in the hermeneutic phenomenon. As will be indicated below, such involvement imposes a difficulty on Dasein's authentic use of discourse.

Authentic Discourse

The occurrence of authentic discourse in everyday life is made possible by Dasein's own authenticity - its ability to remain open to the presencing of Being and thus to exist in and express the truth through acts of disclosure. Discourse functions to perform this disclosure by creating an original understanding of what something actually is and by preserving this creation from becoming misunderstood or forgotten in the tradition of historical consciousness. These two specific functions of discourse operate dialectically to inspire a people to authenticate their commonsense view of the world by associating it with truth. Only by maintaining this dialectic in its everyday discourse can Dasein keep itself open to the presencing of Being and to the question raised by this presencing: Has past understanding been made present such that future understanding will continue to reflect what is thought to be now? Taking this question seriously, Dasein demonstrates its responsibility to Being by enacting its authenticity and thus its desire to express and remain in the truth. However, if Dasein does not maintain the dialectic between creation and preservation, then a reification of preservation takes place. Such reification not only enhances what was termed earlier the "untruth" but also leads to the occurrence of inauthentic discourse. To comprehend how this transformation from the authentic to the inauthentic mode of discourse unfolds, it will first be necessary to explore in greater depth the above introductory remarks concerning the creating and the preserving functions of discourse and their dialectical relationship.

The Creating Function of Discourse

The creating function of discourse is a poetic activity (*poiesis*), a bringing-forth of truth in the word whereby something is named and established as what it is. The authenticity of this naming, its measure of originality for revealing Being, is marked by Dasein's struggle to engage in a "projective saying" of understanding--a speaking and presenting of something, as opposed to a re-presenting of this something in already spoken terms.¹⁶ Disclosing what this something is (i.e., the truth of its Being), especially when this something is found to be more than what historically it was thought to be, defines the creativity at work in the discourse. This creativity functions to liberate present understanding from the determinancy of the past; it counsels people in the most original performance of freedom of speech and directs them in their appreciation of the future.¹⁷ Functioning this way, discourse offers a lesson in the history of truth: in its uncovering of something that has heretofore been concealed, creative (poetic) discourse teaches that "Truth is un-truth, insofar as there belongs to it the reservoir of the not-yet-uncovered, the un-covered, in the sense of concealment."¹⁸ And in showing that the truth of what was no longer is now, creative discourse also shows something more--namely, that the truth of what is now can become something different in the future. Hence, in its relationship with truth and Being, the creating function of discourse instructs humankind to authenticate its everyday life by realizing its potential (i.e., its understanding of what is) in and through the word. As Heidegger put it:

We do not learn who man is by learned definitions; we learn it only when man contends with the essent, striving to bring it into its being, i.e., into limit and form, that is to say when he projects something new (not yet present), when he creates original poetry, when he builds poetically.¹⁹

When building poetically, discourse contributes to the language of Being. In its creative function discourse moves present understanding beyond (*para*) an habitual, commonsense view (*doxa*) of truth that has been preserved in the language of present understanding. By creating this paradox, discourse opens up present understanding to a new linguistic conception of what something is. This new realization of Being, in turn, serves to uncover an untruth found happening in the preserved truth of commonsense. Preservation concedes to creation with this disclosure of untruth; for, what was habitually thought to be a truth has now been exposed by discourse as something in need of further understanding. The language offered by discourse that is functioning creatively encourages this understanding. Such discourse thereby assumes the task of initiating the historical movement of language wherein Being is revealed. In this

revelation an habitual truth is put to rest so that, at least for the time being, a new truth can be brought to life as something worthy of preservation.²⁰

The Preserving Function of Discourse

To engage in the preservation of a new (i.e., paradoxical) truth, according to Heidegger, requires that people transform their commonsense and thus restrain themselves from "all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work [of the discourse]. Only the restraint of this staying lets what is created be the work that it is."²¹ Enacting such restraint enables people to appropriate the truth offered in the discourse. In this epiphanous moment of appropriation people can display their authenticity by making a truth their own (*eigen*); that is, they can become open toward Being and thus learn how to disclose a presencing of what is. But how does this learning take place? Are people merely expected to abide by the creative function of discourse, restrain their commonsense practices, and thus acquiesce to the paradox that is presented to them? This second question points to the difficulty involved when people are asked to acknowledge the demise of a truth that heretofore has guided the experience of their everyday life. Hence, an affirmative answer to the question would be more the product of wishful thinking than of practical reasoning. For unlike wishful thinking, practical reasoning admits the difficulty reflected in the question by recognizing not only the importance of the paradox for inspiring the truth but also how the paradox must take into account the commonsense that confronts it. An example of such practical reasoning was offered by Richard Whately when he noted that

There is a "presumption" against any thing paradoxical, i.e., contrary to the prevailing opinion: it may be true; but the burden of proof lies with him who maintains it; since men are not expected to abandon the prevailing belief till some reason is shown If a paradox is unsupported, it can claim no attention; but if false, it should be censured on that ground; but not for being new. If true, it is the more important, for being a truth not generally admitted.²²

Implied in Whately's reasoning here is a function of discourse that must necessarily be operative if a truth that creates a paradox is to be preserved by people who feel justified in adhering to their commonsense. Although a paradox serves to extend this commonsense toward what is believed to be an original understanding of Being, it is the commonsense that allows the extension to occur. Without the commonsense of the prevailing opinion there would be nothing to extend, nothing to oppose and contradict when attempting to convey a provocative insight into truth. An argumentative appeal to commonsense is thus necessary if what the creative function of

discourse discloses poetically is to gain support as something worthy of attention and preservation. When discourse functions to make such an appeal it engages in a rhetorical activity; that is, it displays the practical mastery that people have for disclosing to others that which is understood.²³ Functioning rhetorically, then, discourse enhances the communicability of something that is being pointed out and predicated poetically. This communicability, in turn, allows the discourse to enact a preserving function whereby people are directed toward a truth for the purposes of either reinterpreting something that was understood only in a superficial way or experiencing something that was never understood. Only when discourse exhibits this preserving function can people be expected to realize, to share, and to act in accordance with a truth that, as presented in the spoken or written word, imposes a paradox on their commonsense.

Creation and Preservation: A Dialectical Relationship

To be authentic, discourse must concern itself with the truth, with the disclosure of Being. As suggested above, discourse performs this disclosure through its creating and preserving functions: The creating function of discourse discloses an original yet potential understanding of Being; the preserving function of discourse, in turn, discloses this potential understanding so that it can be communicated and shared by others. Only in these acts of disclosure can discourse be performed authentically. That is, discourse must either enact a creating function or, if this creating function is not at work in a discourse, use its preserving function to concern itself with a disclosure stemming from another creative act. In the first case, the authenticity of the disclosure exists only in a potential state; it therefore must remain historically meaningless until disclosed by an act of preservation. In the second case, the authenticity of the discourse would appear to be complete; for, here, the preserving function of discourse is present and thereby could concern itself with, and thus disclose, the truth occurring in the creative act of another discourse. (Later in this essay I will suggest that the conditions noted in this second case can also promote the occurrence of inauthentic discourse.)

As stated here, the two cases suggest that the creating and preserving functions of discourse must operate dialectically if the authenticity of discourse is to be both enacted and made-known in a historically meaningful way: Without the act of creation, the preserving function of discourse would have nothing to direct it toward the truth; and without the act of preservation, the truth occurring in the creating function of discourse would be void of any practicality. What happens, then, when this dialectic is not maintained in discourse? A comprehensive answer to this question can be offered only by investigating further how an act of preservation

functions to make-known the truth found happening in an act of creation. As already indicated, this preserving function must be operative if the creativity displayed by discourse is to serve a practical purpose. My investigation here thus will center on the relationship between the creating and preserving functions of discourse as set forth in the second case above. This specific relationship, I would argue, not only exemplifies how authentic discourse plays a role in the hermeneutic phenomenon but also shows how Dasein's practical involvement in this phenomenon is one that encourages the production of inauthentic discourse.

From Authentic, to Inauthentic, to Authentic Discourse

When discourse is used to preserve a truth found happening in a past creative disclosure, it inevitably is confronted with a twofold task that, as noted earlier, places the discourse in a paradoxical tension: Displaying its authenticity, the discourse must raise a people's commonsense understanding and guide it toward a truthful understanding of what is. By so doing, the discourse maintains its dialectical relationship with Being; it functions to build poetically and to preserve an original creative act that brought forth Being in the word. Yet, in struggling to preserve the essential word of Being so that it can continue to be interpreted and understood in a meaningful an authentic way, the discourse must also engage in a rhetorical activity whereby it can associate the word with commonsense. As Heidegger put it, "Even the essential word, if it is to be understood and so become a possession in common, must make itself ordinary."²⁴ Here, however, the preserving function of discourse makes itself susceptible to being transformed into mere rhetoric, what Heidegger labeled "the misuse of language in idle talk." According to Heidegger, idle talk is inauthentic discourse that "releases one from the task of genuinely understanding," "discourages any new inquiry and any disputation," and encourages people to follow "the route of gossiping and passing the word along."²⁵ The inauthenticity of idle talk thus places Being in the danger of becoming misunderstood or forgotten; it promotes communicative experiences wherein both the speaker and the hearer are not building poetically but instead are disengaging themselves from the truth of what is so that they can conform their thinking to preserved judgments fostered by the commonsense of people's present understanding. The more discourse adheres to such judgments, the more it associated itself with matters that may not have yet been authentically comprehended ("unconcealed"). By allowing such matters to remain in their current state of preservation, discourse promotes the reification of this preservation and thereby becomes inauthentic as it adds to the untruth of what still remains concealed and permits this untruth to dissemble a past creative disclosure.

Thus, between the truth revealed in a creative disclosure and the conformity bred by commonsense lies the world of the preserving function of discourse. Moving toward the truth, this function makes itself available to the presencing of Being and thus to authenticity; moving toward conformity, it makes itself available to untruth and thus to inauthenticity. yet, what guarantee is there that untruth and thus inauthenticity would still not be present in a piece of discourse that associated its preserving function with an act of creation? Such a guarantee is clearly an impossibility when one remembers that an understanding of truth of what is--the presencing of Being--is marked by an infiniteness, the not yet of the future. Hence, even when discourse succeeds in preserving an act of creativity, it can only offer a possible disclosure of Being; and this disclosure may later prove to be in error. The point is, however, that if the preserving function of discourse is not associated with an act of creativity, then discourse must necessarily fall back upon commonsense in its attempt to say anything at all. That truth can be better served by people who struggle to avoid this fall is a fact that has made possible the intellectual and authentic growth of *homo loquens*.

Conclusion: The Difficulty and the Danger of Authentic Discourse

For a person to perform authentic discourse such that what the discourse is about can be communicated and shared with others, the person must assume the dialectical task of becoming both a creator and a preserver, a poet and a rhetor, a voice for truth and a voice for the prevailing commonsense. The translator of a text, for example, can provide an illustration of what is being suggested here. According to Walter Benjamin, "It is the task of a translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work. For the sake of pure language he breaks through decayed barriers of his own language."²⁶ In other words, the authenticity of a translator's discourse is dependent on the translator's ability to open up the language characterizing the commonsense understanding of his or her culture so that a truth perceived in the pure language of a text can be appropriated by this understanding. If the translator is too much of a poet, then the translation of the text and its truth may remain too far beyond its readers' understanding, thereby serving little or no purpose besides bringing a commonsensical scorn to the translator. If, on the other hand, the translator is too much of a rhetor, then the truth of the text would most likely become lost in the current language preserved by commonsense.²⁷ The experience of rhetorical criticism and the experience of conducting a truthful conversation, as I have indicated elsewhere, can provide further illustrations for appreciating the task of performing authentic discourse in a meaningful way.²⁸

History has shown that such a task is not only difficult but also strewn with danger. When overcoming the difficulty, people take on the responsibility of being great heroes, scholars, politicians, theologians, and so on. In this responsibility, however, lies the danger of authentic discourse. An example of this danger was noted above--that is, incurring the scorn of commonsense. Yet, such scorn is mild when compared to other responses for commonsense. Consider, for instance, the fate of those like Socrates, Christ, or Martin Luther King, Jr. all of whom tried to associate a sense of truth with a specific realm of commonsense.

Authentic discourse is a response to Being, as Being shows itself differently in the changing contexts of history. Authentic discourse discloses this change and thereby asks commonsense to be as truthful and as flexible as that which is making the request. That commonsense is all too often incapable of responding to this request is witnessed in its own biography which, as Vladimir Nabokov so eloquently noted, makes for "nasty reading":

Commonsense has trampled down many a gentle genius whose eyes had delighted in a too early moonbeam of some too early truth; commonsense has back-kicked dirt at the loveliest of queer paintings because a blue tree seemed madness to its well-meaning hoof; commonsense has prompted ugly but strong nations to crush their fair but frail neighbors the moment a gap in history offered a chance that it would have been ridiculous not to exploit. Commonsense is fundamentally immoral, for the natural morals of mankind are as irrational as the magic rites that they evolved since the immemorial dimness of time. Commonsense at its worst is sense made common, and so everything is comfortably cheapened by its touch It is instructive to think that there is not a single person in this room, or for that matter in any room in the world, who, at some nicely chosen point in historical space-time would not be put to death there and then, here and now, by a commonsensical majority in righteous rage. The color of one's creed, neckties, eyes, thoughts, manners, speech, is sure to meet somewhere in time or space with a fatal objection from a mob that hates that particular tone. And the more brilliant, the more unusual the man, the nearer he is to the stake. *Stranger* always rhymes with *danger*. The meek prophet, the enchanter in his cave, the indignant artist, the nonconforming little schoolboy, all share in the same sacred danger. And this being so, let us bless them, let us bless the freak; for in the natural evolution of things, the ape would perhaps never have become man had not a freak appeared in the family.²⁹

Commonsense is the audience that witnesses the performance of authentic discourse. Those who choose to become the actors for this performance must offer more than histrionics if the truth is to be heard and taken seriously. Yet, how much truth can be heard before the performer is

labeled a "freak" and thereby risks the danger of confronting "a common-sensical majority in righteous rage"? Indeed, "let us bless the freak," but let us also hope that he or she has enough commonsense to realize how to enact authentic discourse in a practical and historically meaningful way.

1. For the Gadamer quotation see his *Truth and Method*, eds. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury, 1975). Heidegger's *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) was published originally in 1927. The translation used in this essay is that of John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

2. Calvin O. Schrag, *Radical Reflection and the Origin of the Human Sciences* (West Lafayette, IN.: Purdue University Press, 1980), pp. 98-99, 126.

3. This explication of the hermeneutic phenomenon adheres to Heidegger's conception as set forth in his *Being and Time*, see esp. pp. 188-209. Here, however, it should be noted that Heidegger's use of the term "discourse" (*Rede*) is not restricted to the everyday communicative practices of speaking and writing. Rather, Heidegger's sense of discourse is also ontologically oriented; it encompasses the lived-through experience of human existence (*Dasein*) which makes possible all concrete forms of language use. For an interesting discussion of these two senses of discourse found in Heidegger, see Paul A. Bové, *Destructive Poetics, Heidegger and American Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 79-81. Unless otherwise noted, my use of the term "discourse" throughout this essay refers to the communicative practices of speaking and writing.

4. For Heidegger, discourse (conceived in a strict ontological sense, see note 3 above) is necessarily authentic because it is equiprimordial with the possibility of existence that characterizes all human experience. This possibility constitutes the basis of what Heidegger meant by the term "authenticity." (An in-depth discussion of the relationship between the possibility of existence and authenticity follows in the next section.) As performed in the communicative practices of everyday life, however, discourse also exhibits an inauthentic nature. This nature of discourse is examined later in this essay.

That the issue of authentic discourse continues to be addressed by scholars interested in the hermeneutic phenomenon is suggested, I would contend, in Gadamer's conception of "hermeneutical conversation," Ricoeur's theory of "metaphor," Habermas' reconstruction of "the universal validity basis of speech," Apel's "ethics of argumentation," and Lacan's discussion of "creative subjectivity." For example, see Gadamer, esp. pp. 325-51; Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), esp. pp. 45-

69; Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1979), esp. pp. 1-68; Karl-Otto Apel, *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, trs. Glyn Adey and David Frisby (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), esp. pp. 225-300; and Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits, A Selection*, tr. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), esp. pp. 68-107. For essays that suggest how these authors approach the issue of authentic discourse, see Michael J. Hyde, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Communicative Experience: The Paradigm of Oral History," *Man and World*, 13 (1980), 81-98; "On the Reifying Tendency and the Liberating Function of Speech," *Eros*, 7 (June 1980), 54-82; and "Transcendental Philosophy and Human Communication," in *Interpersonal Communication: Essays in Phenomenology and Hermeneutics*, ed. Joseph Pilotta (Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1982), pp. 15-34.

5. Here, I have in mind the work of E.D. Hirsch. In his *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), Hirsch sets forth a theory of interpretation, based on the idea of "re-cognition," that "assumes that something in the nature of a text requires the meaning to be the stable and determinate meaning of the author" (p. 24). Hirsch, however, fails to realize the consistent and determinate meaning of authenticity, as this term takes form in the writings of Heidegger and those influenced by Heidegger's thought. Contrary to Hirsch, authenticity was not intended by Heidegger to be some ontic designation whereby it assumes the common dictionary definition of genuine or sincere. See Hirsch's essay "The Paradoxes of Perspectivism," paper delivered at the Germanic Section of the Modern Language Association, (December 1967), 1. This definition is but a derivative representation of the ontological status of authenticity discussed by Heidegger. Hirsch's continual misinterpretation of the term is evidenced in his *The Aim of Interpretation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 45-49.

6. This belief underlies various critical assessments of the scientific-technological world-view and its prevalence in contemporary thought. See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); Apel, pp. 225-300; Edward Goodwin Ballard, "On Dialectic: Mechanical and Human," in *Communication Philosophy and the Technological Age*, ed. Michael J. Hyde (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1982), pp. 13-37; Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "Communication: Technology and Ethics," in Hyde, pp. 38-53; and Michael J. Hyde "The Human Component in Technology," in *Phenomenology and the Understanding of Human Destiny*, ed. Stephen Skousgaard (Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1981), pp. 31-44.

7. See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, tr. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University

Press, 1962); *Identity and Difference*, tr. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); and his *On Time and Being*, tr. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

8. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 31.

9. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 67-68, 182-186.

10. "Dasein" literally means "Being-there." As discussed in this essay, the significance of Dasein's disclosedness reflects Heidegger's appreciation of the term in his *Being and Time*, esp. pp. 256-273.

11. Dasein's existence, when understood as a unitary phenomenon, is designated by Heidegger as Dasein's "care-structure." Dasein is caring when it takes seriously the issue of its own Being and realizes what it means to be as a Being-in-the-world. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 225 ff.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

14. This example is based on my reading of Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits, A Selection* and his *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978). See Michael J. Hyde, "Jacques Lacan's Psychoanalytic Theory of Speech and Language," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 66 (1980), 96-108.

15. This is not to say that once Dasein interprets its Being as something (e.g., a symptom), Dasein will necessarily continue to be this something. Rather, the interpretation only shows a possibility of Dasein's existence. As Lacan put it: "I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object. What is realized in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming." See Lacan, *Ecrits, A Selection*, p. 86.

16. See Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in his *Poetry, Language, Thought*, tr. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 73-75.

17. Cf. Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," trs. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, in his *Existence and Being* (South Bend, IN: Gateway, 1949), esp. pp. 302-10; also see Michael J. Hyde "Rhetorically Man Dwells: On the Making-Known Function of Discourse," *Communication*, (in press).

18. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," p. 60.

19. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. Ralph Mannheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 144.

20. For an interesting discussion of how this revelation is fundamentally an act of violence, see *Ibid.*, pp. 157 ff.

21. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," p. 66; also see pp. 67-75.

22. Richard Whately, *Elements of Rhetoric, Comprising an Analysis of the Laws of Moral Evidence and of Persuasion, with Rules for Argumentative Composition and Elocution*, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p. 115.

23. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection," trs. G.G. Hess and R.E. Palmer in his *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 20. For a discussion that suggests how this rhetorical activity also shows itself on an intrapersonal level, see Michael J. Hyde and Craig R. Smith, "Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen But Unobserved Relationship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 65 (1979), 347-63.

24. Heidegger, "Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry," in *Existence and Being*, p. 275.

25. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 211-214.

26. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 80.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

28. See my "Hermeneutics and Rhetoric . . ."; and my "Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Communicative Experience . . ."

29. Vladimir Nabokov, "The Art of Literature and Commonsense," in his *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1980), p. 372.

Reading, Writing: Radix

Charles R. Kline, Jr.
Roland K. Huff

In this exploratory essay the authors treat of three hypotheses of the radical intersection ("radix") of composing and reading. The emerging context is seen as controlling element in themes of composing and interpreting. Is the interrelation of author, reader, subject/topic and situational context the connecting point worthy of further study? The second hypothesis is that the more specific, concrete act of discovering questions may be the radix; a model used to teach writers how to discover topics (invention) and readers what avenues of questions may be helpful in reading and understanding a literary work is presented. The third is the "physical" hypothesis -- that the radix of composing and interpreting is actually neurophysiological -- based in recent knowledge of the hypothalamic switching center, parallel nerve circuits and cortical distribution of memory.

I

There exists a reciprocal control of part and whole in the act of reading and the act of writing. In the hermeneutic circle the reader either brings to or creates even from the first word, first sentence, a texture for the text ("context," *with the text*). This context allows better comprehension of the elements of the text and is in turn adjusted by the reader as each element of the text is processed. In writing, the same pattern can be seen -- the writer increasingly controlled by the already presented elements in the text (that, the context).

I. A. Richards wrote, "In almost all learning, the control of part by whole and of whole by part is, or should be, reciprocal."¹ Drawing on Peirce,² Richards goes on to present a discussion of "type" and "token," the crux of which can be stated: As token reinforces or modifies the understanding of type, mediation is lessened. Continuous consideration of tokens within types leads eventually to immediate cognition/recognition. These processes parallel the reader's processes in reading (assuming a fluent reader). Essentially, this is the lowest identifiable level of the hermeneutic circle.³

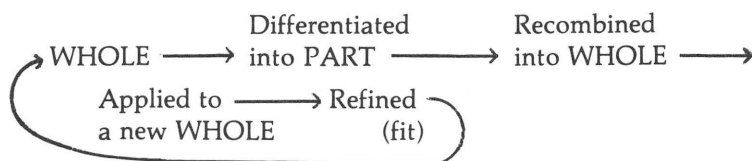
As readers and writers become more familiar with the language, they generate an hierarchically controlled set of rules or axioms, which develop

in remarkably parallel ways across cultures. We know that people in learning language move (at different rates in idiosyncratic patterns which are generally describable through series of generalizing stages. For example, consider the past morpheme {-ed}. A normal child hears and begins to imitate {-ed}. The child soon uses {-ed}, but she (typically) overgeneralizes, deriving, e.g., "see +ed" and "go +ed," at which time (utilizing feedback in the communication system) she begins to form a scheme for differentiating the forms in the expanded generalization.⁴ The correction to fit (differentiation) occurs as the child forms another quasi-axiomatic set, a second-order generalization as it were. The acquisition and use of other morphemes (e.g., plural {-es}) follow the same steps.

Schema expand; occasionally a new schema is formed. Several axiomatic "systems" begin to be related. As a generative principle for their relationship is discovered, a controlling system evolves--in this case a third-order generalization. The symbol using animal quickly (after processing and, maybe, producing thousands of symbolic messages) begins to comprehend the axiomatic system's inability to predict only and wholly the needed patterns. Hence, Gödel's remarkable proof in mathematical logic is paralleled in language.⁵

For example, let us consider a third or fourth-order generalization; we shall use "situational context." At a certain point in the increasingly complex communication system, the instability of the environment is noticed. This unstable environment contains far too much unpredictable flux. While a consideration of situational context allows the language user to decide about factors at the third-order level, situational context is posited and describable only by a higher-order generalization, which is necessarily a non-linear formula-apparatus.

Psycholinguists posit five steps in the acquisition of language, and it seems that these steps are also basic steps in the development of language.⁶ The five steps are: imitation, repetition, control of stimuli, expansion, and correction. In terms of part and whole our five step process involves a movement which may be charted thus:



We are now getting very close to reading theory. We have arrived at that point of reciprocity posited by Heidegger and amplified upon by Gadamer, as noted earlier.

An infinity of ever new phenomena belonging to a new dimension... come to light only through consistent penetration into meaning--and validity--implications of what was taken for granted--an infinity, because continued penetration shows that every phenomenon attained through this unfolding of meaning...itself contains meaning--and validity--implications whose exposition leads again to new phenomena, and so on. —Husserl, *Krisis* (trans. Cairns)

Thus, we shall look at several well-established models of reading (while other models may have been chosen, we opted for truly well known theories/models since they have been subjected to close scrutiny and have survived): 1) an information processing model, 2) an hypothesis testing model, and 3) a developmental model. The first is quite similar to the basic machine communication model--say that of Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver--with some elaboration. The hypothesis testing model is familiar through the writings of and about Kenneth Goodman. The purely developmental model is the only causal-comparatively based model we shall entertain.

Information processing model. Those who have based work upon the models of, say, Lasswell or Berlo, Jakobson or Watzlawick would find Gough's "One Second of Reading" model straightforward.⁷ Gough's model is designed to relate the operations he assumes must go on within *one second* of reading, as the text "Suppose the eye..." is first noticed, until the vocal system produces the sounds "Suppose the eye." We shall briefly comment on five points in Gough's model.

There is a provision for recognition of basic graphic patterns--a subsystem which works in *tandem* with the scanning system; Gough uses two-way arrows to indicate that the pattern recognition subsystem interacts with the scanning system. Gough believes that an abstract phonemic tape relates the output of the decoder to the "librarian" which in turn works with the lexicon. [Gough cites Chomsky and Halle's *Sound Pattern of English*;⁸ in that work, however, they write: "We feel, however, that the existence of such a level has not been demonstrated and that there are strong reasons to doubt its existence."] Gough also postulates a two-way relationship between code book and decoder; similar phenomena are present, according to Gough, between the lexicon and the searcher ("librarian") and between a) the syntactic and semantic rules storage and b) the magical sorting unit (he calls "Merlin").

These components of Gough's model involve the introduction of the reader's experience. That is, the reader's experiences and knowledge about patterns--especially in this model graphemic patterns and abstract

phonemic patterns, lexicon, and rules of syntactic and semantic relationships--exist before reading the text. And obviously these experiences and knowledges are augmented by each successive act of reading, hence learning is continuous.

An information processing model is a *serial* model (each grapheme or set of graphemes studied left to right, top of page to bottom) in which (it is assumed) the reader moves from print to meaning either through a speech loop, through a direct print-meaning jump (See, respectively, Conrad [1972] for the former and Kolers [1970] for the latter), or through a systematic phoneme loop. Gough has decided⁹ in favour of the third. Gough's model is designed to produce oral reading, but stopping at "TP-WSGWTAU" is possible--since that mouthful of letters stands for "The Place Where Sentences Go When They Are Understood."

Hypothesis testing model. Goodman's model is an hypothesis testing model.¹⁰ According to Goodman, reading, a "psycholinguistic guessing game," is a process of selective, anticipatory cueing, in which the reader predicts and then reads to confirm the prediction. For those of us who work with relatively fluent readers, at relatively higher levels, this is certainly meaningful. (The reader who cannot anticipate the difference among Joyce's *Ulysses*, Agee's "Carter," and Milton's *Paradise Lost* will certainly have difficulty in reading.)

Goodman believes that three entities exist before (in his drawings of the model, Goodman puts these at the top) the reading: the material to be read, prior predictions (often based, e.g., in knowledges of genre) and the repertoire of language experiences--labelled "long term memory" and placed into the oscilloscopic waveform.

Goodman places medium term memory into the model in four places: a) at prior predictions, b) at context, actually the *emerging* context c) at prediction and d) at store partial meaning. These are the four crucial points. The model can provide for the emerging context, the partial meaning, and prediction--original and continuous aspect. Meaning, both the principal and ultimate context, is a "long term memory" function; it occurs thrice.

One final comment upon the Goodman and Gough models: the Gough model has fewer components and is more compact but involves more abstract and reified notions. The Goodman model is more involved and apparently more complex, but less mystical.

Developmental models. Developmental models usually are derived by the researcher's looking at the process from the product side of the black box to *produce* that product. No silly *arcana disciplina*, that; but developmental models cannot be used to explain the *process*, which is the goal of the Gough and the Goodman models.

Holmes and Singer¹¹ can predict 74.6% of the variance in power of reading (a construct) from knowledge of reader's performance in various specific cells, which are interrelated in cell assemblies, in a three-tiered set of sub-systems (hence, the model is called a "substrata" model). That is, given a student score on a "mechanical aptitude" measure, Holmes and Singer could infer 2.99% of the variance of "power of reading." [From inferences of variance, it is statistically straightforward to adduce regression formulae and to predict.]

In level three (the lowest stratum) the largest substrata factors and the percentage of variance which can be inferred from each are phonetic association (5.42), homonymic meaning (5.54) and mechanical aptitude (2.99); in level two range of information and reasoning contribute (21.44%); in level one (the highest stratum) four factors *each* contribute more than 5.00 (vocabulary in isolation, 5.05; vocabulary in context, 5.80; auditing, 6.62; and verbal analogy, 6.54).

In a grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 comparison Singer¹² can account for more and more of the variance in power of reading each year. Singer has discovered that this progression continues into the college years, resulting in an ability to apportion 78% of the variance in power of reading at the college level, and *one-half* of that is our language in context variable again! Finally, Singer stresses the importance of "attitudinal factors, verbal flexibility, and mobilizers."

We close this section by proposing a metaphor, which closely represents hermeneutical conceptualizations of reading. We believe that the meaning-making of the act of writing can be visually discovered by making the generator a motor: need to communicate becomes the power and text is produced as output (Figure 1). The metaphor is based on the conceptual relationship between an electric motor and a generator: a motor turns electrical power into force (an electromagnetic field spins the shaft which in turn drives the gears or axle to which the motor is attached) and a generator turns mechanical force into electric power (the shaft rotates the plates within the magnet creating electricity). In our model the power is the text, the force is meaning, and the reader (motor) and the writer (generator) produce, respectively, the meaning and the text.

One interpretive point provides the worthy idea to be got from seeing reading and writing as radically similar: in the Heideggerian concept of *Dasein* is implied, via the thrown-ness of being, *being-with*. In the first place, then, there are *two* hermeneutic progressions: part and whole within text *and* reader with text. That is to say, there are two particular relationships which are 1) text as particle and reader as particle and 2) part as particle and text as whole. Just as the hermeneutic builds intratextually, so

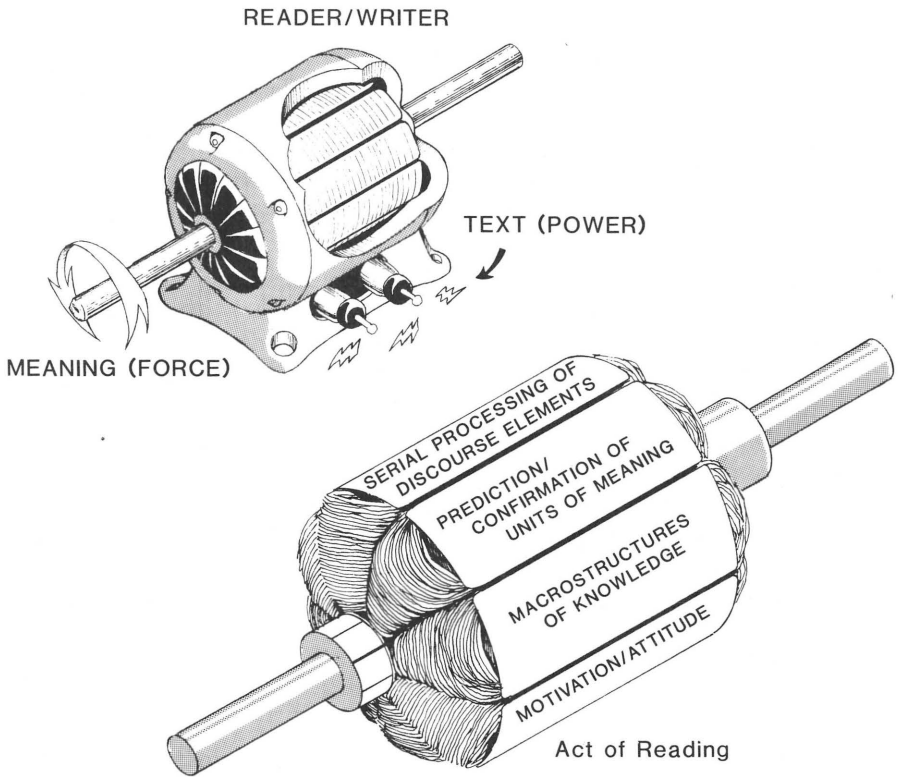


Figure 1. (Figures 1 and 2 were drawn by Karl Dolgener of the Learning Resources Center at the University of Texas)

does hermeneutic reciprocity build between the reader and the text; and this construction usually progresses into new stages of understanding by moving through some (arithmetic) first stages and later (geometric) middle stages of context establishment. Linear to *Gestalt* to global *Gestalten*: critical double play.

A writer beings with an idea and starts the crafting of the text; soon the already crafted portions of the text demand certain craftings-to-be. At this point the text has become a dynamic force, synthesizing and synthesized out of the interaction of the intent of the writer and the crafting of the text. The text becomes something apart from either the author's intent or the crafting of it. (See Burke's *Counter-Statement*, especially "Poetic Process,"¹³ for a more complete discussion of this idea.) If reader as well as text can each be particle, then each could (as change occurs) be wave. Reader, text (both part and whole,) and context become--by extension--field.¹⁴

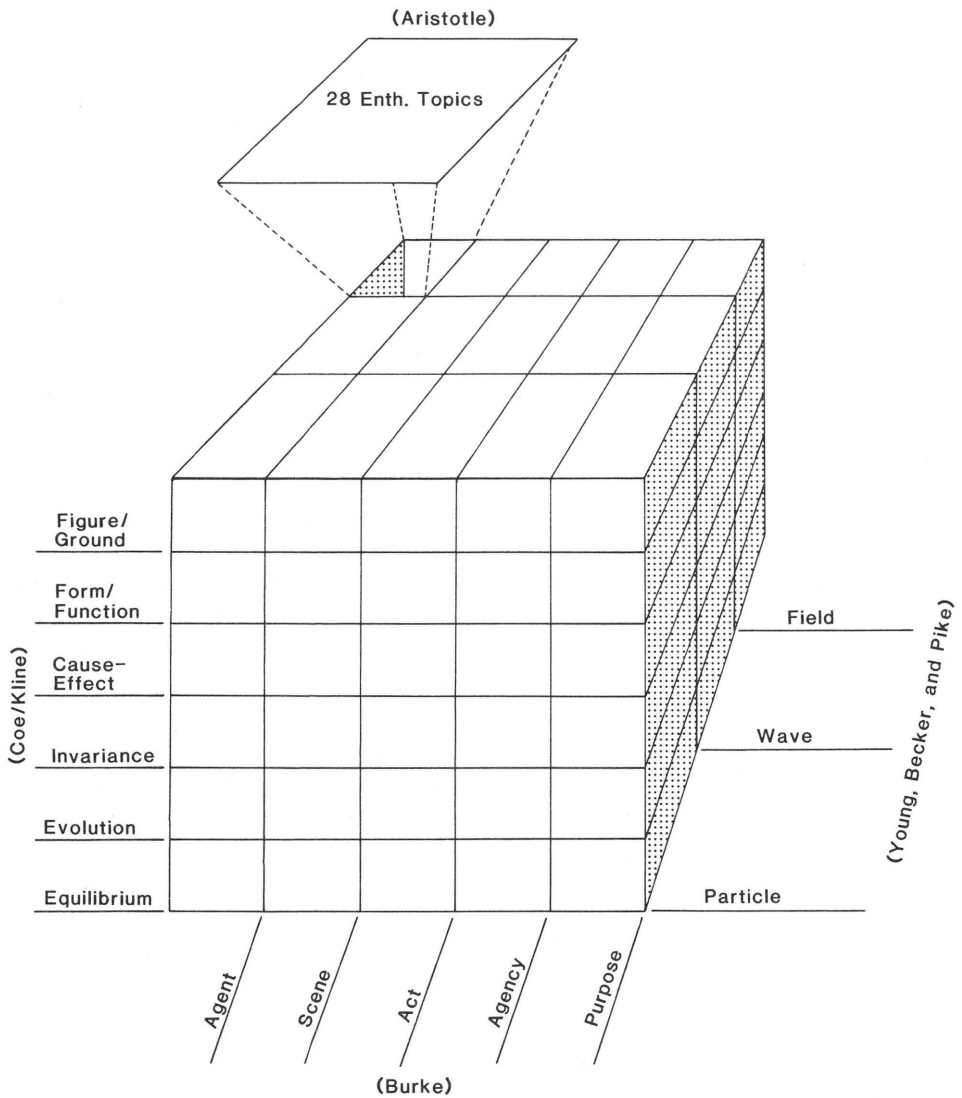


Figure 2.

Integrative, configurational heuristic. Could we generate now a configurational heuristic which allows the *linear* to *Gestalt* movement? We think so--and it might begin to look like Figure 2. Note that we have portrayed Burke's pentad,¹⁵ the Coe-Kline isomorphs,¹⁶ and the tagmemic particle-wave-field division. The result is a 90 cell matrix; simply place into *each* cell the Aristotelian 28 enthymemes¹⁷ and we can derive a 90 x 28

matrix; that is, 2520 possibilities at the basic non-branching level. We have found this multidimensional heuristic array to be useful in asking questions before or about reading, in generating *in vacuo* topics for writing, and in generating writing topics of response to just-read literature. Polyvalent heuristics may be the radix.

All this is to set up a simple sentence: *the essential* (text, context, emerging sense), *the elemental* (five steps and the part-whole interaction), and *the substantial* (heuristic and hermeneutic) elements of reading and writing, of interpreting and composing, are shown to be radically similar.

Our hermeneutic model can be seen as:

Ergodically viable. Its elements and postulated interrelationships function similarly at quite different levels of interpretations. In this sense, it is non-reductive; the model does not remove the text from the context, nor does it define a separate context for the work.

Isomorphically consistent. Our interrelated heuristic model shows how the Burke pentad/heuristic, the Aristotelian heuristic, and the tagmemic heuristics co(r)-relate and how those systems work in a (dynamic) interplay with isomorphic patterns as discourse organizing and interpretive principles. In short the model has "horizontal ergody."

Categorically non-modal. It is equally applicable to composing or interpreting. It becomes the radix of reading and writing.

I I I

Let us first posit the image of a triumphant plural, unimpoverished by any constraint of representation (of imitation). In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable (meaning here is never subject to a principle of determination, unless by throwing dice); the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language. --Barthes, *S/Z*

At another level, too, this radical essence may be known. In our readings we have discovered that correlates of the points advanced thus far may be found within the nervous system and the brain. In order to demonstrate this warrant, we present an example of the connection of the brain, the central nervous system (CNS), and the cueing system(s) which keep all the message traffic going the right way at the right rate. Consider Figure 3. The important aspects for our present discussion are the mid-line and the thalamus. Note the signal from the body passes up the spinal cord, crosses

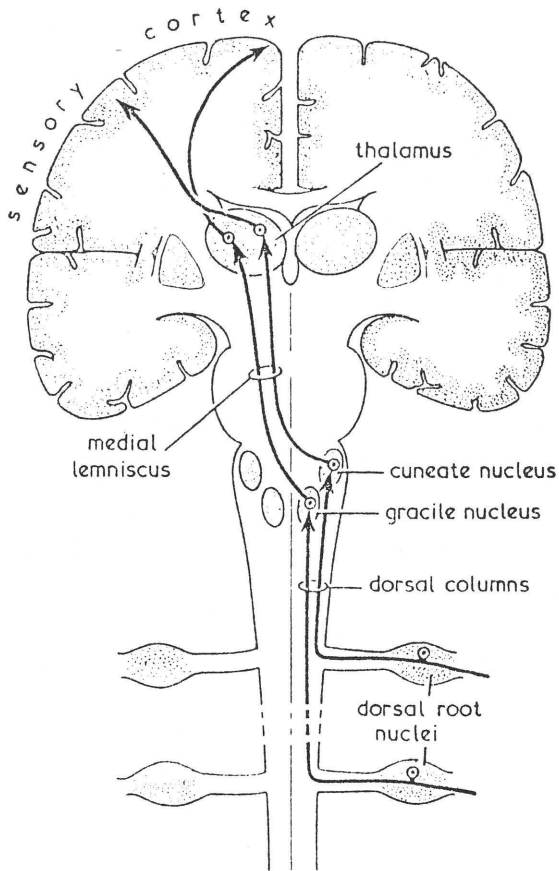


Figure 3. The pathway of some fibres conveying somatosensory information. First order afferents travel in the dorsal roots to the spinal cord where they pass upwards as the dorsal columns to end in synapses within the cuneate nucleus and gracile nucleus. Fibres from these two nuclei cross the midline (as the sensory decussation) and have their terminals on cells in the thalamus, reaching the latter via the medial lemniscus. The thalamocortical radiations transmit impulses from the thalamic nuclei to various regions in the cerebral cortex on the same side. (Figures 3-5 are from Bindman & Lippold, 1981)

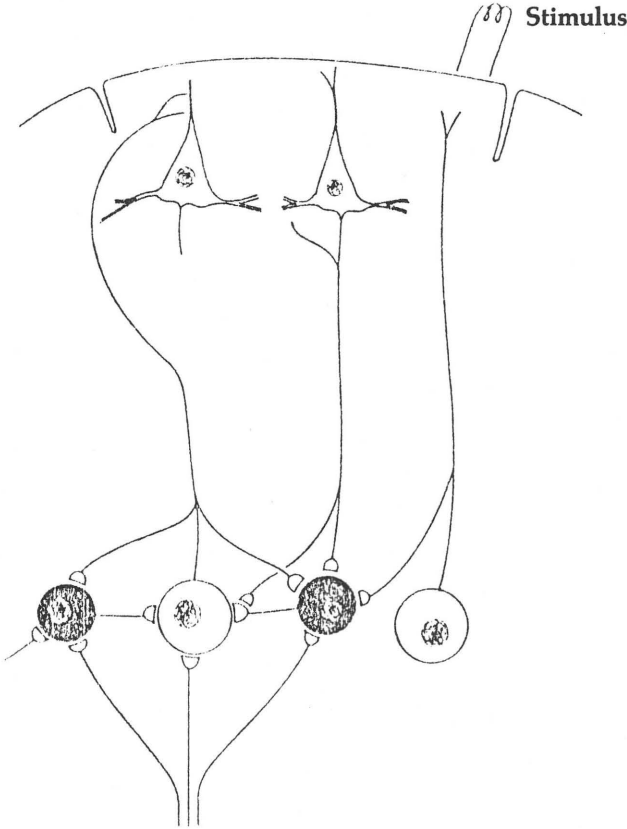
the midline above the top of the spine, and passes into the thalamus. The thalamus is the routing center. Through it *come* the signals from the periphery of the system (afferent pathway) and go the signals to the periphery (efferent pathway). The thalamus has connections to the cortex; given the natures of cortical and thalamic nerves, excitation (stimulation) of

one small area of the cortex can have widespread action (response) in other areas of the cortex and of the thalamus (Figure 4).

We are not neurological specialists in medicine, psychology, or zoology, but as we ponder these ideas certain conclusions begin to become more meaningful, viz.: 1) We know now that memory is not localized, but dif-fused (Figure 5). 2) We know now that the central nervous system cannot possibly relay all sensory signals, the ocular pathway cannot transmit all visual stimuli, and so on; some reduction and selection of neural data is required. In Bindman and Lippold's words:

It is well established that there is a limit to the amount of sensory material that can be dealt with at any one time; the range of infor-

Figure 4. Diagram showing some possible connexions between cells of a thalamic nucleus and with the cortex. Stimulation of the cortex can excite corticofugal axons but also the axons of the thalamocortical cells having collateral branches running back into the thalamus.

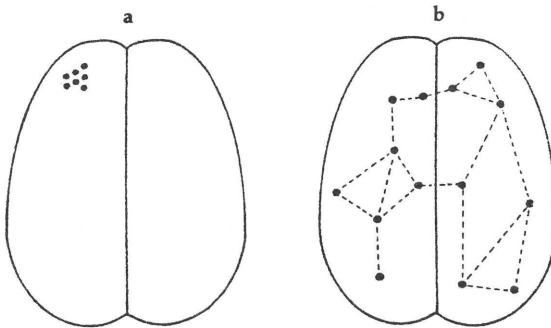


mation which can attain awareness is relatively small. This limitation is of biological value in that the animal is enabled to concentrate upon one particular facet of the environment, to the exclusion of most of the environmental stimuli which would be irrelevant, distracting, and which would hamper rapid data processing by the cortex. At any instant of time, it is not possible to deal with or to memorize more than very few inputs of information although receptors can be simultaneously activated by very many sources and information storage exceeds this capacity very greatly. (p. 130)

Sensory inputs are subject to control from higher regions of the central nervous system at the level of the first synapse on the afferent pathway. The descending control can modify the inhibitory or excitatory effects of other stimuli, applied simultaneously to other skin regions or to other types of receptor. Because there is often convergence of more than one type of input into a single cell in the pathway, selective control of one of the inputs can result in a change of responsiveness of a cell to a particular type of stimulus. (p. 54)

Most sensory pathways have a synapse within the thalamus. This applies not only to the somatosensory pathways which end in the ventrobasal complex, but to the neurones of the visual pathway that terminate in the lateral geniculate body, and those of the auditory pathway that relay in the inferior colliculus and medial geniculate body. The congregation of sensory inputs within the thalamus allows

Figure 5. Location of the memory trace. In the early part of this century, it was thought that specific memories were stored in a well localized group of cells in the brain (a). (b) shows the kind of neuronal organization of memory traces which would accord with the finding that discrete brain lesions do not remove particular items of remembered information. The memory deficit produced by a cortical lesion is related in extent to the size of the lesion and not to its location.



for both intra- and intersystemic integration. Each of the main sensory systems projects from the thalamus to a particular region of the cerebral cortex--one of the primary sensory receiving areas. They also project to secondary and other sensory receiving zones. The fibres pass from thalamus to cortex in the thalamocortical radiations. (p. 56)

The thalamus is the switching center. And it is in the thalamus that "intra- and intersystemic" integration can occur. Signals can excite not only their own pathway but sometimes an adjoining pathway. (The commonest example: loud noise or severe blow to the body produces "visible lights" in the mind's eye.) Repeated transmissions of a given signal give rise to two events: 1) inhibition--that is, the cortex tells the thalamus, which relays to the sensing nerves: "Let me know if there is any change." 2) Sympathetic signals--that is, in adjoining pathways signals are generated by inadvertent enervation, and these signals are generated every time the originally separate signal comes along. Hence, an elaborating context and a polyvalent--global--network of approaches to a point are conceivable in a biological metaphor. "Thalamic switching" allows elaboration and constraint of conduct. All cortically received signals are both reductions of input and integrations of input.

Coda

We believe with Barthes that a readerly text is fully comparable to a classical music score. In a score parts (notes, a mellisma, measures, motifs) are built up into wholes which cannot be divided into their linear sets of parts. Since they are woven together, the warp may be studied, or the woof, but the whole is the total of (the hearer's perception of) the small and large interactions of warp and woof. At each point in the score, in the text, a polyvalent symbol exists, with horizons of potential meanings.

To read well, the reader (re)constructs the whole from the parts, noting the value (positions, frequencies, definitions, contexts) of each part, each small set of parts (the emerging whole), and so on. Similarly, the writer builds the whole by crafting the parts. Just as the emerging context is field for new figures for the reader, so the already crafted portions of text are for the writer. Each successive line is elaborated and simultaneously constrained by what came before and in turn elaborates and constrains what follows. It is with this understanding that we comprehend "interpretation" in its potentiality.

1. "Powers and limits of signs," in *Media and Symbols: The Forms of Expression, Communication, and Education* (David R. Olson, ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p.114.

2. See "Logic as semiotic: The theory of signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (J. Buchler, ed.) (New York: Dover Publications, 1955).

3. We do not doubt that at the level of recognition of letter shapes--on the one hand--and at the level of critically looking back across the canons of texts read in ones field--on the other--the circle exists. The "identifiable range" is considerably smaller, though; it encompasses that immediate recognition stage up to the analysis of a single work or a genre analysis.

4. That is, a higher order generalization controls its constituent, lower order ones; and, the higher order generalization is in turn part of yet another even higher order generalization. We think these relationships and interrelationships (exponential) are the fabric of memory in that they serve as the structural strings holding together component parts of concepts and real world relationships.

5. An easily read discussion of Gödel's theory concerning the inability of a rule-based system to produce all and only derivations which conform to the rules posited is in W.V. Quine, *Methods of Logic* (New York: Holt, 1950), pages 246ff.

6. For an overview of current awarenesses, see Roger Brown, "A new paradigm of reference," and G.A. Miller, "Pastness," both in *Psychology and Biology of Language and Thought, Essays in Honor of Eric Lenneberg* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), pages--respectively--151-166 and 167-185.

7. P. Gough, "One second of reading," in *Language by Ear and by Eye: The Relationships between Speech and Reading* (ed. J.F. Kavanaugh and I.G. Mattingly) (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), pages 331-358.

8. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968, page 11.

9. While he adduced this in an unknown fashion and he did not report researches which corroborate his point, his decision makes sense. Mutes can learn to read. The potentially massive job of storing all "prints" as meaning defies belief.

10. Like Gough's model, Goodman's has been widely discussed. To capture most quickly the flavor of these discussions, see K.S. Goodman's "Psycholinguistic universals in the reading process" in *Psycholinguistics and Reading* (F. Smith, ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pages 21-27 as well as other essays in that volume. Then see the articles by Goodman ("From the strawman to the tin woodman: A response") by Peter Mosenthal ("Bridge principles in an abridged reply to Goodman"), and by Brian Cambourne ("Getting to Goodman: An analysis of the Goodman model of reading with some suggestions for evaluation") in *Reading Research Quarterly*, XII (1977), 4: pages--respectively--575-585, 586-603, and 605-636.

11. J.A. Holmes and H. Singer, *The Substrata-factor Theory: Substrata Factor Differences Underlying Reading Ability in Known-groups at the High School Level* (Washington: Office of Education, 1961).
12. H. Singer, "Substrata-factor theory of reading: grade and sex differences in reading at the elementary school level," in *International Reading Conference Precedings* (Neward, DL: IRA [Vol. 9, pp. 313-370], 1964).
13. Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), especially "The poetic process," on pages 45-62.
14. We use the "tagmemic" concepts of Kenneth Pike, Alton Becker, and Richard Young. See Young, Becker, and Pike's *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1971)
15. See Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969) and *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Also University of California Press, 1969). The "pentad" is a division of the communicative/dramatic moment into the five elements shown; also important are the "ratios" which are the interrelationships of elements (e.g., act-agency).
16. Drawn principally from R.M. Coe's "Isomorphic processes" (speech at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Philadelphia, 1976) and emended through the years by both Coe and Kline. Coe's idea was that interpretation was based in only a few algorithm-like relationships which closely paralleled creative procedures; Kline first turned that idea into a set of activities useful ("heuristics") in inventing, arranging, and presenting prose (cutting across *heuresis*, *phrasis*, and *taxis*, that is); then, the two ideas were merged giving the creative-interpretative axis and the rhetorical process dimension. See Roland Huff and C.R. Kline, Jr.'s *A Composing Curriculum Based on Rhetorical Processes*, forthcoming from Teachers College (Columbia University) Press.
17. We prefer the Lane Cooper translation of *Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1932). See sections 2 of Book I and 22, 23 of Book II.

Other references

- Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. R. Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).
- L. Bindman and O. Lippold, *The Neurophysiology of the Cerebral Cortex* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
- R. Conrad, "Speech and reading," in Kavanaugh and Mattingly, *ibidem*.
- Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations, An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).
- P.A. Kolers, "Three stages of reading" in *Basic Studies on Reading* (eds. H. Levin and J.P. Williams) (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pages 90-118.

Topical Structure and Writing Quality: Some Possible Text-Based Explanations of Readers' Judgments of Student Writing

Stephen P. Witte

The argumentative essays of 48 freshmen were used to form two groups of essays, rated holistically for overall quality by experienced readers of student writing. One group had been judged "high" in overall quality; one group had been judged "low." The two groups were compared with respect to several text features--length, syntax, and topical structure--to determine those features readers may have associated with quality in student writing. The topical structure variables, which were based on work growing out of Prague School Linguistic theory, were found useful in explaining the quality scores readers assigned to the texts. Particularly significant were the percentages of Type 3 and Type 5 sentences; percentages of t-units in parallel, extended parallel, and sequential progressions; average number of t-units in parallel, extended parallel, and sequential progressions; mean number of t-units per topic, and mean number of words per topic. The limitations of the study are discussed, and its implications for research are suggested.

Writing research has long sought to identify internal features of written discourse that can help to explain qualitative differences among texts. The motivations for this research are many but perhaps most important has been the need to teach students at various levels how to communicate effectively in writing. The assumption has been that if text features influencing readers' judgments of quality could be identified, then instruction in writing could be substantially improved. Apart from studies that examine such features as handwriting (e.g., Remondino, 1959; McColly, 1970) and error (e.g., Shaughnessy, 1977; Grobe, 1981), two approaches have been taken to help explain qualitative differences in student writing, one focusing on intrasentence features and one focusing on intersentence features.

The first approach has attempted to locate the source of qualitative differences in syntactic features. Following the lead of Hunt (1964, 1965, 1970) and--to a lesser extent--Christensen (1963), recent research (e.g., Nold & Freedman 1977; Morenberg, Daiker & Kerek, 1978; Stewart 1978; Faigley,

1979; and Witte & Faigley 1981b) has looked for correlations between writing quality and such syntactic features as t-unit and clause length, percentage of t-units with nonrestrictive modifiers, and percentage of words in non restrictive modifiers. Although Hunt's research (1964, 1965, 1970) and two 1978 sentence-combining studies (Morenberg, Daiker & Kerek, 1978; Stewart, 1978) suggest a positive and linear relationship between clause length and t-unit length and writing quality, other studies (Nold & Freedman, 1977; Faigley, 1979; Witte & Faigley, 1981) using multiple regression techniques report that t-unit and clause length predict very little of the variance in the quality scores readers assign to student essays. And two recent studies¹ amass considerable evidence to suggest that longer t-units may be negatively associated with writing quality, thus providing *some* evidence to support *some* of the assumptions underlying various readability formulae (e.g., Flesch, 1949; Dale & Chall, 1948) and thus challenging many of the assumptions that underlie sentence-combining research (cf. Kinneavy, 1979; Witte, 1980). The Christensen variables do not fare much better in the literature, as the multiple regression analyses reported in Nold and Freedman (1977), Faigley (1979), and Witte and Faigley (1981a) attest.

Often more theoretical and descriptive than quantitative in nature, the second approach has focused on text features that extend across the boundaries of sentences, features that lie beyond the reach of syntactic analyses. Perhaps the best known of this research is that produced during the 1960's on larger units of meaning such as paragraphs. During the 1960's, for example, Christensen (1965), Becker (1965), Karrfalt (1968), Rodgers (1966, 1967), and Pitkin (1969, 1977a, 1977b) turned to such concepts as functional slots, "stadia," semantic levels of generality, discourse "blocs," and relationships across sentence boundaries to explain how groups of sentences combine to form units of meaning larger than the sentence. During the 1970's, Grady (1971), D'Angelo (1974), Odell (1977), and Nold and Davis (1980) extended and refined some of these concepts. However, while this research has perhaps increased our understanding of extended units of discourse, it has not produced an analytic method that could be applied in studies of large numbers of texts.

More recently, researchers taking this second approach have begun to examine cross-sentence, or intersentence, relationships in other ways. For example, drawing on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976) on text cohesion, King and Rentel (1979), Witte and Faigley (1981b),² Halloway (1981), Welchen (1982), and Cherry³ have conducted studies or presented theoretical rationales suggesting that the ways writers use cohesive ties can help distinguish between low- and high-quality texts. However, while cohesion analysis shows promise for research on writing quality, it does not adequately depict crucial semantic relationships or important coherence

relationships within texts. As Witte and Faigley (1981b) demonstrate, a text may be highly cohesive and still not be coherent.

A more promising line of research has evolved from the study of *topic* in discourse, particularly by such Prague School Linguists as Mathesius (1929, 1928), Firbas (1964, 1966, 1974), Sgall (1967, 1974, 1979a, 1979b), Sgall and Hajičová (1977, 1978), and Daneš (1964, 1974). Mathesius' work on topic may derive in part from the earlier work of Weil (1844) and Marty (1897), but one of Mathesius' contributions to the analysis of extended texts stems from his emphasis on sentences in the context of whole texts, rather than as autonomous units of discourse. Mathesius used the term *theme* to identify "what the sentence is about" and the term *enunciation* to refer to "what is said about the theme." The context in which individual sentences exist becomes important because the theme not only indicates "what the sentence is about," but also announces "what is known or at least obvious in a given situation and from which the speaker proceeds in his discourse." Thus, for Mathesius, the enunciation of an individual sentence adds new or unknown information to the discourse.

Building on Mathesius' work, Firbas proposed the concept of "communicative dynamism." Firbas argues that the theme of a sentence contributes least to the "communicative dynamism" of the text, primarily because it delivers the least amount of information not recoverable from elsewhere in the text. In place of Mathesius' term *enunciation*, Firbas uses the term *rheme*. According to Firbas, the rheme of a sentence contributes most to "communicative dynamism," delivers information new to the text, and usually appears toward the end of the sentence, a claim finding support in some of the recent work of Williams (1979).

Between the time of Mathesius and Firbas, the term *topic* emerged as a synonym for theme. The term *topic* appears to have been first used by Hockett (1959) to refer to what the Prague School Linguists had called *theme* and has since become the more common term; and the term *comment* is now often used in place of the Prague School terms *enunciation* and *rheme*. Indeed, much of the recent work of such Prague School theorists as Sgall and Hajičová employs the terms *topic* and *comment* and treats extensively topic-comment relationships in texts.

Drawing on such concepts as theme-enunciation, theme-rheme, old-new information, given-new information and topic-comment, Daneš argues that Prague School theories can be used to identify basic text patterns. In one such pattern, successive sentences express the same theme or topic. In Daneš' second text pattern, the comment or rheme portion of the preceding sentence becomes the topic or theme of the following sentence. In a third text pattern, topics of successive sentences are identified with reference to their relationship to a "hypertheme," in effect a discourse topic not stated explicitly in the text.

While the "topic" approach to discourse analysis is not free of terminological, methodological, and theoretical problems (see, e.g., Enkvist, 1974; Grimes, 1978; Chafe, 1976; de Beaugrande, 1980), it has been used successfully in studies of comprehension (e.g., Haviland & Clark, 1974; Clark & Haviland, 1977; Kieras, 1978, 1980, 1981; vande Kopple, 1982; Faigley & Witte, 1983), and used to study student writing.⁴ In addition, its importance has been stressed in recent theoretical studies (e.g., van Dijk, 1977a, 1977b, 1980; Grimes, 1975; Li & Thompson, 1976; Dillon, 1981; Prince, 1981; Halloway, 1981).

Using the theoretical and applied research on topic at the level of the sentence and in extended discourse, the present study explores one general question and two subordinate questions. At the most general level, the present study addresses the question, "Can a topic approach to discourse analysis distinguish among readers' judgments of writing quality?" The present study also addresses two more specific questions: "Can a topic approach to discourse analysis distinguish between the sentences of high- and low-quality argumentative texts written by college freshmen?" and "Can a topic approach help distinguish between the structural patterns of such texts?"

Methods and Procedures

Methodology. To explore the relationship between readers' judgments of writing quality and topical structure features of student writing, I chose to do a *post hoc* analysis of high- and low-quality texts that had been previously rated holistically. A different methodology could have, of course, been selected. For example, I might have used the methods of survey research. In that case I could have done one of two things: I could have collected--after the manner of Diederich (Diederich, French & Carlton, 1961; Diederich, 1974)--readers' written responses to student writing and determined whether those comments related to topical structure features in the student texts, or I could have simply asked a large number of experienced readers of student writing to identify the features of student writing which most affected their judgments of writing quality. In the former case, incomplete, cryptic, and ambiguous responses would have been very difficult to relate to topical structure features of texts, thus threatening the validity of the study. If readers, on the other hand, had simply been asked to identify the text cues to which they responded in forming judgments, the responses would very likely have been too general to have been very useful. In addition, Harris (1977) has argued that readers are not aware of the criteria they employ when they rate student writing. A different *post hoc* analysis could also have been conducted. I could have, for example, coded texts representing the full range of quality scores and then used multiple

regression techniques to determine what percentage of the variance in the quality scores could be explained in terms of different topical structure features of texts. This possible procedure was rejected because the mid-range essays would likely obscure the relationship between the higher and lower levels of writing quality and the topic variables entered into the regression equation. Finally, I might have chosen an experimental method or design such as those used by Freedman (1979) and Freedman and Calfee.⁵ Experimental designs are, however, most appropriate when existing theory and research suggest specific hypotheses to be tested. Because little previous research has examined student writing in terms of topical structure features, it could not be determined which hypotheses, if any, should be tested experimentally. The present study was thus conceived from the outset as an exploratory one, a study which might identify some hypotheses that could subsequently be tested experimentally. Given this exploratory focus, a *post hoc* analysis of high- and low-quality essays seemed most appropriate.

Sample Selection. The texts examined were chosen from 180 essays written on a controlled assignment as part of an evaluation of the Freshman Writing Program at the University of Texas in 1978 (Witte & Faigley, 1981a). The writing assignment asked students to argue either for or against required high school composition courses. During the fall of 1979, 16 experienced readers of student writing rated holistically the 180 essays according to procedures used by the Educational Testing Service (see Godshalk, Swineford & Coffman, 1966; Cooper, 1977; Alloway, 1980; Stiggins, 1982). Each essay was rated by two readers on a 1-to-4 scale, with "4" being the highest score. Thus each essay could have a summed holistic score ranging from "2" to "8". In the present study, essays that received a summed score from "2" formed a low-quality group (N=24) of texts; and essays that received a summed score of "7" or "8" formed a high-quality group (N=24) of texts. To control for possible extraneous influences, all names were removed from the essays before they were rated. In November of 1981 a workstudy student retrieved the 48 essays from storage, photocopied them, and randomly sequenced them.

Text Analyses. Before any text analyses were performed, I examined the writing assignment carefully and read the 48 essays as a group. This procedure gave me a rather clear sense of the principal main ideas or themes which could be expressed in response to the assignment. Without knowledge of the summed score assigned to any essay, I then analyzed the 48 texts for a number of text features. First, I counted the number of words, clauses, and t-units. These three features allowed me to compute two syntactic variables commonly used in composition research, mean clause

length and mean t-unit length; and the number of words allowed me to compare the two sets of essays with respect to text length.

In addition to these features of either syntax or text length, I analyzed features of topical structure in the 48 texts to determine how the two groups of writers developed their discourse topics, their main ideas, in sequences of sentences, and how they mapped their discourse topics onto individual sentences and sequences of sentences.

The first step in this analysis entailed classifying each t-unit as one of the five types of sentences used in Lautamatti's (1978) research on discourse simplification. These sentence types differ one from another according to the relationship among the initial sentence element, the topical subject, and the grammatical subject. In *Type 1 sentences* the initial sentence element (ISE), the topical subject (TS), and the grammatical subject (GS) are identical. In *Type 2 sentences* the ISE differs from the TS, while the TS and the GS are identical. In *Type 3 sentences* the ISE and the GS are identical, but both differ from the TS. In *Type 4 sentences* the ISE and the TS are identical, but both differ from the GS. In *Type 5 sentences* the ISE, the TS, and the GS are all different.

Distinguishing among the five types of sentences in real discourse obviously presupposes identifying the topical subject of each t-unit, a process partly dependent on one's understanding of the text as a whole. Accordingly, before I marked the topical subjects of any text, I read the essay carefully and tried to create an abstract or gist for it—a procedure much easier to perform for high-score texts than for low-score ones. In effect a summary of an essay's main ideas, the gist provided a global context for interpreting individual sentences and for determining the topical subject of each. Within this larger framework, the semantic relationship between a particular sentence and the previous sentence provided a local context for interpreting individual sentences and thereby also helped to determine the topical subject of each. Both the global and the local contexts influenced the analyses of individual sentences.

Given a local context and a global context for each sentence, I asked the question, "What is this sentence about?" To determine the answer for each sentence, I first looked to the grammatical subject of the main clause. If that particular noun phrase provided a satisfactory answer to the question, I labeled the t-unit either a Type 1 or a Type 2 sentence, depending on whether the subject was preceded by a nontopical initial sentence element such as a participial phrase, a subordinate clause, or a single-word adverb. Adjectives and articles appearing before the grammatical subject of the main clause were not considered as initial sentence elements because they are elements of the subject. However, elements such as conjunctive adverbs, coordinating conjunctions, and subordinate clauses appearing before

the subject of the main clause were considered initial sentence elements because they are not grammatically a part of the subject. If the grammatical subject of the main clause did not provide a satisfactory answer to the question, I then looked for a suitable noun phrase either in an initial sentence element or in matter following the verb of the main clause. If a noun phrase in an initial sentence element other than the grammatical subject of the main clause satisfactorily answered the question, I labeled the t-unit a Type 4 sentence. If the suitable noun phrase appeared after the verb of the main clause, I labeled the t-unit either a Type 3 or a Type 5 sentence, depending on whether the nontopical initial sentence element was the same as the grammatical subject of the main clause. In the essays used in the present study, a Type 3 sentence typically begins with a "dummy" grammatical subject (either "it" or "there") and embeds its topical subject in a relative clause following the verb of the main clause. A Type 5 sentence also usually contains a "dummy" subject and embeds its topical subject in a relative clause following the verb of the main clause; however, the "dummy" subject in a Type 5 sentence follows a nontopical initial sentence element of some kind.

Twenty of the high-score and 20 of the low-score texts used in the present study were selected for use in another study, one on the relationship of topical structure and text type. These 40 texts were also coded by a second researcher. In coding the topical subjects of individual t-units, perfect agreement was achieved 86.53% of the time. Most differences in coding topical subjects were attributable to ambiguities either at the sentence level or the discourse level in the 20 low-quality texts. These differences were resolved in conference before the statistical analyses reported in the present study were performed.

The following two passages, selected from the two sets of essays, illustrate the five types of sentences and the results of the coding procedures used. The first passage includes the initial 13 t-units of an essay readers judged to be of high quality, and the second passage includes the first 13 t-units of an essay readers judged to be of low quality. At the beginning of each t-unit, I have identified the sentence type it represents; and within each t-unit, I have indicated the topical subject with italics.

Example: High-Quality Essay

(1-a) (Type 1) Certain *aspects* of composition courses are important and necessary parts of the curriculum in many high schools. (1-b) (Type 1) *They* develop writing skills which serve students well, both in other courses and in the world of work. (1-c) (Type 3) There are *critics*, however, who see these courses as a waste of time and effort. (1-d) (Type 1) *Some* criticize the standards and grading procedures used by composition teachers. (1-e) (Type 1) *Others* contend that these courses

are not related to anything outside the classroom. (1-f) (Type 4) However, when all *aspects* of high school composition courses are examined, it becomes clear that these courses can be useful to anyone who enrolls in them.

(1-g) (Type 1) One important *aspect* is the teacher. (1-h) (Type 2) For example, high school composition *teachers* show students the value of being able to communicate one's thoughts in writing. (1-i) (Type 1) *Teachers* thus help students develop healthy attitudes toward language and toward writing. (1-j) (Type 2) In high school composition courses, *teachers* also help students appreciate good writing. (1-k) (Type 1) *Students* learn to imitate good writing as they read it. (1-l) (Type 5) Most importantly, it is essential that *teachers* show that they really care about the students' writing.

(1-m) (Type 1) Another important *aspect* of composition courses is what is taught....

Example: Low-Quality Essay

(2-a) (Type 1) A *composition* can be any number of written works: essay tests, creative works, and analytic works. (2-b) (Type 3) It is basic to have a good *understanding* of writing because many courses in high school and college concentrate on bringing forth one's ability to assimilate and write down material picked up in the course. (2-c) (Type 1) *Creative writing* is writing works of fiction or non-fiction but without the rigorous following of the rules needed in an analytic essay.

(2-d) (Type 1) The main *purpose* of any type of composition course is to teach one to express his/her thoughts in a more concise and complete manner. (2-e) (Type 2) If one is writing a journal, the *ability* to write down thoughts in a clear way can help a person think in a clear way. (2-f) (Type 1) *analytical writing* helps students understand what they are reading, whether it is a novel or a poem.

(2-g) (Type 1) The *ability* to write any type of composition is important for those who hope to attain a higher education. (2-h) (Type 1) A *freshman* entering college must know how to write in order to do well in most courses. (2-i) (Type 1) Government, History, English, and even Foreign language *courses* demand that a student absorb the facts and can [sic] put them into concise and clear order when the student is tested. (2-j) (Type 2) However, the *student* who does not plan to go to college only needs composition to improve reading skills. (2-k) (Type 1) Many *jobs* people have do not demand writing ability while everything demands reading ability. (2-l) (Type 2) Thus *writing* essays in high school teaches students what to analyze in a work of literature, bettering reading ability.

(2-m) (Type 1) The *High Schools* have problems teaching the right aspects of composition in both the Public and Private schools....

After classifying the t-units in the 48 essays according to Lautamatti's taxonomy of sentence types, I analyzed the texts in terms of a number of features of topical structure. In contrast to the five sentence types, which yield information about the topical focus of individual sentences, this second set of variables indicates how topical material is carried across t-unit boundaries and how t-units are linked to form coherent texts. These topical structure variables are the following: the number of different topics; the number of nonrepeated topics; topical depth; the number of t-units in parallel progressions, extended parallel progressions, and sequential progressions; and the number of parallel, extended parallel, and sequential progressions. These variables are illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2, which present graphically the topical structure of the first 13 t-units of the high-quality and low-quality examples, respectively.

Figure 1 shows that the high-quality example contains four different topics, and Figure 2 shows that the low-quality example contains 11 different topics. Because the topical subjects of adjacent t-units (1-a) and (1-b) are the same, together they form a *parallel progression*--as do t-units (1-c) through (1-e), t-units (1-f) and (1-g), and t-units (1-h) through (1-j). The lengths of parallel progressions give some indication of the degree to which a writer develops or extends a topic once it is introduced in the discourse. No parallel progressions appear in the low-quality example. Together t-units (1-b) and (1-c) form a *sequential progression*, because the topical subject of each is different. Other sequential progressions in the high-quality example are the following: (1-g) and (1-h); and (1-j) and (1-k). In the low-score example, sequential progressions are formed by t-units (2-a) through (2-f), by (2-g) through (2-k), and by (2-l) and (2-m). The lengths of sequential progressions suggest the degree to which writers change topics as their texts unfold. Two *extended parallel progressions* appear in the high-quality example, and two appear in the low-quality example. An extended parallel progression results when the same topical subject appears in at least two nonadjacent t-units. That is to say, the sequence of a given sentence topic is interrupted by at least one t-unit containing a different topical subject. In the low-score text, (2-e) and (2-g) form one extended parallel progression, while (2-f) and (2-l) form a second. In the high-score example, (1-a), (1-b), (1-f), (1-g), and (1-m) form one extended parallel progression, and (1-h), (1-i), (1-j), and (1-l) form a second. For further illustration, consider t-units (1-h), (1-i), (1-j), and (1-l). This progression of t-units is called extended because the progression of the same topical subject--"teachers"--through the text leaves off after (1-j) and then resumes with (1-l) following (1-k), which is an intervening t-unit with a different topical subject, in this case "students."

T-unit No.	Topical Depth			Topic No.
	1	2	3	
(1-a)	aspects			1
(1-b)	They			1
(1-c)		critics		2
(1-d)		some		2
(1-e)		Others		2
(1-f)	aspects			1
(1-g)	aspect			1
(1-h)		teachers		3
(1-i)		Teachers		3
(1-j)		teachers		3
(1-k)			students	4
(1-l)		teachers		3
(1-m)	aspect			1

Figure 1. Topical Structure of Example High-Quality Essay.

From this discussion of the three types of progressions, it should be clear that a given t-unit often participates in more than one type of progression. Consider, for illustration, the high-quality example quoted above. In that essay, t-unit (1-b) is part of the parallel progression consisting of (1-a) and (1-b). It is also part of the extended parallel progression consisting of (1-a), (1-b), (1-f), (1-g), and (1-m); and it is part of the sequential progression made up of t-units (1-b) and (1-c). If one were to argue that a particular t-unit should be counted as belonging to only one progression at one time,

T-unit No.	Topical Depth									Topic No.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
(2-a)	composition										1
(2-b)		understanding									2
(2-c)			creative writing								3
(2-d)				purpose							4
(2-e)					ability						5
(2-f)						writing					6
(2-g)					ability						5
(2-h)						Freshman					7
(2-i)							courses				8
(2-j)								student			9
(2-k)									jobs		10
(2-l)						writing					6
(2-m)									High Schools		11

Figure 2. Topical Structure of Example Low-Quality Essay.

then one could not represent accurately topical relations across t-units. In the case of (1-b), one would have to decide whether it belongs primarily to the parallel, the extended parallel, or sequential progression. Such a decision would be an arbitrary one. To count (1-b) as belonging only to the extended parallel progression is to ignore at the local level its relationship to (1-a) and (1-c). To count (1-b) as belonging only to the parallel progression is to ignore its relationship to the larger semantic structure of the text as suggested by the extended parallel progression or to ignore its

relationship to (1-c) at the local level. To count (1-b) as belonging only to the sequential progression is to ignore its relationship at the local level to (1-a) and its relationship at a more global level to (1-a), (1-f), (1-g), and (1-m). Viewing particular t-units as belonging to more than one type of progression may be confusing, but at least doing so seems to represent fairly well the relationship of a single t-unit to the text as a whole.

The *topical depth* of a passage is determined by the number of different topics in the longest sequential progression or combination of sequential progressions. Thus while the high-score example contains four distinct topics, it has a topical depth of three; and while the low-score example contains 11 different topics, it has a topical depth of nine.

The last stage of analysis involved the creation of a number of computed topical structure variables, variables which result from the mathematical transformation of previously quantified raw data. These computed topical structure variables are the following: percentage of t-units falling into each of the five classes of sentences; percentage of topics which are not repeated; percentage of t-units in parallel, extended parallel, and sequential progressions; number of t-units per parallel, extended parallel, and sequential progression; number of t-units per topic; and number of words per topic.

Results

Syntactic Variables. Group t-tests were performed to determine whether the means for t-unit and clause length differ significantly for the two sets of essays. The high-quality texts contain t-units (mean = 17.0; sd = 4.0) which average 0.9 of a word shorter than those of the low-score texts (mean = 17.9; sd = 4.1). The means for t-unit length do not differ significantly at the .05 level of confidence ($T = 0.79$). The clauses in the high-score texts (mean = 10.8; sd = 2.4) are on average about 0.1 of a word shorter than those in the low-score texts (mean = 10.9; sd = 1.5). The means for clause length do not differ significantly ($T = 0.15$).

Text Length. A group t-test was also used to determine whether the essays in the two sets differ significantly with respect to text length. The high-score texts average 530.8 words (sd = 221.4), about 124 words more than the low-quality essays which average 406.5 words (sd = 139.4). The means for the two sets of essays differ significantly ($T = 2.33$; $p < .05$).

Types of T-Units. The mean percentages of t-units classified under Lautamatti's five sentence types were also compared. The means, standard deviations, t-values, and significance levels are presented in Table I.

As Table I indicates, the mean percentages of total t-units represented by Type 1, Type 2, and Type 4 sentences do not differ significantly across the

Table I. Means, Standard Deviations, T-Values, and Levels of Significance for percent of T-units Classified Under Each of Lautamatti's Five Sentence Types for the High-Quality Texts (N=24) and the Low-Quality Texts (N=24).

<i>Sentence Types</i>	<i>Percentage of T-Units</i>				<i>T Value</i>
	<i>High-Score Mean</i>	<i>Texts SD</i>	<i>Low-Score Means</i>	<i>Texts SD</i>	
Type 1	52.9	15.8	45.2	17.0	1.64*
Type 2	19.3	11.3	12.9	12.0	1.93*
Type 3	8.7	12.7	17.4	13.0	2.33**
Type 4	9.1	4.5	6.4	5.9	1.75*
Type 5	10.0	7.6	18.2	11.5	2.93**

* Not Significant ** p<.05

Table II. Means, Standard Deviations, T-Values, and Significance Levels for Group T-Tests Used to Compare Topical Structure Variables Analyzed in the High-Score Texts (N=24) and Low-Score Texts (N=24).

<i>Topical Structure Variables</i>	<i>High-Score Texts</i>		<i>Low-Score Texts</i>		<i>T Value</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Topics	10.9	4.1	13.3	5.9	1.65*
Repeated Topics	5.0	2.0	4.6	2.3	0.60*
Nonrepeated Topics	5.9	3.7	8.7	5.8	2.47**
% of Topics Not Repeated	50.6	20.0	61.4	19.5	1.90*
Topical Depth	4.2	1.3	5.9	2.3	2.99***
% of T-Units in Parallel Progressions	50.4	11.7	37.5	23.5	2.41**
% of T-units in Extended Parallel Progressions	68.8	20.2	47.8	23.8	3.29***
% T-units in Sequential Progressions	64.8	9.4	81.5	14.9	4.73****
T-units per Parallel Progression	2.8	0.5	2.3	0.9	2.59**
T-units per Extended Parallel Progression	5.6	1.6	3.5	1.7	4.55****
T-units per Sequential Progression	2.7	0.6	3.7	1.8	2.65**
T-units per Topic	3.04	0.9	1.88	0.64	5.12****
Words per Topic	53.2	22.5	33.7	12.4	3.74****

*Not Significant ***p<.01
 p<.05 **p<.001

two sets of essays. However, the mean percentages for Type 3 and Type 5 sentences do differ significantly, with a significantly higher percentage of Type 3 and Type 5 t-units appearing in the low-score essays.

Topical Structure Variables. The two sets of essays were also compared in terms of several topical structure variables. Some of these variables are raw data variables, but most are computed variables. The information relevant to the t-tests used to compare the means for these variables appears in Table II.

Table II reveals that the means for two raw data variables (number of topics and number of repeated topics) and for one computed variable (percentage of topics that are not repeated) do not differ significantly, although the difference between the means for the computed variable approaches significance ($p = .064$). However, Table II also shows that the means for the remaining variables all differ significantly across the two sets of essays. The values for three of these variables--the percentages of t-units in each type of progression--require some clarification. The sum of these three values for each of the two groups of texts totals more than 100%--184% for the high-quality texts and 166.8% for the low-quality texts. The reason that the percentages total more than 100% is that some t-units belong to more than one progression at the same time, a matter discussed previously in some detail.

Discussion of the Results

The results of the analyses indicate in what ways the two sets of argumentative essays are different and in what ways they are similar; and they provide the bases for some inferences about text features to which readers respond in forming judgments of writing quality. Whether or why either the differences or the similarities are meaningful or important and how they may have affected readers' judgments are the major questions addressed in this section. In the present discussion I focus primarily on the results reported in Table I and in Table II. I use the results of the analyses of syntax and text length to supplement my discussion.

Use of the Five Types of Sentences. Table I indicates that the two sets of essays are similar with respect to the degree to which they rely on Type 1, Type 2, and Type 4 sentences, but that the two sets of essays differ significantly with respect to the use of Type 3 and Type 5 sentences.

As Table I indicates, writers of both sets of essays display a decided preference for Type 1 sentences. In fact, between about 45% and 53% of all t-units in the two sets are of this type. Typically, Type 1 sentences--t-units in which the initial sentence element, the grammatical subject, and the topical subject coincide--are syntactically the least complex of the five types. Type 1 sentences, for example, never begin with introductory clauses

or phrases, including discourse connectives (such as "first," "obviously," "however," or "consequently"). Although the mean percentages for the two sets of essays do not differ significantly, writers of the high-score essays use Type 1 sentences somewhat more often than their low-score counterparts, a phenomenon which partly explains the difference in mean t-unit length. In addition, the relatively high percentage of Type 1 sentences in both sets of essays indicates a general tendency on the part of both good and poor writers to place topical subjects at the beginning of sentences as subjects of main clauses. Such "fronting" may result from writers' attempts--which need not be completely conscious ones--to identify for readers the topics of sentences as soon as possible, thus increasing the ease with which readers can process a text.

Although the mean percentages do not differ significantly, Table I also suggests a tendency on the part of the writers of the high-score texts to rely more heavily than their counterparts on Type 2 sentences. Like Type 1 sentences, Type 2 sentences contain topical and grammatical subjects which coincide. Unlike Type 1 sentences, Type 2 sentences contain an initial sentence element which is distinct from the grammatical and, in this case, the topical subject. Type 2 sentences, as the two example passages illustrate, often help the reader make semantic connections, or establish meaning-creating relationships, across the boundaries of t-units in extended texts. In the majority of the Type 2 sentences appearing in the two essay sets, the initial sentence element consists of a discourse connective such as the "For example" in (1-h) of the high-score example and the "However" in (2-j) and the "Thus" in (2-l) of the low-score example. Considerably fewer of the initial sentence elements in Type 2 sentences contain a topical adjunct, a phrase or clause which provides a context for the topical subject of the sentence as in (1-j) and (2-e). In (1-j) the phrase "In high school composition courses" is considered a topical adjunct because it reestablishes or reiterates the larger context in which the topical subject of the sentence--in this case "teachers"--is to be considered. Presumably, the introductory phrase in (2-e) is intended to function similarly; but the writer of the low-quality text uses an ambiguous adjunct to invoke the larger context. When topical adjuncts do appear in the initial sentence element of Type 2 sentences, they usually appear in the high-quality texts.

The occurrence of Type 2 sentences may signal another important difference between the two sets of essays, a difference that may have affected readers' responses to them: whereas the Type 2 sentence is the second most frequently used sentence type in the high-score essays (19.3% of all t-units), it is the fourth most frequently used in the low-quality essays (12.9% of all t-units). This observation admits at least two possible interpretations. First, because after Type 1 sentences, Type 2 sentences may be

syntactically the least complex of the five types, the heavier reliance on them in the high-quality essays helps account for the shorter t-units in those essays. Second, the greater frequency of Type 2 sentences in the high-score essays suggests that the writers of those texts are perhaps more conscious of the need to help the reader through an essay by providing initial sentence elements having an adjunct function or purpose.

When the percentages for Type 1 and Type 2 sentences are summed, we find that the writers of the high-score texts use t-units with identical topical and grammatical subjects about 71% ($sd=11.5$) of the time, while the writers of the low-score texts use such t-units much less frequently, about 58% ($sd=17.6$) of the time. These mean percentages differ significantly ($T=3.32$, $p=.002$). Perhaps the writers of the high-quality texts operate on the assumption that using sentence types in which the topical and grammatical subjects coincide can facilitate the reader's comprehension of the text. Perhaps these same writers believe that using the sentence types that are usually less complex syntactically than the other three types can also facilitate comprehension.

The mean percentages for Type 4 sentences, like those for Type 1 and Type 2 sentences when those types are considered separately, do not differ significantly. Nevertheless, the uses of Type 4 sentences in the two sets of essays do differ in important ways. Type 4 sentences are those in which the topical subject and the initial sentence element coincide but differ from the grammatical subject. In an extended text, such sentences can be used in two ways: either to introduce a new topic or to create a semantic connection across t-unit boundaries by fronting a topic previously given in the text and then adding new information as a comment in the main clause. This second use is illustrated by (1-f), the only Type 4 sentence in the two example essays. In that t-unit, a previously introduced topic--"aspects"--appears in an introductory subordinate clause. Because "aspect" had itself not been used as a topic in the three immediately preceding t-units, making t-unit (1-f) a Type 4 sentence helps the reader contextualize the new information delivered in the main clause. The writers of the essays that readers found high in overall quality are much more likely to use Type 4 sentences in this way than the writers of the essays judged low in overall quality. In the low-quality essays, 49.4% of the Type 4 sentences introduce a new topic, while only 31.2% of the Type 4 sentences in the high-quality essays do so. To put the matter in another way, in the high-score essays, nearly 70% of the Type 4 sentences contain topical subjects previously introduced, often as a comment in the immediately preceding t-unit, while only about half of the Type 4 sentences in the low-score essays do so. However, neither group relies extensively on Type 4 sentences: they are the least used sentence type in the low-quality essays and the next to the least used in the high-quality essays.

The mean percentages for both Type 3 and Type 5 sentences differ significantly across the two sets of essays, as Table I indicates. It is useful to discuss these two sentence types both collectively and separately, because they are similar in some respects and different in others. In Type 3 and Type 5 sentences, the topical subject appears *after* the grammatical subject of the t-unit. As Table I indicates, 35.6% (sd=16.3) of the t-units in the low-score essays are of these two types while only 18.7% (sd=13.8) of the high-quality t-units are. These collective mean percentages differ significantly ($T=3.87$, $p<001$). In both sets of essays, the grammatical subject of a Type 3 or a Type 5 sentence is usually a "dummy" subject, either "it" or "there" (as in sentences (1-c), (1-l), and (2-b) of the example passages). One effect of "dummy" grammatical subjects is, of course, longer t-units. For example, more words are needed to say "It is basic to have a good understanding of writing" than are needed to say "A good understanding of writing is basic." In addition, the Type 3 and Type 5 sentences in the 48 texts are frequently passives, as in the following sentence from a low-quality paper: "After failing, it was recommended by my counsellor [sic] that I take remedial English." Converting this sentence to the active voice saves words, as well as eliminates a grammatical error: "After I failed, my counsellor recommended remedial English." The heavier reliance on Type 3 and Type 5 sentences in the low-quality essays (35.6% compared with 18.7% in the high-score texts) probably accounts for some of the difference in mean t-unit and clause length between the two groups of essays. More importantly, Type 3 and Type 5 sentences may have been more difficult for the readers to process, since they would have had to "search longer to determine what a particular sentence of those types was about. Table I also indicates that the writers of the low-quality texts tend to use both Type 3 and Type 5 sentences with greater frequency than they use Type 2 sentences, sentences that can help the reader make transitions across t-unit boundaries. However, for the writers of the high-score essays, just the opposite is true. Perhaps this finding indicates that the writers of the high-quality essays tend to be more adept than their counterparts in creating coherence relationships across t-unit boundaries, in helping readers establish meaning relationships across t-units, by fronting topical subjects in sentences where readers must depend on initial sentence elements to help bridge the semantic gaps between t-units.

Topical Development and Structure. While Table I directs attention to some important differences in the way the two groups of writers handle topical focus at the sentence level, Table II distinguishes between the ways the two groups of writers structure their essays around the topics they introduce. These differences are reflected in two related aspects of topical development: (1) the way in which a given topic is elaborated on, and (2)

the way topical progressions are used to advance the discourse topic, the main idea or theme of the essay.

As I have noted, the high-quality essays contain significantly more words than the low-quality texts, about 531 words compared to about 407. Text length alone may suggest that the writers of the high-score texts are more capable than their low-core counterparts of developing their main ideas, that they have better invention skills. Clearly text length seems to be positively associated with writing quality, both in the essays examined in this study and in those examined in other studies (e.g., Nold & Freedman, 1977; Witte & Faigley, 1981). But text length, like t-unit and clause length, is at best only a gross indicator of qualitative differences among texts. Text length cannot tell what features of texts contribute to the qualitative differences readers identify. Neither can text length tell in what ways the invention skills of good writers differ from those of poor ones. And text length cannot tell anything about differences in the ways the two groups of writers arrange or structure the semantic content they decide to include in their texts. To explore such issues, I used the variables reported in Table II to analyze the two sets of essays.

We learn from Table II that the high-quality texts introduce on average about 2.4 fewer distinct topics at the sentence level, 10.9 compared to 13.3, than do the low-quality essays. These means do not themselves differ significantly, and neither do the means for the number of repeated topics nor the percentage of nonrepeated topics. However, the means for the number of nonrepeated topics do differ significantly. These findings suggest that in the texts that readers judged to be of high quality, text length is positively associated with more development or elaboration of fewer topics. Two other variables--mean number of t-units per topic and mean number of words per topic--also indicate that the combined effect of greater length and fewer topics in the high-quality essays is significantly more elaboration of given topics in high-quality texts than in a low-quality ones. Whether seen in terms of the average number of words or t-units per topic, the differences in the extent to which the two groups of writers develop, or "stick to," a given topic once it is introduced is significant beyond the .001-level. Once a topic is introduced in a high-quality essay, it will receive significantly more of the writer's attention than a topic introduced in a low-quality essay. These findings suggest three things about the two groups of essays. First, they suggest that the writers of the high-score texts are more capable of "inventing" or "discovering" content for the topics they introduce. Second, they indicate that the high-score writers prefer to elaborate more on fewer topics. Third, and perhaps most importantly, these findings suggest that the high-score writers can better distinguish than their low-score counterparts between topics that are crucial to the "main idea" of a

text and those that are not, a matter rather well illustrated by the low-quality example. These same results strongly suggest that readers do not respond positively to longer texts *per se*, but that readers respond positively to texts that establish focus by limiting the number of topics introduced and by elaborating on those topics extensively.

The suggestions that the writers of the high-quality essays are more capable of inventing or discovering content for the topics they introduce, that they can distinguish between crucial and non-crucial topics, and that readers respond positively to their efforts find support in the ways the two groups of writers develop the topics they introduce. The percentages of total t-units in the three different types of topical progressions indicate that while both groups of writers rely heavily on sequential progressions, the writers of the low-quality essays do so significantly more often than the writers of the high-quality essays. Whereas about 82% of the t-units in the low-score texts appear in sequential progressions, only about 65% in the high-score texts do. As Table II indicates, these means differ significantly. The difference in the percentages of t-units in sequential progressions indicates that the high-quality essays tend to introduce new topics significantly less often than do the low-quality essays. Usually the result is that the most important topics appear at higher levels of topical depth, an observation supported by the example essays. Maintaining a consistent focus on fewer topics at higher levels of topical depth and elaborating more on those topics appears to affect the ways readers respond to student writing.

The mean percentages for the two groups of texts for parallel and extended parallel progressions also differ significantly. In the low-quality essays, 37.5% of the t-units are in parallel progressions, while in the high-quality essays 50.4% are. As Table II shows, these mean percentages differ significantly. In the low-quality essays, 47.8% of the t-units are in extended parallel progressions, but in the high-score texts, 68.8% are. As the two example passages illustrate, both parallel and extended parallel progressions consist of t-units having the same topical subject. In addition--and this matter is reflected in Figure 1 and Figure 2--the parallel and extended parallel progressions in the low-quality essays sometimes differ from those in the high-score texts. In the high-score texts, parallel and extended parallel progressions typically appear at a higher level of topical depth than in the low-score essays, usually at a topical depth of "1" or "2", as in the case of the high-quality example. In the low quality essays, something quite different happens. In those essays, parallel and extended parallel progressions usually occur at lower levels of topical depth, as is the case with the extended parallel progressions formed by (2-e) and (2-g) and by (2-f) and (2-l). If repeated topics are assumed to be the most important topics in a text, these phenomena may suggest that the writers of texts that readers

judged inferior experience more difficulty in establishing goals and in laying plans for the texts they write, thus providing some evidence for the claim that good and poor writers can be distinguished on a basis of planning strategies (cf. Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981).

This difference in the use of parallel and extended parallel progressions suggests that when the writers of the low-quality texts choose to elaborate on a given topic that topic is often at a lower level of topical depth than the topics elaborated on extensively by the high-score writers. My reading of the essays suggests that in the low-score essays, such elaborations of topics at lower levels of topical depth either front topical material which is not essential to the development of main idea or that these elaborations bury the most important topics introduced into the discourse. In short, the writers of the high-score texts tend more often than their low-score counterparts to use parallel and extended parallel progressions to highlight important topical material at higher levels of topical depth. In addition, the writers of the high-score texts more frequently return to their important topics after intervening sequential progressions. The greater frequency with which the high-score writers return to their most important topics seems to affect their essays in two ways: the frequent return to the same topic allows them to front consistently the most important topics, and it allows them to elaborate more on those topics. These effects, in turn, help the writers to maintain a consistent and clear focus in the high-quality essays.

Such differences between the two sets of essays are also reflected in the mean number of t-units in each type of topical progression, differences that also suggest how specific text cues may affect readers' judgments of student writing. The mean number of t-units appearing in the three types of progressions perhaps best reflects how the two sets of essays differ. These means tell quite specifically how the writers of the high-quality essays manage to devote more words and more t-units to each of their topics. As Table II shows, the means for each of these three variables differ significantly. In the low-score texts, 2.3 t-units appear on the average in parallel progressions, but in the high-score texts 2.8 t-units do. In the low-score texts, 3.5 t-units appear on the average in each extended parallel progression, whereas 5.6 t-units appear in each extended parallel progression in the high-score essays. In the low-score essays, 3.7 t-units appear on the average in each sequential progression, whereas only 2.7 t-units appear on the average in each sequential progression in the high-score essays. These findings support what we have already observed, namely, that the writers of the high-score texts elaborate much more on a given topic and introduce fewer of them.

A good deal of the difference between the ways the two groups of writers elaborate on and structure the topics introduced in their respective texts is suggested by the differences among the average numbers of t-units per each type of topical progression. The highest average number of t-units per type of progression in the low-score texts is 3.7, and that for sequential progressions. On the other hand, the highest average for the high-score essays is 5.6, that for extended parallel progressions. Extended parallel progressions return repeatedly to previously introduced topics, adding new information about a particular topic as the discourse unfolds. In contrast, sequential progressions are formed by introducing new topics to the discourse; and in the low-score texts, these new topics are not always crucial--or sometimes even relevant--to the essay. The topics introduced in sequential progressions contained in the low-score essays frequently suggest either that the writers do not know how to establish connections among topics or that their principal discovery or invention strategy is "free association" or "nondirected and nonselective brainstorming." As a result of their heavier reliance on sequential progressions, the writers of the low-score essays generally produce texts which are less coherent than those of their high-score counterparts. This heavier reliance on sequential progressions, coupled with a tendency to use fewer parallel and extended parallel progressions, suggests that the low-score writers do not know how to use invention strategies to develop a topic or to fit it into a semantic structure appropriate for a particular "main idea." For the writers of the texts that readers judged high in quality, invention seems to have occurred in response to particular plans, to have been guided by the goals the writers had established for their texts. However, for the writers of the low-quality texts, invention and planning appear not to be clearly distinguishable subprocesses of composing. As a result, the low-quality essays frequently lack what Hobbes and others (Hobbes & Evans, 1979; Agar & Hobbes, 1982) have called "local coherence" and what they have called "global coherence."

The problems that the writers of the low-score essays have in creating coherence in their texts is also reflected in the mean "topical depth" of their essays. As Table II indicates, the low-score essays have a mean topical depth of 5.9, compared with a mean topical depth of 4.2 in the high-score essays. These means differ significantly. The difference between these means reflects the greater reliance of the writers of the low-score essays on sequential progressions. More importantly, the difference indicates that the writers of the low-score texts tend to introduce successively a larger number of topics than do the writers of the high-score essays. In this connection, recall that sequential progressions in the low-score texts average 3.7 t-units. Since sequential progressions by definition contain only t-units with

different topics, each sequential progression in a low-score text contains an average of 3.7 different topics, compared with 2.7 in the high-score texts. In the essays readers found to be of inferior quality, greater topical depth, longer sequential progressions, and more topics may have the effect of distracting readers by presenting them with topics which are not immediately germane to the essay's main idea.

The topical structure variables used in the present study help to pinpoint rather precisely some important qualitative differences between the two sets of essays. These variables also provide evidence of the kinds of decisions the writers of the two groups of essays made during composing. For example, writers of the two sets of essays appear to select topics for their essays in somewhat different ways, selection processes that affect both the number of topics and the number of times a given topic appears in a given essay. Both the number of topics and the times each is repeated seem to bear directly on how coherent a given essay is. In the present study, the essays that rely most heavily on sequential progressions--progressions introducing new topics successively--and least heavily on parallel progressions of either type--progressions relying on repeated topics--tend to suffer most from a lack of coherence, tend not to be able to maintain a consistent focus from beginning to end.

The present study was designed as an exploratory one to determine whether aspects of Prague School theories of topic and text structure might provide a useful framework for examining the written texts of student writers and the responses of experienced readers to them. I employed this theoretical framework in an analysis of topical subjects, examining the influence of topical subjects on both sentence structure and discourse structure. At the sentence level, Lautamatti's five types of sentences were able to pinpoint some important differences between the high-quality and low-quality texts of beginning college freshman. It might be said that the analyses of topics at the sentence level yield data about the "style" of the two sets of texts. The variables which looked beyond the sentence to development and structure in extended texts were able to distinguish among the two sets of essays in other important ways. The use of those variables suggests not only that the planning and invention strategies of the low-score writers were perhaps inappropriate to the task at hand, but also that these strategies affect in important ways the patterns of arrangement employed by the low-score writers, particularly as those patterns affect coherence both locally and globally.

Limitations and Implications

The findings reported seem to suggest the value of employing topical structure analysis in the study of student writing and in the study of readers' judgments of that writing. However, the findings reported and the interpretations given of them are subject to a number of limitations that derive from the particular texts used and from the design of the study itself.

As an exploratory study employing a *post hoc* analysis of student writing, the study is limited. It is limited in at least five ways. First, only the essays of college freshman were examined, and those essays represented what Britton (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975) and others have called "school writing," writing produced in an artificial environment of a classroom or testing center and directed to a teacher or an unknown evaluator. Whether readers would respond similarly to writing produced under different circumstances or directed to different audiences was not addressed in the present study. Second, the texts examined were all written in response to a topic that asked students to take a stand on a particular issue and to argue in support of the stand they took. If the findings are at all generalizable, they are generalizable only to comparable texts. Indeed, Sodowsky and Witte⁶ have found that when developed through narrative and descriptive details, the informative texts of college freshman differ substantially in terms of topical structure variables from the texts analyzed in the present study. Third, the study examined only the topics of the student texts; it did not examine what Prague School linguists would call "comments." An examination of comments in the 48 texts used in the present may reveal that the two groups of essays are more alike than the present findings suggest, or that they differ in ways other than those described in the present essay. Fourth, while the 48 essays had all been rated by experienced readers of student writing, the judgments of writing quality by which the two groups of essays were formed are relative ones. The quality score assigned to a particular student text was always made with reference to the other essays in the 180-essay set from which the 48 texts were taken. It is impossible to determine whether a high-quality essay examined in the present study would be a high-quality essay in another study because the holistic score a particular essay receives is always dependent on the relative quality of the complete set essays being rated at one time. Fifth, the findings are largely contingent on the reliability and the validity of the coding procedures. While it has been my experience that continued practice can lead to consistent coding, coding is always to some extent dependent on the coder's understanding of the text at hand. When texts are ambiguous, the reliability of coding suffers most; and coding itself becomes dependent on the inferences the coder makes about what the writer intended the text to mean.

These limitations notwithstanding, the findings appear strong enough to suggest some directions for subsequent research. These findings suggest that topical structure analysis might be usefully applied in seven kinds of studies. First, topical structure analysis might be useful in examining structural differences among kinds of discourse written by writers of varying abilities. It could, for example, be used in a study that crossed, say, Kinneavy's (1971) aims and modes in an examination of differences among text types. Second, topical structure analysis might profitably be used to study the ways writers of different ages structure texts of different types. Third, topical structure analysis of "texts produced so far" might be linked with composing-aloud protocols to determine in what ways planning effects structure of texts. Fourth, topical structure analysis could be used in revision studies to determine not only the effects of revision on text structure but also some of the text cues that cause writers to revise. Fifth, topical structure variables could be systematically manipulated in texts to determine in what ways readers' judgments of texts are affected. Sixth, topical structure analysis might be used in pedagogical studies to determine whether that method of text analysis is useful in teaching students how to examine their own texts critically and to revise them constructively. Seventh, topical structure analysis might be used to explore the relationship between particular cognitive skills and the difficulty levels of writing tasks.

If the concept of topic in extended written discourse is salient enough to allow such studies as these to be carried out, it will have proven itself a most useful one.

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Hermeneutics as Criticism

Adrian Marino

Establishing distinctions between hermeneutics and interpretation shows how the terms have become interconnected in present day use. Aristotle's and Boethius' uses of the term "interpretation" are compared to the reductive use of the term to indicate approval, normative meanings. Reading of a text is a participation in model-making, of reformulating a world view while involved in the art of reading -- an act increasingly (with the reader's growth in knowledge) formed into considerations of typologies and classifications. Understanding is not apart from interpretation; it is the goal of interpretation. Hermeneutical understanding is seen as understanding the meaning of a literary idea (text) and thus the larger model which corresponds to that idea; the reader is critic who participates actively in the idea's being and its history.

First, we must make clear the relationship between hermeneutics and interpretation. Originally one was used in calc translations for the other: Aristotle's *Perí erminéis* became *De interpretatione* in Boethius; this was the beginning of a real terminological tradition. Just as even in the Middle Ages, *Hermes* was an *interpres*, *hermeneuticum* has no equivalent except in an *interpretativum*. This notion applies to the epic-narrative domain (*narrando fabulam*) as well as to the historical one.¹ The addition of the idea of distinguishing, of *discriminatio* (effective as early as the seventeenth century)² introduces a nuance that is even more emphatically critical. Hermeneutics thus becomes an exegesis or interpretation (*Auslegung oder Interpretation*) of written "monuments," guided by specific rules. It can be of two types: grammatical, following the progressive construction of the text, or psychological, transposed into the center of the text's creative process.³ Its aim is to establish a valid universal interpretation. Beyond these elements, current doctrine has nothing to add; its general sense is to extend the concept of hermeneutics to the whole theory of interpretation.⁴ This has the more or less predictable effect of a turnover of terms: hermeneutics thus becomes (in some recent connotations) the general theory or philosophy of interpretation.⁵ Thus the traditional concept of hermeneutics as method of discrimination (between original and imitated literature, for instance) can reappear at the opposite pole.⁶ Since these notions are not

only interconnected but circular, this kind of polarization within the same semantic field is inevitable.

Hermeneutics necessarily places the ideas of sense and signification at the center of interpretation. Hermeneutics interprets the explicit or implicit sense and signification of all symbols, enunciations, texts, or whatever it may analyze. This operation is consubstantial with every kind of explication and primarily of sacred exegesis, which is the discovery of the cryptic, latent, obscure sense of a message or symbol, its meaning and content. For this, the text must be made to speak (*pronunciare*), to become intelligible, to reveal its original meaning: the linguistic expression of the message must be made communicable.⁷ Moreover, any meaningful discourse *menéin*, an interpretation of reality, because it says something about something. For Aristotle, any sign that carried meaning (a verbal enunciation, name, sentence, or the like) was an interpretation. Or, in Boethius' "interpretation," "interpretatio est vox significativa per se ipsam aliquid significans."⁸ And, since anything can in this sense be a *vox significativa*, can have or acquire meaning, hermeneutics becomes the science of the general interpretation of meanings. But this enormous expansion of the sphere of action is directly proportional to an increase in problems: provoking a great explosion of meanings, hermeneutics suffers from a real embarrassment of riches, not to say complete confusion, produced by the significative act of hermeneutics. This inevitably results in a great variety, contradiction, and uncertainty of senses and significations, and that same hermeneutics must choose among them. This observation, too, is traditional (occurring in St. Augustine, Abélard, and others)⁹ transmitted through the whole Classical doctrine of hermeneutics, the object of which is "To know the meaning (*Bedeutung*) for each separate case, according to the real use the author intended."¹⁰ What is the real meaning? An entire hermeneutics must answer this crucial question.

In fact, what it offers us is merely a framework in which to solve the problem by means of variable options, methods, and criteria. Which is the most correct sense, brought out by the best reading of the text, to make it maximally accessible to the reader?¹¹ The traditional answer comes from official, established, dogmatic tradition: interpretation should be based on the authentic reading of the authoritative religious texts (*auctoritates Sanctorum*). It operates with and brings out only the senses admitted by conciliar decision, the unanimous agreement of the church authorities, magisterial glosses, and so on.¹² In this sense interpretation is reduced to the exegesis of given, normative meanings. Their validity is guaranteed by the authenticity of their basic sources; this vicious circle appears in all interpretation of this kind.

By extension, the authentic (true, objective) sense is attributed to the original meaning, the initial connotation of the words or texts, so that significations are deciphered which may be basic, specific, or altered, or even which have been lost. This obliges hermeneutics constantly to check and to distinguish between the text's literal, basic meanings and its derived ones. The literal meanings become authentic and the derived ones, secondary; the former more profound and original, the latter only possible; the first linguistic, lexical, the second non-linguistic.¹³ The distinction between denotative and connotative expresses the same profoundly hermeneutical choice and difficulty: the determination of values becomes a referential problem of establishing one meaning through another, one significative system through another. Deep and superficial senses, interior and exterior, latent and manifest, hidden and obvious, are more hermeneutical alternatives. A Romanian *Hermeneutics* of the nineteenth century made the same distinction, which is by now quite ordinary: "The meaning is imparted through the verbal, or immediate, and through the real, or mediate. The verbal, or immediate, which is always strictly and essentially called the literal, turns out to be closer through the actual meaning of the words, terms, etc."¹⁴ It is not chance that senses and significations are classified on two levels: hermeneutics has by its own nature a dual horizon of signification. If messages of all kinds had put only direct, flat, elementary, generally valid meanings into circulation, then hermeneutics would never have appeared or would have proved totally useless. But on the contrary, it is a long and methodical investigation and interpretation of multiple meanings, an uninterrupted search for possible meanings.

At this level, hermeneutics becomes heuristic, the direct result of the polysemy of enunciations and texts. Semantic chaos, confusion, and obscurity make it imperative. Sacred or profane, hermeneutics tries to put in order this domain of infinite uncertainty, which the medieval exegesis of the Bible called unfathomable, *mira profunditatis*, a vast and deep repository of multiple meanings. If there is a need for a *Clavis Scripturae*, a key to interpretation, this is explained in the same way, raised to the level of a fundamental hermeneutical principle: *De multiplici Sacrarum literarum sensu*.¹⁵ Each word has a single sense (*Sinn, sensus*), but many significations (*Bedeutung, significatione*); and not only each word but each image, each plastic, iconic symbol too. What is called, in contemporary hermeneutics, "the problem of the double sense" or "of sense,"¹⁶ is also included in this category of traditional, established observations. It becomes clear that hermeneutics cannot escape or go beyond the basic condition of its object: the polyvalence of every kind of language.

This vice is transmitted to literary ideas, opening out in two ways in that significative universe: from the central, basic nucleus or etymon, in

widening concentric circles toward a whole modelable system; while these circles (i.e., levels of signification) in turn presuppose an opening out (i.e., clarification) through the interpretation of the critic of literary ideas. It is a mutual dialectical relationship: the system of literary ideas has a potential capacity for signification, it generates its own sense, while the critic discovers and introduces into this potential, latent, expanding sense a personalized sense and modeling schema. The critic in effect introduces one message into another (the usual hermeneutical-interpretive situation), injecting, as it were, a new significance into the previous variants of meaning: the construction *sui generis* of a model of the literary idea. Viewed in this perspective, it is impossible to clarify the meanings of literary ideas and get around the obstacle of polysymbolism by relating these to the intentions of one text or another (a very controversial hermeneutical process). Of course the author of any given literary-theoretical work has certain intentions, and carries them out in the act of formulation. But these have no value, no significance in the construction of a model of the literary idea as a whole. The only legitimate and constructive intention, from our point of view, is that of formulating the model itself, as a systematic project and act.

A way to get around the difficulties of polysymbolism and the ambiguity of texts is to put them into a preconstituted schema of interpretation; hermeneutics has proposed this method from its very beginning. The senses are put in order through classification and typing. We will not here discuss the quality of such typologies, but merely point out that they are historically and methodologically legitimate and possible. Furthermore, hermeneutics appertains, in large part, to the domain of typology. We shall see that the hermeneutics of literary ideas retrieves and amplifies just this tradition, a tradition with great modeling potential.

A fundamental situation is by nature archetypal. Every schema offers an invariable form of interpretation, one that sets a standard. In fact, it has been observed that the archetype itself imposes a meaning, "an invariable nucleus of meaning." It makes sense of some traditional linguistic matrices in which it recognizes its name, its verbal identity.¹⁷ The medieval theory of the four senses is the basis for four different kinds of hermeneutics, four classical methods of interpretation: literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical, referring respectively to the direct, the analogical, the moral, and the theological or transcendental senses. The terminology is rather unstable, especially the term "allegorical," which is in turn interpreted as a key method for all figurative meanings.¹⁸ It is not our intention to reconstruct the history of this concept; that project has been masterfully undertaken by Henri de Lubac, among others. But it is not without importance that modern hermeneutical theories rediscover or claim this very doctrine, in an obviously traditional, established way. A whole exegetical

methodology (see Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*), a topology (Flacius Illyricus, *De tropis et schematibus sacrarum literarum*), a theory of signification (*De modis significandi*) are involved in it, too.¹⁹ Current references to Dante (*Convivio*, II,1; *Epistolae*, XIII) and in general to the fundamental distinction between the literal and allegorical, the literal and spiritual senses,²⁰ become completely comprehensible. We have here a real hermeneutical commonplace. The method may also be extended to historical interpretation, which is also typed²¹ (especially--inevitably--through the analysis of language). This topological quality is confirmed by various observations; for example, there are parallel and constant elements, "topical elements which explain non-topical ones," and many others.²²

The final stage of this essay starts with another traditional question: is hermeneutics an act of understanding, and to what degree is it possible to speak of understanding in the domain of literary ideas? First we must point out that any distinction between understanding (exegesis) and interpretation (hermeneutics)²³ is erroneous, for the simple reason that: hermeneutics being in essence an exegesis as well, it cannot but have the same objective: understanding. In a close examination of this notion in its hermeneutical text and context, Schleiermacher developed three aspects which will be useful to our argument: a) the interpreter introduces his or her own sense into the interpreted text; b) the aim of understanding is to decipher the inner content of thought, essential thought (inner and expressed being one and the same thing); and c) "the art of understanding" implies a whole, total understanding of its object.²⁴ But interiorization is not only an attribute of the hermeneutical object, but of the hermeneutical subject as well. In Dilthey's terms, understanding becomes an "interior experience," a process through which we come to know an interior with the help of exterior signs, exegesis or interpretation being the art of understanding vital manifestations fixed by lasting expressions.²⁵ The rational, Hegelian concept, according to which "understanding means nothing more than the grasping of something in pictorial thought and in memory,"²⁶ is left behind.

The abstract and highly specific nature of the literary idea imposes certain limits. If the hermeneutics of literary ideas is, like all dialectical processes of knowledge, not only a confrontation but also a collaboration between subject and object, it cannot be reduced to an intersubjective act, an affective penetration,²⁷ to the "life" (*das Erleben*) of an idea. That any real participation in the life of the idea implies a transposition, an inner vibration, an affective penetration seems to us indisputable: there is a lyricism, an enthusiasm, even a euphoria to ideas. The adventure of ideas, in the sense of an existential risk or experiment, is very real to the true student of ideas. But the life of the idea cannot be reduced to interiorization alone; it is also an objectivization in the form of a theoretical

system with a logical principle of development which can be constructed in the form of a model. Thus it is not accidental that one can speak effectively of constructing the model of the literary idea.

Through this very aspect of subjectivity, hermeneutics asserts its creative potential, its quality of an art of interpretation, an artistic understanding. Contemporary formulations express this creative act even more precisely. Hermeneutics is a "reconstruction of a construction,"²⁸ a recreation from within of a concept, system, or model. The relationship between these two is one of reciprocity and circularity through a reciprocal transfer of energy and suggestion—a process which leads, in its evolutionary forms, to true identity.²⁹ This empathy or *Einfühlung*, defined with considerable precision by Herder,³⁰ removes all boundaries between subject and object, between I and thou, between interpreter and interpreted text: "To understand a text involves the same possibility of perfect comprehension as does self-understanding."³¹

On this basis, it has been possible in the present era to construct a real ontological hermeneutics (initiated by Heidegger, and continued by Hans-George Gadamer, among others), the result of the principles that we are most concerned with. In essence, the sense of interpretation merges with that of existence. Reduced to its simplest expression, the equation would look like this: being-which-understands = being-which-understands-another-through-itself; this is ontological identity and coalescence. Understanding another (e.g., a text) becomes a manifestation of our ability to understand as existential act. "To understand a text means to weave it into your own mode of existence. Anyone who does not weave it in, does not understand it, will never be able to explain it." This interiorization of meaning has been found in some Oriental mysticism.³² We understand things that come and go in our lives, through immediate confrontation. All understanding is conditioned by the mode of the person understanding. The inner sense develops only through interiorization.

What has been called the metahermeneutics of *Dasein*, the actual condition of intelligible and understanding consciousness,³³ casts some light upon certain aspects of the common practice of hermeneutics. It does presuppose an implication, a participation in the idea's life and destiny, which excludes the possibility of external, superficial, purely formal hermeneutics. Without an inner understanding of the idea (we shall soon see in what sense), the hermeneutical act becomes flat, miscarried, purely didactic, and totally meaningless. If all these exegeses bring no results, the reason is that the critic has not supported the idea, has not lived it, has not adapted its every detail. Put simply, there must be an affinity, a correspondence, a deep interaction, between the literary idea and the critic. Not every critic can study every idea, then. In the case of literary ideas, the

critic must have a vocation, in all forms, for ideas and for ideological imagination; the critic of ideas is a real creator of ideas. Understanding the idea is already such a person's mode of existing with the idea; the critic is integrated into the idea's being and history. A reciprocal creative participation, understanding the idea increases our capacity for understanding. The being grows, develops, is transformed. It becomes more receptive, more available, more pliant, and more elastic, through integration into the "hermeneutical efforts."³⁴ In short, it becomes more understanding.

This whole analysis leads to the unification not only of the content and method of hermeneutics = understanding = exegesis, but also of the terminology. And these notions end up by becoming interchangeable and circular: in order to understand, you must adopt a hermeneutics, you must interpret; in order to interpret, you must understand, you must practice a comprehensive interpretation, one which understands through a vital relationship with the object. This terminology is further generalized: understanding through interpretation, interpretation = [hermeneutical] effort to understand, understanding interpretation (*il capire dell'interpretare*)--the list could continue indefinitely.³⁵ The two concepts can be distinguished analytically, but not on the plane of concrete hermeneutical experience, which has no priorities, subordination, or preferential order. The only distinction is that, rather than deciphering symbols and meanings, our hermeneutics deciphers the literary idea through a rationalized understanding as much of the interpretive moment as of the interpreted idea.

Our new definition of hermeneutical understanding can therefore only be the following: to understand the meaning of a literary idea, its inner system, and hence the functioning mechanism of the corresponding model. The critic is analytically transposed into the idea's logical center, assumes its basic principles, and understands the node, meaning, and rhythm of the literary idea's development throughout its history. Understanding merges with the act of modeling, of constructing a model. It implies a system, a coherent order, which in this case becomes the essential criterion for understanding.³⁶ It becomes clear that the old hermeneutical objective, established by Schlegel, Schleiermacher, and Dilthey, and taken up by many others,³⁷ of aiming to understand a text better than its own author, can now be accepted only in the following form: that a complete understanding of the idea's system as transposed into model is absolutely superior to a fragmentary understanding of the idea as expressed in partial definitions. Which is to say that the modeled idea, which becomes its own author, understands itself far better in this universal, synthesis-type form than in fragments, of *membra disjecta*.

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