Inkshed

INSIDE *INKSHED*

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

ON READING AND WRITING

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Inkshed provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use. Subscribers are invited to submit informative pieces such as notices, reports, and reviews of articles, journals, books, textbooks, conferences, and workshops, as well as polemical discussions of events, issues, problems, and questions of concern to teachers in Canada interested in writing and reading theory and practice.

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A PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT OF FEMINIST PEDAGOGY:
RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

/// Fran Davis

Sherlock Holmes was always clever enough to keep his own counsel until he had proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that his hypotheses were correct; only then did he astonish Watson and enrage the reader by his lucid account of how elementary all his deductions were. I cannot help thinking, as I begin to do precisely the opposite -- talk about hypotheses which we have only just begun to investigate -- that the style of Holmes is the quintessential model of western patriarchy: it is hierarchical, competitive, and intellectual. It is no coincidence that as a feminist teacher and researcher I have agreed to write about being in the middle of what may turn out to be a muddle and to confess that I am quite content with the fact that at the end of the research we will probably astonish no one, and if there is rage it will have little to do with us.

I must admit, as well, that I feel uncomfortable theorizing about this research. Articulating theory is not a problem; it is to be found in the writings of feminist educators such as Bunch and Pollack, Culley and Portuges, in the works of the great humanists like Maslow, and in a great deal of the research on the reading and writing process with which Inkshedders are all familiar. Paulo Freire stands at the centre of it all as a model of radical pedagogical thought, though it is sometimes hard for feminists to give him full credit since all but his most recent writing is profoundly sexist. The point is, however, that we do not need more theory. We do not need more data, either, on the sexist biases of traditional education. There is excellent documentation on the problems women have speaking up and being recognized in large groups (Spender, Laforce, Rich, Serbin and O'Leary), dealing with hierarchical and competitive situations (Horner, Gilligan), and engaging in exclusively rational modes of thought (Gilligan, Rich). To the extent that traditional education emphasizes large classes, evaluates students against each other, and excludes the personal and affective from many areas of study, it is clear that males and females are not afforded equal education. I am not sure how widely known this research is, nor how widely accepted it has become, but it exists in abundance, and it has been written about by both women and men.

What happens in classrooms, however, is another story, and the most progressive theorists, feminists included, are all too often, alas, so anxious to impart their wisdom that they become talking heads.

The idea for our research project was born in a workshop on the needs of women students, when several male colleagues told us they were aware of the marginalization of women students in their classrooms but that they did not know how to cope with the problem. They confessed that their teaching styles, especially but not only in the sciences, seemed to exacerbate the situation. They asked us what to do.

What Arlene Steiger, Karen Tennenhouse and I are doing for them, particularly, and for the Quebec CEGEP network as a whole, is codifying and testing specific pedagogical strategies which we believe will improve female students' self-esteem, interest and liking for subject matter, performance, commitment to subject and program, and attitude and commitment to further education. At this point we have only just begun to identify the teachers who will take part in the project, teaching one class with some of the strategies

and one control group without. We plan to use teachers of Social Science, Physics and English, since these are the subject areas we ourselves represent. We also hope to use teachers from two three-year career programs, such as Nursing and Computer Science. We are preparing teaching packages and workshops for the teachers. And of course we will pre- and post-test the students, as well as monitor the process in open-ended and informal ways.

The first strategy lies at the very heart of feminist theory, and is best illustrated in my own opening paragraph. I began not with a thesis, the traditional opening for this form of discourse, but with a self-disclosure. It is a very typical example of systematic self-disclosure in that its function is to situate the informant/speaker/writer/teacher as a subject engaged in a process with respect to a subject matter, rather than as an authority who has brought closure to by mastering the material. Naturally, the presentation of oneself as a subject, a person, is designed to engage students as equals insofar as they too are engaging in a process which will only be meaningful if they can find its connection with their own lives as subjects in the world. Acknowledging the dialectical relationship between the self and the material also legitimizes personal experiences for intellectual inquiry and allows women to begin to develop their own relationship to traditional subject areas. And, like one of our other strategies, a much simpler one of setting students together in study partnerships for mutual academic help and encouragement, self-disclosure humanizes the classroom and establishes an attitude of respect and trust.

Another interesting aspect of self-disclosure is its use in evaluating writing. Expressive and interactive assessment of student writing, in which the reader/writer acknowledges and communicates in writing her/his reading process of the student text, democratizes the communication exchange and validates the particularity of the student writing. It is a collaborative rather than a hierarchical writer-reader connection and allows for affective modes of interaction; such strategies legitimize the collaborative and affective qualities of female learners and allows them to profit from these characteristics rather than suffer them as disadvantages.

Many of these strategies are deliberately devised to challenge the habits of inferiority and passivity which female learners develop in traditional classrooms. Self-initiated projects are strategies used to empower students and to encourage women to call on their own individual resources. Co-operative work units in which students contribute to a common project are empowering experiences and allow women to function in an environment which does not presuppose competitive and assertive characteristics. Systematic use of journals and write-to-learn assignments not only help students integrate learned material into their own thought processes but give some women students the chance to use well developed verbal skills and affective resources to deal with complex and, to them, intimidating cognitive areas. And, of course, choosing course content that reflects women's experiences is one of the most empowering devices of all.

One of the members of the Quebec Government committee which gave us our funding objected to the term "feminist", not on the grounds of its exclusion of males, but because, he said, what we were proposing to investigate was not "feminist" pedagogy but "good" pedagogy. We argued with him, of course, but secretly, we half agreed. What will be interesting to see is whether the strategies are, indeed, equally empowering for females and males, and equally

accessible to male and female teachers. But what fascinates us more than anything is the process. What will happen in those classes, as teachers try out some of these ideas we have worked out so carefully together in our own collaborative team?

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VOICES:INKSHEDDING ON A WORK IN PROGRESS   /// Jean Sanborn

"There are only two forms of the essay: deductive and inductive." (Joseph Williams)

"Inductive and deductive organization, it seems to me, is simply a distinction between two forms of the male mode which proceed by differentiation and antithesis." (Thomas Farrell)

"My problem with papers is that I see them as linear processes--one sentence and then another sentence and then paragraph and then page....I think writing should be a spherical process....I've just been expanding ideas linearly and all it gives me is a chain of sentences." (Sam)

"I'm not very good at making single line, logical argument....I often know when I'm doing something that is not logical but I'll believe that it is true--in contradiction to its being illogical." (Matt)

"Moreover, the term 'rational' relegates to its opposite term all that it refuses to deal, and thus ends by assuming itself to be purified of the nonrational, rather than searching to identify and assimilate its own surreal or nonlinear elements." (Adrienne Rich)

"I advocate that students in college composition courses be required to master the male mode of rhetoric." (Thomas Farrell)

"I find Farrell's conclusions extremely disappointing, for they fail to recognise the destructiveness of the predominance, the hegemony, of the male mode, not only in academic discourse, but in the world that discourse mirrors." (Chris Bullock)

"I just couldn't jam into a form like that, it was something that was too constricting for me; my thoughts made me feel constricted." (Polly)

"But I was really bogged down and I really couldn't see out, see in the linear way." (Matt)

"I was a good writer. But we sort of wrote by formula. Although I didn't have a lot of problems...." (Jill)

"On the other hand, the woman who may choose to reason, to express herself, in accordance with masculine techniques will be bent on stifling an originality that she has cause to mistrust; like the woman student, she is very prone to be studious and pedantic; she will imitate male rigor and vigor. She can become an excellent theoretician, can acquire real competence; but she will be forced to repudiate whatever she has in her that is 'different.'" (Simone de Beauvoir)

"I worry that I won't be able to say everything I want to say. I usually rewrite my thesis and I get really confused. It's gotten worse actually. I think I've learned a lot more in my head. But I'm having a hard time actually communicating it so that it's readable." (Jill)

"Antithesis and struggle are integral facets of the differentiation and development of ego-consciousness. Since antithesis is much more characteristic of the male than of the female mode of rhetoric, it appears that there are good psychological grounds for the significant place of the male mode in the teaching of rhetoric, for many students are in the midst of developing personalized ego-consciousness." (Thomas Farrell)

"We suspected that in women one mode often predominates whereas conventional educational practice favors the other mode. We suspected that when the women's mode is treated as deficit, women come to believe that they cannot think and learn as well as men. The depreciation of these modes of thought must also discourage men from cultivating their capacities for such strategies for knowing." (Women's Ways of Knowing)

"I guess I felt just that, I felt as though somebody was trying to cram a square peg into a round hole. And, I had feelings that had to be expressed in a certain form and all of a sudden people were telling me that my form was not acceptable." (Polly)

"I felt violated...I think it's because I put a lot of time into finding things that I wanted to say and I just could not find the right way to say it...the paper was just not taking the right form that I had in my mind." (Linda)

"I wanted to prove that Raskolnikov was schizophrenic and I could not write the paper. I went in to her sweating up a storm and she said to me, 'Polly, I think you want to write about this subject because that's the way you feel. You feel really broken....if you write the paper I think you should write about something that's not so close to you.' Well ended up I never wrote the paper and I ended up withdrawing....I think she kind of hit the nail on the head in that that's how I did feel...I mean why didn't I just crack down and write the damn paper and--it just pisses me off." (Polly)

"These women lack even the derived authority of those who, having faith in received knowledge, can assume as they parrot their elders that they speak the truth. Lacking, also, the inner authority of the subjectivist, they cannot cheerfully blurt out the first idea that springs to mind. The inner voice turns critical; it tells them their ideas may be stupid." (Women's Ways of Knowing)

"But to me a form means, to me, a paper has to be academic, which to me seems there has to be some kind of style involved that is stuffy and it maybe shouldn't seem that way to me, and the idea that you have to come up with a little grain of an idea and prove it, leave no questions unanswered is difficult to do....I always have to leave questions unanswered. I really just start to feel dumb. I feel dumb." (Jill)

"Because I'm not supposed to be doing that [writing a story]...I'm supposed to be writing a paper right now and if I'm not writing a paper I shouldn't be doing anything at which point I sit there in a catatonic state and the next thing I've gone to sleep." (Rose)

"I was writing very little, partly from fatigue, that female fatigue of suppressed anger and loss of contact with my own being:" (Adrienne Riche)

"Students may block to the extent that they don't write at all. Or they may procrastinate in a dazzling and creative variety of ways, leaving themselves so little time that they can't possibly write something that satisfies them, thus self-fulfilling their expectations of failure." (Pam Annas)

"Rhetoric. . . developed in the past as a major expression of the rational level of the ceremonial combat which is found among males and typically only among males at the physical level throughout the entire animal kingdom." (Walter Ong)

"The male mode of rhetoric seems to assume that antagonism is all right because intellectual life presumably proceeds antagonistically." (Thomas Farrell)

"A woman thinking scientifically or objectively is thinking 'like a man'; conversely, a man pursuing a nonrational, nonscientific argument is arguing 'like a woman.'" (Evelyn Fox Keller)

"At the position of received knowledge and prodecural knowledge other voices and external truths prevail. Sense of self is embedded either in external definitions and roles or identifications with institutions, disciplines, and methods. For women in our society, this typically means adherence to sex role stereotypes of second rung status as a woman with a man's mind but a woman nevertheless." (Women's Ways of Knowing)

"For it is language more than anything else that reveals and validates one's existence, and if the language we actually speak is denied us, then it is inevitable that the form we are permitted to assume historically will be one of caricature, reflecting someone else's literary or social fantasy." (Alice Walker)

"Literacy was and remains an effective and effective and efficient means of indoctrination, of immasculation." (Susan Schibanoff)

"And of course our language is suppressed because it reveals our cultures, cultures at variance with what the dominant white, well-to-do culture perceives itself to be." (Alice Walker)

"There was really nowhere for my own feelings or projections even though it was just my paper, it was my research, and the only freedom that was really allowed was to make it very tentative conjectures and I understand that, I mean it's supposed to be professional style, that's important..... But I felt very cramped." (Martha)

"I think that this course is taught in a certain way and I don't work that way so I, I don't know, I don't expect to have my papers taken seriously." (Jill)

"Listen to a woman groping for language in which to express what is on her mind, sensing that the terms of academic discourse are not her language, trying to cut down her thought to the dimensions of a discourse not intended for her." (Adrienne Rich, "Taking Women Students Seriously")

"We may value women's creative writing while at the same time feeling that it is very different from expository writing, the actual essay or research paper, which on the other hand we have been trained to think should be based on what the authorities say rather than on personal experience, and on "hard" data rather than "soft." It should be objective rather than subjective; it should be linear and logical in a particular way, with a beginning, a middle, an end, and a clear thesis statement." (Pam Annas)

"By concentrating almost exclusively on thesis-support exposition in college composition classes, we are implicitly teaching that the ability to support an assertion is more important than the ability to examine an issue." (William Zeiger)

"The Adversary Paradigm accepts only the kind of reasoning whose goal is to convince an opponent, and ignores reasoning that might be used in other circumstances: to figure something out for oneself, to discuss something with like-minded thinkers, to convince the indifferent or the uncommitted. The relations of ideas used to arrive at a conclusion might very well be different from the relations of ideas needed to defend it to an adversary." (Janice Moulton)

"The doubting game emphasizes a model of knowing as an act of discrimination: putting something on trial to see whether it is wanting or not....The believing game emphasizes a model of knowing as an act of constructing, an act of investment, an act of involvement." (Peter Elbow)

"It seems that wherever I started understanding something about what I was writing about, is where my writing really started to take off. Where I felt like I 'got it'!....That's probably where all my "got its!" come--when I understand the emotional life..the source." (Matt)

"I wrote a good paper for this one, I remember because I finally in this class, I didn't know what to write about the assignment and that had to do with writing about what I thought about Marx's analysis of capitalism. So I related it to a company--the ironworks that's in my town and what's happened to them. That, when I was finally applying it to real life, it worked." (Jill)

"Constructed knowledge--began as an effort to reclaim the self by attempting to integrate knowledge that they felt intuitively was personally important with knowledge they had learned from others. They told of weaving together the strands of rational and emotive thought and of integrating objective and subjective knowing." (<u>Women's Ways of Knowing</u>)

"Being so aware of this format or having a lead-in statement and having this thesis statement and when I'm writing I'm fighting this one side of me that wants to talk about all of these great things that I've seen in a book and the other side is saying you have to have it organized in such a way. So I feel like I'm compromising." (Linda)

"I guess the papers that kind of go like a hydra are ones where the ideas, one idea will spin off of another idea and then another will spin off and another idea--and they all are intertwined and seem to back each other up and so I don't know how to get them all in without the paper sort of exploding under it. But I want to get them all in because I think they are so important." (Rose)

"Standard dramatic structure is linear....The result is narrative structure that works on a ladder principle; action and tension mount as we progress through the fiction to its climax, its high point, situated close to the end.

Jewett's structure in <u>The Country of the Pointed Firs</u> is, in contrast, webbed, net-worked. Instead of being linear, it is nuclear; the narrative moves out from one base to a given point and back again, out to another point, and back again, out again, back again, and so forth, like arteries in a spider's web.... (Elizabeth Ammons)

"I think I have an almost opposite way of looking at Greek art than he does. I don't think it's all intellectual rationality...the Minoan period....really had an organization but it wasn't the way we look at things now. And they almost had a circular way of doing things instead of square and linear. They oriented their buildings according to the landscape around them and what I wanted to say was that I believe is that classical Greek temples were, had their roots in that, even though it's not obvious. But just the way they are open aired and oriented toward the mountains around them...I thought there was a connection." (Jill)

"The images of hierarchy and web, drawn from the texts of men's and women's fantasies and thoughts, convey different ways of structuring relationships and are associated with different views of morality and self." (Carol Gilligan)

"When the thinking is more contextual than it is here [unpublished dissertation]--then--as in the case of making a painting--the focus point of the process (and the product) may be anywhere, or there may be serveral, and always they are evolving in the exchange with the work in relation to the other elements of the work as a whole, the personality of the creator, and the 'vision' or (continually evolving) projected idea. Another way of saying this is that the reference points for the validity and reliability of the work occur all along in the process, not at the end; and they are not outside the work itself.

Looking backwards now, I think that for me the biggest impediment to the flow of the creative process was the ingrained idea that I had of a step-by-step process--i.e., completing one element before going on to the next." (Janet Levine)

"For what sometimes has been perceived as the weaknesses in women's writing--an emphasis on the particular, the contextual, the narrative, the imagistic, what Meridel LeSueur has called circular rather than linear writing; and the different content and conclusions that emerge as women write from a specific reality as women (including, for example, what goes on around kitchen tables)--these are in fact some of the strengths of women's writing." (Pam Annas)

"When the interconnections of the web are dissolved by the hierarchical ordering of relationships, when nets are portrayed as dangerous entrapments, impeding flight rather than protecting against fall, women come to question whether what they have seen exists and whether what they know from their own experience is true." (Carol Gilligan)

I suspect that one must first master the male mode of rhetoric before attempting the female mode, because the female mode requires an even greater degree of control. (Thomas Farrell)

"We believe that connected knowing comes more easily to many women than does separate knowing.
     We have argued in this book that educators can help women develop their own authentic voices if they emphasize connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate; if they accord respect to and allow time for the knowledge that emerges from firsthand experience; if instead of imposing their own expectations and arbitrary requirements, they encourage students to evolve their own patterns of work based on the problems they are pursuing." (Women's Ways of Knowing)

"Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of male traditions, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture." (Elaine Showalter)

"A form of discourse emerged based on cooperation and augmentation rather than competitiveness, on dialogue rather than monologue, on listening as well as speaking, on equality rather than hierarchy." (Pam Annas)

"Women students need to stop learning primarily how to translate their own experience into a foreign language and instead to spend some time learning their mother tongue." (Pam Annas)

"How can we become 'Guerrillas in Academic Proseland'?" (Ann Blasingham)

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Bibliography available on request.

CONNECTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCES: MARGARET GATTY'S WORLDS   /// Susan Drain

     To gain a better understanding of a particular historical period and its culture, it is often rewarding to change one's perspective, to go beyond the canon and past the secular saints and heroes of the time to see the relationship of the marginal and the minor with the central and the acknowledged. There it may be found that the apparently marginal are in fact part of a rich and complex whole which is neglected by those who concentrate only on the outstanding. For it is at the level, often, of the lesser figures of a period that more interesting connections and relationships may be perceived. Contrary to the opinion of Carlyle and his like, history is not the record of great men; it is more likely that a true understanding of the temper and spirit of a time can be derived from the record of its women, fragmentary and undervalued as that record may often be. For women make the connections; theirs is the matrix of a culture, and their intellectual, spiritual, and literary endeavours have provided a rich soil for sometimes more spectacular growth. When the record of such endeavours is, by chance or foresight, preserved in a wealth of primary documents in addition to published material, then it offers an imnportant opportunity.

Such an opportunity is offered in the papers of Margaret Scott Gatty (1809-1873). A largely neglected writer now long out of print, in her day she was acknowledged and sometimes lionized as an authority on children's literature, a recognition achieved in part by her own writing and in part by her editing, from 1866 until her death, the children's periodical *Aunt Judy's Magazine*. But it is not only as a writer and arbiter of children's literature that Gatty deserves attention. She was an amateur scientist of considerable repute among professionals in her selected study, that of seaweeds. Her authoritative, non-technical guide (<u>British Seaweeds</u>, 1893) was still in use in 1946. She maintained a lively scientific and personal correspondence with William Henry Harvey and George Johnston, both contemporary experts in marine botany. Her strong Christian faith (she was the daughter as well as the wife of Anglican clergy) would have caused her to look upon Darwin with dismay, had she not regarded him, and his arguments, with disdain. Her scientific and her spiritual confidence were serene and interdependent, as her <u>Parables from Nature</u> (five series, 1855 - 1871) testified. When she read Tennyson's <u>In Memoriam</u>, she was delighted to find, as she told him, that he too saw that God and Nature were not at strife.

Here is Margaret Gatty's claim for attention: in her own studies and writing she was able to accommodate and even, apparently, reconcile a daunting array of interests; in her correspondence and personal acquaintance, too, she makes a link between several mid-Victorian worlds: those of science, of religion, and of literature, in its full range from Aunt Judy to Mr. Tennyson. This robust involvement is attractive; that it takes place in the context of a life constricted by family, social, and financial pressures, as well as illness, bespeaks a formidable strength of character.

But it is not only for her own sake that it is worth understanding the Victorian period better through the medium of Margaret Gatty. Such a study offers instructive insight into some of our Victorian intellectual inheritance: the tendency to splinter intellectual endeavour into disciplines which rarely communicate with one another, the tendency to downplay the contribution of women to the rich texture of intellectual and literary life, and to appreciate instead the individual genius as if he (almost invariably he) were independent and isolated rather than nurtured and tempered in an intellectual context.

This is the large scope of the work which I expect will occupy my summers long after my current sabbatical is over. Of more immediate interest to Inkshedders is a focus I have just begun to bring to bear on Margaret Gatty's actual writing -- her prose style, or rather, styles. The private writer is quite different, naturally, from the published writer, but even in her published work she shows (at least) two distinct personae and voices. The differences are attributable not only to the different audiences to whom she addresses herself, but, or so I hypothesize, to the degree of authority (power) she, as a woman writer, feels, and to the kind of authority (the scientific or religious ideology) which underlies and reinforces her writing. If it sounds as if I am thinking about a paper for Inkshed VI, you are absolutely right!

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AVOIDING SEXISM IN LANGUAGE   /// Nancy Carlman

    Despite the frequent, predictable articles in newspapers and magazines
about the "silliness" of non-sexist language, always with the red-herrings of
"fireperson" and "personkind," for example, business communication -- and
written communication in general -- has inexorably become less and less
sexist.   The main reason this is so is, I think, that so many women are now
managers in business, major committee members in universities, lawyers or
judges in courtrooms, and, though not to so great an extent, elected government
officials.   Even the most died-in-the-wool male chauvinist has female
colleagues or competitors and knows that "Gentlemen" or "Dear Sir" is not
likely to be accurate. Those perennial articles never reflect this change, but
you and I have seen it.

    Examples appear in the business correspondence we all receive from Canadian
or U.S. companies and in the samples I see from the companies with whom I
work.   Rarely do letters begin "Dear Sir." If writers know the reader is a
man, they probably know the person's name. And, if the letters do not use a
name, since "Dear Sir or Madam" is both cumbersome and may be insulting to a
woman, they are likely to "salute" the recipient as part of a particular
group: "Dear Wooden Boat Society Member," "Dear Professor," "Dear
Stockholder," "Dear Composition Committee Member," "Dear False Creek
Resident."   Although these salutations could be grouped with "Dear Occupant,"
they do not cause the same reaction. What they do for recipients, in fact, is
to alert them to which of their many life "roles" these letters want them to
"play" while reading.

    In addition to using the person's name or role as member of a specific
group, other alternatives include addressing the title of the position (if you
cannot determine the name of the person in that position): "Dear Chief
Accountant," "Dear Training Coordinator," for example, or addressing the
company or department as a group: "Dear Flair Productions," "Dear ASEA
Incorporated," "Dear Legal Services Society."   This alternative may sound
awkward, but it avoids the problem of finding a generic plural to replace
"Gentlemen" or "Dear Sirs."

    Using complimentary titles also causes problems for letter-writers.
Sometimes a person's name, like Terry or Leslie, or initial, like L. Yeung,
gives no indication of sex.   In such a case, "Dear Terry Orcotti" and "Dear
L.P. Yeung" are preferable to "Dear Mr. or Ms. _____." Or you can use a
non-sexist title if one is appropriate: "Dear Dr./Professor/Constable Yeung."
I have also noticed the trend toward elimination of complimentary titles. Even
in a letter that uses the salutation, "Dear Mr. Alcock," the inside address and
the address on the envelope may say simply "Arthur R. Alcock" without any
title.   Some women prefer this trend and want it carried to the next step:
"Dear Arthur R. Alcock" or "Dear Adrienne Alcock" to eliminate complimentary
titles.   They don't like the specificity of "Mrs." or "Miss," and they think
"Ms." makes a misleading or negative statement.

    If you are answering a letter and are unsure which complimentary title to
use for a woman, take your cue from the way her name is typed under her
signature.   It if is typed "Margot Tremblay," write "Dear Ms. Tremblay" or
"Dear Margot Tremblay." If it is typed "Margot Tremblay (Mrs.)," she has given
you the title she prefers to use. Chapter 484 of the Administrative Policy

Manual of Treasury Board of Canada (December 1982) gives the same advice more delicately (and, perhaps, more confusingly): "correspondence should be addressed in the same form as that used by the originator unless tradition or discretion indicates otherwise when the originator is known" (p. 6).

Although most businesses recognize the need to be non-sexist in their written communication, law firms (in British Columbia, at least) continue to use some old-fashioned business conventions. One B.C. lawyer recently wrote a letter to a small company he knew was composed entirely of women. The letter included an attention line for one of the women and the salutation "Dear Sirs." When I asked the lawyer about this, he said it was his firm's policy to write to companies, not individuals, and that "Dear Sirs" was generic.

In other law firms senior partners have been more willing than junior partners to acknowledge that "Dear Sirs" is both illogical and insensitive, particularly in the following situation:

> Shaw, Bernard and George
> Barristers and Solicitors
> 100 West Georgia Street
> Vancouver, BC V6T 4W9
>
> Attention: Maureen White
>
> Dear Sirs:
>
> Thank you for meeting with me last Thursday to discuss the Arena Contract. As we agreed, you will arrange the signing with your client and I will have the final version ready ...

In a letter addressed to a single client, lawyers write to Mr. Angus Forbes at his address and then use the salutation "Dear Sir." However, if they are writing to Mrs. Aileen Forbes, they use "Dear Mrs. Forbes," rather than "Dear Madam" -- possibly the connotations of "Madam" have not escaped them.

Changes are also occurring in the texts of business correspondence and articles written for training, management, accounting, and personnel journals. Rarely does one see "he" used as a generic pronoun anymore. And writers seem to have been able to eliminate the awkward circumlocutions the elimination of "he" may cause. You are probably familiar with most of these ways:

> Use the plural ("Writers...their...")
> Omit the personal pronoun through use of a definite article ("the assignment" rather than "his assignment")
> Repeat the noun ("A writer begins by.... Then the writer....")
> Use first or second rather than third person point of view ("We want our writing to...." "Use the active voice.")
> Develop examples of two or more named individuals throughout an article (In an article about students' experiences with cooperative writing, the author might use Jenny and her experiences as one example and Colin and his as another.)
> Use "he or she" infrequently (The expression is awkward and calls attention to itself but may be necessary occasionally. Few writers like the various coined substitutes, like "s/he.")

(For an extensive discussion and many examples of how to avoid sexist pronouns, see "Avoiding Sexist Pronouns" by Michael P. Jordan and Jennifer J. Connor in *Technostyle* Vol. 6, No. 3, Winter 1987. The article also includes a 49-item bibliography. The journal is published by the Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing with editorial offices at the Centre for Administrative and Information Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Western Ontario, London, ON N6A 5C2)

A comparison of two articles over a period of 18 years in the *Harvard Business Review* highlights the trend toward non-sexist language. These articles were both written by John S. Fielden on closely related subjects. Here are some examples:

From "What Do You Mean I Can't Write," May-June 1964

"What do businessmen answer when they are asked, 'What's the most troublesome problem you have to live with?'" (masculine plural)

"The young manager can use the inventory as a guide to self-improvement (perhaps even ask his superior to go over his writing with him, using the writing inventory...)." (manager=he)

From "What do you mean you don't like my style?" May-June 1982

"In companies where managers primarily write their own letters, confusion about style also reigns. Someone sends out a letter and hears later that the reaction is not at all the one desired. It is reported that the reader doesn't like the writer's style." (generic plural, "managers"; substitution of "the one desired" for "what he desired"; use of nouns like "reader" and "writer")

"The subordinate tried to imitate the boss's style, but in actuality...he or she has no single style for all circumstances and all readers." (use of "he or she")

"Do we want to be personal and warm?" (use of first person plural)

If I had given you the 1964 article to read without any preamble, I think you would have noticed the sexist language and known it was dated. Our perception of the generic "he" has changed; we no longer accept it without question.

Although English is unlikely to ever have a generic singular personal pronoun and the transition to non-sexist language is often awkward, I think we'll manage.

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JOURNAL NOTES ON FEMINIST PEDAGOGY   /// Janice Williamson

(with thanks to the generosity of Daphne's Marlatt and Read)

November 4, 1988

How does the journal work as feminist pedagogic tool? My colleague who works on early Canadian exploration narratives might insist on the journal form as a masculine writing practice: the utter outer dailiness of Northern voyages. Or other early travellers: the voyage out interiorized in the loss and enactment of self recorded by Anna Jamieson in 1837 on seeing Niagara Falls:

> What has come over my soul and senses?--I am no longer Anna--I am metamorphosed--I am translated--I am an ass's head, a clod, a wooden spoon, a fat weed growing on Lethe's bank, a stock, a stone, a petrifaction--for have I not seen Niagara, the wonder of wonders; and felt--no words can tell what disappointment.

The journal as imaginary space, a midsummer night's dream of transformation: mind-ing costumes. My student titles her journal "new oceans." Charting a provisional "I" in process, she writes, "We cannot discover new oceans unless we have the courage to lose sight of the shore."

March 1986

In a course on Contemporary Canadian Women Writers, I stay up all night lost in student journals. One submits hers, the size of an urban Canadian telephone book, wrapped in Christmas paper. Typing up my comments, I write the obverse side of the journal: a conversation, or a wish to write on thin skinned membranes or transparencies, to let my words find their way home between her writing lines. I feel privileged and vaguely voyeuristic at the openness of my students, marvelling at the trust which has quietly grown within among all of us in the class.

February 1985

Franco-Ontarian poet Lola Lemire Tostevin writes about women writing in a Conetmporary Verse review (Fall 1985): "the role of passive victim, barely audible in her female passivity is the unfulfilled wish to be loved by the father . . . . passivity is the wish to be loved by the father figure, and acitivity is the wish to love the mother . . . . " I note this in the margin of my journal, offer this as comment in the margins of a student's journal: "Your journal shifts from well-made stories to a very fluid and unfixed 'maternal' text, in both subject matter and in form. How do I find a way to read the writing-subject-I-Rosa more flexibly, fluidly, freely." Another student avoids the ambivalence and fear of symbiotic merging sometimes informing mother/daghter relationships and calls her journal a "grandmother, ... unconditional and always caring . . . a faithful and constant friend." There are other family portraits: "There was weather in my father's mind . . . . waves, not walls, of silence."

October 1985
Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Montreal

The room is filled with women talking about their journals, for many a fugitive writing, a long-time secret refuge or textual companion. Vancouver feminist poet Daphne Marlatt, herself the author of books which explore the journal and epistolary forms, leads the workshop introducing us to the genre. I take these notes:

In medieval Europe, witches kept diaries as books. Their lives depended on the secrecy of their writing. The journal shifts between fact and fancy: ships' logs, explorers' writings, newspaper chronology recording the "fact" of wind, weather and historical event. The Japanese provided some of the earliest texts--forms of "personal expression with flights of fancy." Eighteenth-cenury journal writer Sameul Pepys juxtaposes social historical detail and gossip. Puritan journals provide an account of one's conscience. The dream journals of Carl Jung include illustrations as well as free association and verbal play. Anais Nin writes her room full of journals in the light of Otto Rank's account of neurosis as "blocked creativity." (Here I find a scribbled note to myself about how my own fiction writing begins to unwind during several intensive years in psychoanalysis.)
Journals, not recognized as writing to be studied, provide a free space, outside genre. They record the sometimes subversive inner lives of the women behind the great men. "The stuff literature isn't made of," journals chart the "trivial" and the "mundane."

October 7, 1988

The group of twenty women exploring "Women's Literary Tradition" are studying Susan Glaspell's "A Jury of Her Peers." We think about how the accumulation and valorization of trivial detail makes us read the dailiness of the female characters as source of insight and wisdom. Today our discussion of journal writing concerns our resistance to writing. One student finds her writing too rigidly attending to the literary texts we study. Another worries that her journal is "boring." Should she rewrite it, edit for effect? Another worries that her journal is too loose, too personal.

December 1987

I am marking my student's journals in English 366, a survey of the short story. Throughout the course, we work to open up the short story and uncover links to other writings. Some journals include bold revelations. One woman writes an entry on Kafka's "The Metamorphosis": "Yes! That's it. This exact, same thing happened to my ex-husband! One day he just turned into an insect." Others write with trepidation: "I am making my first journal entry with a slight uncertainity about the direction I will take in this project." Some comment on the relation of their writing to their participation in class. "I often feel intimidated when sharing my opinions with others for fear that they may be wrong," writes one student, while another notes that her journal "helped to clarify and organize my thoughts and feelings about the short story. This in turn gave me the confidence to contribute to the class discussion." The analysis of reading as an activity was central to the project and one student wrote how "I had to teach myself to become a more productive reader." Another described the journal as performing an "almost reciprocal process of reading

and writing." Many students wrote of the relationship of their journal to their own experience, with sometimes poignant or wry testimonies of their youth: "I did not elaborate on the eroticism of the story because I felt my knowledge in this area was limited. This is one thing I plan to understand in the future."

March 1986

Reading Virginia Woolf's <u>A Room of One's Own</u>, we discuss the material conditions of the journal. One young lesbian woman hides her journal in her family home behind her rarely used squash racquet. Another writes in the midst of a room full of crying children. The husband of one of the journal writers becomes jealous. She locks herself in the bathroom scribbling her entries under water.

On reading and writing: "I restrain myself. I'm hanging on tight from being dragged into Elizabeth Smart's flood of emotion." In the Harlequin romance, the reader "loses herself." In this journal, the reader has her revenge, speaks up and addresses her contradictions. The journal is a "counterpoint" to the texts on the course. It provides an intertext through which the course can be read at a distance. Writing is "de-romanticized." It is "work" and "improves with my practice and with my growing confidence."

November 1988

"In writing journals, our forgetting accumulates. What is lost to memory?" Critic Michael Mundhenk notes how "Producing public autobiographical narratives can be an act of resistance against mass culture . . . (and) a struggle against the loss of memory." For women this memory loss is related to a dual silencing, public and private. Women's marginalization through history in the public sphere constructs her as silent within, in Himani Bannerjee's words, "the culture of the deaf." This silence parallels an interior silencing, what Adrienne Rich calls "the amnesia of the unconscious." Louky Bersianik reminds us that MEMOIRE, memory, is a "portmanteau word: sometimes MOTHER (mine) and sometimes ME, a condensed word." As an introduction to the student's journal project we link up some of these quotations and read Daphne Marlatt's journal poems in <u>What Matters</u> (1980). In her journal workshop, Marlatt had described this work as "an enactment of journal writing in terms of a narrative[, . . .] rooted in the private dimensions of living." Her poems articulate a spatial organizaiton of rings within rings to encompass the process of splitting, of self becoming other during pregnancy and the birth of her child. She reflects on her experience as a mother and her identity as a writer:

> [I] realized what pushed me to writing was the intuition of the other: inspiration I've since called it, interweaving of my life and a life outside me, as if I could see myself as an object within a more total relationship.

The journal provides a space for this splitting: the one who writes and the one who watches, the reading/writing I's. Interwoven, the female self "e/merges," in Judith Kegan Gardiner's words, through a tension between autonomy and symbiosis, through a linking of inner with outer worlds, the public and private.

The student journals write the self "in process." *I am* "produced in writing." One student writes apologetically of her inner censoring, locating her self as absence: "whatever I learned, I didn't write down . . . . In my journal analysis, I look for what I omitted."

September 1988

As part of the syllabus for English 395 "Women's Literary Tradition," I revise the journal assignment. Daphne Read, a fellow graduate of York University, developed the first formulation of this project when we co-directed a third-year course cross-listed between Women's Studies and Canadian Studies at New College, University of Toronto. What follows is an extension of her insightful work:

English 395: Journal Project

There are two parts to this assignment. The journal and journal analysis must be submitted at the same time.

The Journal: This assignment is designed as an aid to intellectual study and self-exploration. A regular discipline of writing in the journal form will help you to understand your own reading and critical practices. It will also give a writing space outside the traditional essay form to structure your ideas, intuitions and musings about women writing. Most of us write letters, though we may not write novels or poems. An early form of the novel is the epistolary form. The journal shares the intimacy of personal letters although it is addressed to the writer herself. Some of the first journals were accounts of new world exploration recorded "daily," a word associated with the etymology of "journal." Your thinking about your readings and women writing will be your "new world."

You will not be required to make daily entries; however, for the project to become a creative and productive part of your life, a regular writing practice is required. In order to accustom yourself to writing, begin by making short entries each week. The first entry could be a response to the text you are preparing for class. The second entry will give you an opportunity to respond to class discussion. As the term progresses you may wish to focus on particular issues raised in class. For example, in analyzing your initial reading of Virginia Woolf, are you able to identify emerging critical interests? What qualities of her writing do you applaud? What kind of interior dialogue does her work stimulate in you as reader? As you continue to make entries, make note of any patterns which emerge in your critical thinking. Consider the material conditions of your writing in relation to other women in different historical periods. As a "daily" or regular practice, the journal has a particular relation to the everyday. Think about the differences and similarities between your journal and "literature." Who is your reader? In some cases journals are thrown into a fire or hidden in a shoebox. Many will never be read by anyone other than the writer. What aspects of journal writing do you imagine are lost (or found) by creating a journal in the context of a classroom?

There is no set pattern to how you SHOULD write the journal. Some classroom journal writers find they continue to address themselves or their solitary reader, or they move into different genres or modes of writing: for example, poetry, fiction-theory, dialogues, or creative documentary. Your journal will not be read by anyone other than myself. If there are passages which you would prefer that I not read, edit them out before submitting your

journal to me. We will have periodic in-class discussion about the progress of our journals. At the first sign of writer's block, please raise the issue in class or come to see me.

The Journal Analysis:
    The five-page analysis of the journal will indicate what this journal has taught you about your readings and critical responses to the writing we have studied (fictive and theoretical.) It will be evaluated in terms of insight, originality, creativity and perseverence. _

November 4, 1988

Harvard feminist critic Alice Jardine gives a performance on women and modernism. I return to her book Gynesis, where she rethinks "experience." How do we sustain "what women have come to know through experience without reducing experience to what we know?" she asks. Is the journal a map of what we already know, or in Marlatt's words, "a fiction representing a self that is in the process of being imagined."
    I scribble parenthetical notes to myself about how my own creative writing began to unwind during several intensive years working with a feminist psychoanalyst--"my words break on your listening chair." How much am I constructed as silent listener in my student's journals?

October 1988

I visit Vancouver and talk with Daphne Marlatt about my teaching. She tells me how she has integrated the journal into her course through essay topics. I try out her suggestions with my class and assign Marlatt's "imaginary journal" topic first term, eagerly awaiting the results. This is how the topic is constructed:

Imaginary Journal--10 typed pages (maximum) due December 1.

In order to develop your creative critical interpretive skills you are asked to choose a character in one of the texts we are studying this term and produce a journal entry or a series of journal entries in her/his voice. You will be asked to read your imaginary entry/entries to the class (no more than ten minutes; therefore you must choose your most revelatory 5-6 pages). This assignment requires a close reading of the text and cultural context. Trust and extend your interpretive skills, share your insights with others in the class, and risk the exposure of your creative genius. Good luck!

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An address for our far-flung correspondent:
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DIAMONDS OF THE DUSTHEAP:
THE COURSE JOURNAL IN ENGLISH 210 /// Jo-Ann Wallace

> I have just reread my years diary & am much struck by the
> rapid haphazard gallop at which it swings along,
> sometimes indeed jerking almost intolerably over the
> cobbles. Still if it were not written rather faster than
> the fastest typewriting, if I stopped & took thought, it
> would never be written at all; & the advantage of the
> method is that it sweeps up accidentally several stray
> matters which I should exclude if I hesitated, but which
> are the diamonds of the dustheap.
>
> Virginia Woolf, 20 January 1919

My title might seem rather cynically to imply that the great
bulk of first-year student writing comprises a kind of Gatsby-esque
valley of ashes or a slough of despond, enlivened only by the
brilliance of the occasional and rare mind. However, my experience
with course journals has been more humbling and I have come to
regard the journals as the means by which my students teach me how
to teach them. Even the most seemingly banal journal writing --
that, for example, of a student with a propensity to dot her "i"s
with happy faces -- contains a flash of personality and
individuality usually missing from most of the other course
assignments. It is writing which lives, even if haphazardly or
accidentally, and it is writing which is engaged and engaging.

When I began, three years ago, to require that my first-year
English students keep course journals or diaries, it was from a not
very fully articulated suspicion that the course journal might
somehow prove to be a useful pedagogical tool for the kind of
teaching I wanted to do; that is, teaching which was in line with my
feminism, which broke down postures of authority and subservience,
and which opened up spaces for productive discourse and exchange.
Since then, several books and articles have given me a theoretical
grounding by helping me to clarify what I want from the journal
assignment. Three especially helpful texts have been Paulo Freire's
Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), Robert Scholes's Textual Power
(1985), and Constance Penley's "Teaching in Your Sleep: Feminism
and Psychoanalysis" (1986). Freire advocates a "dialogical" model
of teaching and suggests some of the ways in which even seemingly
privileged students are oppressed or disempowered by a consumerist
civilization which discourages critical thinking. He describes the
traditional student-teacher relationship as having a fundamentally
narrative character -- "This relationship involves a narrating
Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students)"
-- and he concludes that "Education is suffering from narration
sickness" (57). Scholes similarly points to a series of binary
oppositions which structure the "English apparatus" (which he also
calls the "arche-institution" or "professional unconscious" of
English studies). Such oppositions as literature/non-literature,
production (writing)/consumption (reading) are organized around a
hierarchy of texts and the student's relationship to those texts.

Thus literature is consumed by the student through acts of interpretation, and pseudo-literature is produced by the student in creative writing assignments or classes; non-literature is consumed by the student in his or her non-academic reading, and pseudo-non-literature is produced by the student in his or her composition assignments. A more insidious opposition, and one which is often assumed both by teacher and student, is that between the real world and the academy, evidenced in the assumption that university prepares the student for a "real life" which begins when schooling ends (9). Penley also works toward erasing some of the traditional boundaries between private and public discourses. She describes the demands of teaching a women's studies course on feminism and psychoanalysis, but the questions she addresses are relevant to any pedagogy which seeks to undermine the role of the teacher as unquestioned and unquestionable authority. Penley briefly analyzes the ways in which knowledge is produced through the "shifting and interchangeable positions" of student and teacher. Finally she asks "can the feminist classroom afford to lose sight of the extreme power of the transferential relation, of the narcissism underlying the demands of both students and teachers, or the basically eroticized nature of learning (the constant appeal for recognition?)" (138).

Oppression, the institutional apparatus, and psychoanalysis may seem to be topics remote from the classroom experience of most Canadian university students. However, breaking down the kinds of oppositions described by these theorists is especially important in a first-year course like English 210 since many students bring into the classroom a kind of sad despair over their troubled relationship to literature and writing. English 210, the first-year English course for non-majoring students at the University of Alberta, is probably not unlike many such courses at other universities and colleges throughout the continent. The title of the course is Introduction to Literary Forms; the course content consists of one-third compositon instruction and two-thirds literature instruction; and each section of the course draws 35 to 45 students of widely varying backgrounds and abilities. What most of these students share is a conviction that reading literature is an activity of decoding -- that is, translating and summarizing in a one-sentence "theme" -- while writing is an activity of encoding, of following a formula. Many of them are frustrated by what they know are poor writing skills while others are bemused by a perceived lack of connection between Literature, Writing, and Life. Some are terrified by the anticipated challenges of the university curriculum. In short, the English 210 classroom is, at least initially, often a site of profound alienation. The course journal can work to expose and explore that alienation and its sources.

At the beginning of the year, I advise students that they will be required to keep a course journal and, as their final essay assignment, to write a 750 word analysis of it. Students are given the following instructions:

Journal Guidelines: The journals should be a record of your response to the texts you are reading and the discussions in which you are participating. You should write in your journal as often as you can outside of class (for example, immediately after a reading session) and you will frequently be given a few minutes at the end of class in which to write. The journal should serve at least two functions: if you write in it frequently and consistently, the fluency of your writing should improve and you should be starting to discover your own style and voice; and the journal should serve as a record of your intellectual insights and growth.

Final essay assignment: Write a 750 word analysis of your course journal and of the journal keeping experience. This may include such considerations as whether keeping a journal helped you to come to terms with some of the ideas and texts under discussion, the ways in which your journal keeping style evolved and developed, and whether -- looking back over the journal -- you can discern patterns of thought or recurring interests.

I gather and read the journals at least twice a term and, while I do not correct grammar or syntax, I do comment on the content of the journal. The journal itself is ungraded but I assign a grade to the journal analysis. In my instructions, which are intended to convey an expectation that students will develop in intellectually interesting ways, I try to foster in them a sense of collegiality, a sense that they are working together with me, with the other students in the classroom, and with the authors they are reading in producing readings. Many students take advantage of the journal to try their hands at imaginative writing of their own. For others, the sense of writing for a very particular audience -- sometimes me, sometimes their own future reading selves -- helps them to more effectively ground their writing.

However, there are also benefits and rewards which are unannounced and often unexpected. The journal gives very shy or reserved students a non-threatening way of connecting with me; some ask questions in their journals and I am able to give them a written response; some later gather the courage to participate in class discussions. Deeply troubled students will often use the journal, and often unconsciously, as a cri de coeur; these students can be directed to counselling. (This is an aspect of the course journal with which I feel ill-equipped to deal.) But for me the most significant benefit of the course journal is the insight it allows me into my students. It gives me a sense of the problems and questions they are honestly struggling with, a sense of the enormity of their lives inside and outside the classroom, and the opportunity to meet them, at least initially, on their terms and to engage with them in more meaningful and productive ways.

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Inkshed VI

Call for Proposals   Power, Politics and Pedagogy

15-17 May, 1989
Vancouver, BC

During Inkshed V discussions grew about how relationships of power and empowerment shape and are shaped by the development of reading and writing abilities. Inkshed VI will explore this question on all levels from student-teacher relationships in individual classrooms to the politics of curriculum development, from the power implications of particular pedagogies and curricula to broad issues of ideology. We will also, as always, explore innovative pedagogies and research about reading and writing Inkshedders are now doing.

We will welcome presentations that involve participants actively and constructively, texts-in-process as well as publishable papers. We will welcome talks that present contexts for researching the interrelationships of power, politics and pedagogy; what are the crucial problems, questions, issues? what should researchers be looking for, and looking at? where and how should they be looking?

We seek presentations of varying length and format, from 10-minute informal reports on current research and interesting pedagogy, to 20-minute papers or formal talks, to 45-minute workshops or interactive demonstrations. Beyond the 10-minute reports on current research and pedagogy, all proposals should have some explicit relation to the 1989 theme.

Proposals should include name, address, phone numbers; title of proposed session, and a brief description or abstract (at least 200 words), very brief description of method and statement of aim or purpose.

Deadline: 2 December 1988
Send Proposals to: Rick Coe, Anne Hungerford, Susan Stevenson
                            English Department
                            Simon Fraser University
                            Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6

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MY IMPRESSIONS OF MY FIRST INKSHED   /// Wayne Lucey

I begin by staring at the shadow of my pencil as it follows my appendage across the short page (my daybook is 4½ inches by 6½ inches.) My students are reading, some are writing too. It's the ten minute freedom of form meeting before the official class begins. I am working through a response to Kay's request for a reaction to my first Inkshed. In my several first starts there are many voices clamouring to get out, no teletype. I have meandered through a few different forms. (The audience is shaping this so much I feel I'm losing control.) The thought of how my students would realize this writing task, not just the nine enriched grade 11 students who sit with me, but the other classes I have too starts to erupt inside me.

My graduating grade 12 generals I suspect would start out with ...

"My first impressions of the conference I just was at are interesting."

Perhaps, the students in front of me might begin with ...

"Conferences have always given me two things: good thought and plastic food."

So I wonder about my lead, I read it again. It adheres to some form, I think, well, I'm playing. Well, certainly the food wasn't plastic. But Aaron, one of my nine (as I read what little I have written so far) claims I have plagiarized his idea, it's our cafeteria at school that serves plastic food.

My writing class, a group of grade 13s, would want to know several things. They would want a due date and they have quickly grown sensitive to what will be evaluated. What values of mine will assess their effort ...

"English teachers seem to pride themselves on talking about things no one else would find interesting."

I'm on line 47 of Volkswriter and I'm trying to avoid staring at my cursor, as it blinks in brown on a background of blue, bordered by black. The voice is fading and the black border is sneaking in closer and closer. I had better get back to staring at my pencil as it glides across my daybook. Perhaps then I can get back to writing a reaction to my first INKSHED.

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SOME COMMENTS ON THE HUNT/VIPOND WAY OF TEACHING   /// Lynn Holmes

Russell Hunt and Doug Vipond gave a one-day workshop at Seneca College, North York, May 19, 1988, billed as "Writing Across the Curriculum" but perhaps more accurately as "Writing to Learn" approach. Over 100 people attended, mostly teachers of subjects other than English. At the end of the initial presentation 74 of these wrote inksheds; at 4 pm there were about 60 people left in the room. To those of us dedicated to the cause of Writing Across the Curriculum, this was a very cheering success, yet it seems to me we're not quite ready for the kind of "total involvement" classroom Doug and Russ were describing; there are fundamental disagreements about what, as teachers, we're doing.

Of the two presenters, Doug was the more apprehensive of criticism directed at the Institution (that is, at education, collectively, as a social structure). But after they had seen some of our inksheds, Russ and Doug must have picked up some of our agenda. The unedited inkshed scripts have a few complaints and excuses, blaming our supervisors for the conventional ways we do things, but more noticeable was a general undertone of resentment at constraints. In some cases it was truculent (we have to turn out reliable "products"), in other cases helpless whining (we have to do what Business and Industry tell us), and there was even some indignation at not being told by our supervisors that there were better things we should be doing, and why hadn't someone explained all this before?

Clearly, we see our obligations as more to our employers than to our students, or to a world of knowledge (education) itself. More disturbing was the undertone of hostility toward leaders in education, and developments in philosophy and practice over the past few decades. This is regarded as the cause of the awful job the schools have been doing, and easily becomes contempt for and derision of any innovators. (But there was also a great deal of cautious approval, envy, and amazement. But all too little delight.)

Most inkshed papers, as would be expected, showed some misunderstanding of what Russ (in particular) was saying. His course design was confused with some familiar abominations: independent learning, student-centred classrooms, do-your-own-thing, ungraded free-writing, peer-marking as a substitute for corrected papers handed back, an emphasis on student creativity, grades based on attendance rather than on the quality of assignments, teachers goofing off and letting the kids set the curriculum. For many, what Hunt and Vipond were presenting was just a new and better way of accomplishing the same old things (a more efficient way of burning witches). There was a chorus of: I'll adopt some of these ideas, cautiously and gradually. There was no evidence of the radical element of language-ownership involved in the Hunt/Vipond curriculum (except for one paper with a reference to Kenneth Burke -- and even that paper ended with a caution about some of the unintended effects).

Several conclusions: as a group, we feel outside of and intimidated by the professional educators, the theorists of classroom management and curriculum design. We want to be left alone to do things our own way, according to models we've internalized to the point where we're not quite conscious of them any more.

We're individualists, and we want our students to develop as individuals.

At its extreme, this seems to be an assumption that an education is an almost autistic, internalized process of growth that separates the student from a culture hostile to such growth. (Even when we assign projects to a group of students, our concern is to evaluate the individual contributions.) Rather than establishing a community (communion) of scholars, we perceive our task as one of training the individual.

We defend this vigorously, and sometimes in a quite convincing way, by seeing our institution (not just Seneca...) as a training institution rather than a place for educating students. (They had their chance; now we get down to the real work). We see our college as an adjunct to institutions in our culture other than education as an institution (or as Russ would think of it, more narrowly, of "English as an Institution").

Russ and Doug say they've got a method to ensure students join a community (are brought into a communion); at its best, Seneca joins students into a quite different kind of (workplace) communion, but more often sends them out into a world of competing, autonomous individuals. We may be dealing with two very different models here, and many of us fear that one model cancels out the other. (What if one example of Russell's "total collaboration class" poisons all the other, conventional classes in the college? Or, from my perspective, what if their other, conventional classes have conditioned my students not to collaborate, not to share or contribute, but to insist on performing only for me?)

There are some very hard choices to be made here, and we must not ignore the strength of the institutional models being challenged (or the insecurity we incite in others when we appear to challenge them.) Nor should we ignore some of the false alternatives: laissez faire, empiricist, pluralist, liberal compromises that would take the sting out of what Russell proposes. Look at some of his choices:

First choice: no textbook.

Second choice: no lectures. (Like a central text, a lecture manages the students' learning. You can't blame the students for falling under the delusion that the contents of the textbook define the course, or the series of lectures "covers the material". But you wouldn't want to cover the material, even if you could; in any case, this implies that the text or teacher owns the material.)

Third choice: no assignments, formal papers, or final exams. Evaluation is tied to a product, and that product is not absolutely indeterminate at the beginning of the semester (since the first thing is to define what it is the class should have as its objective: to produce a book telling all about something or how to do something.) What the evaluation shows is the contribution of each student to a joint achievement; notice that this is not a measure of what each individual knows. Not only is the teacher de-centred from the group; the subject, in the sense of objective knowledge, is also de-centred from the group engaged in the process of knowing.

I don't want to stress the importance of these choices; they may be merely facilitators to something, rather than essential ingredients in a radical shift in pedagogy. (If I were to deconstruct Russell's course outline I suspect I'd find several unconnected crusades. One would be against the textbook

publishers; another against a lot of tendentious criticism we have inherited from the generation before last; another would be against the humanist/capitalist/liberal theory of education. But I suspect none of this counts for much, and would not clash with the convictions of Russ's fellow teachers at St. Thomas's. To someone outside the universities, however, such choices could do much to alienate a teacher from his/her discourse community.) One central feature in the new pedagogy is <u>withdrawal</u>: the teacher, the texts, the whole apparatus of methods and sequences and linear programming of student tasks gets replaced by something else. Russell thinks of this as social discourse, which doesn't so much <u>reconstruct</u> the knowledge (doesn't reinvent the wheel) as recreates it within the group, modifies it to fit into the group's (limited) consciousness as part of a social, on-going community. It's the <u>people</u> who know, not the knowledge that gets known; education becomes the enhancement of people rather than the perpetuation (reification) of accomplishments (products or works of art or skills; procedures, know-how, theories...)

That's as it should be. And then we get back to the role of teachers, in this new scheme. And what <u>about</u> evaluation? We find Russell's answers to these questions unsatisfactory because he's telling us: Look, these are improper questions.

Our own insecurities have made us egocentric: if we worried less about being effective as teachers, we might be more perceptive about what students are really doing, and need to be doing. If we'd stop thinking of students as products, and stop using zero-defect product control analogies, who knows <u>what</u> we'd notice about them?

How my own teaching differs from Russell Hunt's

-- his students work in teams, outside of class; mine work alone, in class

-- my students all read the same text, but end up with different readings and different written responses to it; Russell's students choose different texts, comprising a "field"; their writings and readings make up part of a shared, joint account

-- I direct (and control) the reading, and to a lesser extent, the writing; I provide heuristic approaches (at least) and do some retrospective instruction to correct egregious misreading. Russell leaves it up to the students to learn whatever they can, as best they can; the test is whether they can convince their peers

-- I indoctrinate and instruct, while Russell educates. This is not (just) because I'm operating at a different academic level than Russ is, but because of the different social contexts into which our institutions have been placed. Though my efforts to change that context may not be futile, the noticeable impact can only be of marginal significance.

Would I want to teach the way Russell does? Probably not, because I <u>am</u> more concerned with individual rather than social knowledge. Sharing has its limits. And deep down I believe that knowledge is individual, personal, more than it is communal and collective. More important, I believe my students live in a world that values only the individualistic, not the communal. To try to change them would be doing them no service.

The difference is between an educational institution that serves a community, and an institution that serves something else: the world of the educated. Many of us would consider the latter as, to a great extent, self-serving: the perpetuation and enhancement of an elite group within the community at large. We're reduced to a utilitarian, pragmatic role within a secular, commercial, individualist society, in which _communal_ values have a very low priority.

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EDITORIAL INKSHEDDING /// Kay Stewart

Many thanks to all the contributors to this issue. The response to Feminist Perspectives on Reading and Writing was so great that I have decided to publish this as a special double issue. (Raising subscription prices won't help much if the issue size doubles.) That means there will be no _Inkshed_ in January. The next issue, usually scheduled to appear at the beginning of March, will be out mid-February.

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I would like to link the February issue to the Canadian Caucus session at CCCC in March by inviting all subscribers to submit a position paper, no longer than two single-spaced pages, on what they see as the major issue(s) in the study and teaching of reading and writing in Canada. Deadline: February 1. These position papers will be published in February and become the basis for discussion at the Canadian Caucus meeting. You do not have to attend CCCC to submit a position paper, but if you are there, be prepared to present a brief summary of your views.

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Welcome to Wayne Lucey of Assumption Catholic High School, Burlington, Ontario, as a contributing editor. Wayne joins Coralie Bryant in representing Inkshedders in secondary schools. I would very much like to add other contributing editors from outside the universities. If you are willing to promote _Inkshed_ among your colleagues, to contribute to the newsletter once a year or so (and to feel guilty if you don't), and to give advice and moral support as required, please let me know.

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Is this your last issue of _Inkshed_? As you will see if you read the subscription form on the back cover, it will be if you haven't renewed by February 1. If your mailing label has the date "88-89" in the lower right-hand corner, you are paid up through May. If it says "87-88" . . . time to renew. If you've already thrown away the envelope, send money just to be sure.

Inkshed Subscription Form

Subscriptions to **Inkshed**, newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Advanced Study of Writing and Reading, will increase this year from $5 to $7 for five issues, to cover increases in postage and printing costs and allow more pages per issue. If your address label does not say "88-89" in the lower right-hand corner, your subscription is about to expire. To ensure you receive the next issue, send your renewal in by February 1, 1989.

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