Composition Studies emerged as a scholarly research discipline during the 1970s as (a) empirical methods became available to investigate the problem of meaning in discourse and, concomitantly, (b) the work of an international writing research community became institutionalized in the form of new journals and graduate programs. Distinguishing their efforts from prior histories of the field, the authors argue that the development of composition studies needs to be understood as part of a broader intellectual history affecting linguistics and literary studies, as well as composition. Reviewing basic tenets of formalism, structuralism (including both constructivism and social constructionism), and dialogism as root epistemologies organizing the recent histories of these disciplines, the authors conclude with a discussion of the dominant and often parallel themes that have characterized evolving conceptions of language, text, and meaning in composition, literature, and linguistics since the 1950s.

Where Did Composition Studies Come From?

An Intellectual History

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Many have argued that the serious, scholarly investigation of writing came about as a university-level response to a widely perceived literacy crisis during the 1970s brought on by open-admissions pro-

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grams such as that of the City University of New York at that time (Bizzell, 1986) and widely publicized in a *Newsweek* cover story on "Why Johnny Can't Write" (Witte & Faigley, 1983). For example, Bizzell (1986) has suggested that "it was largely in response to the perceived new needs of students—and teachers—that composition studies began to emerge in the 1960s as an area of specialization within English studies" (p. 51). Many teachers began to recognize a "powerful sense of dissonance between their responsibility for teaching writing and the inadequacy of their understanding and training for doing so" (Lauer, 1984, p. 21). As a consequence, they began to raise important questions about the nature of the writing process, the interactions among reader, writer, and text, in the process raising many seminal issues about the nature of written discourse. Moreover, teachers began to puzzle over the extent to which writing could be taught as an art. Such quandaries took composition scholars to many diverse fields and sources, including classical rhetoric, tagmemic and transformational linguistics, sociolinguistics, semiotics, problem solving, cognitive psychology, and critical theory. Connors (1985) observed that the field had begun to confront difficult questions, such as how to balance the teaching of formal and rhetorical considerations of writing, showing "that composition studies are [sic] finally coming to constitute a genuine discipline and no longer a mere purblind drifting on the current of unexamined tradition" (p. 71).

To comprehend the many approaches to writing that have sprung up over the past two decades, several studies have sought to characterize composition studies in terms of various factions—especially "good" versus "bad" theories—and methodological groups—again good versus bad methods (cf. Berkenkotter, 1991). Bizzell (1982a), for example, distinguishes between "inner directed" and "outer directed" theories of composing as a way to answer the question of what we need to know about writing.[1] Arguing that the field had yet to sufficiently explore its theoretical underpinnings, Faigley (1985) identifies three theoretical perspectives—the textual, the individual, and the social—that have influenced the ways researchers have examined writing and that can help describe the distinguishing features of writing across settings.[2]

Knoblauch (1988) contrasts four conflicting rhetorical traditions that offer different explanations of the relationship between language, knowledge, and discourse: (a) ontological (e.g., Aristotle), (b) objectivist (e.g., Locke), (c) expressionist (Kant and European romanticism), and (d) sociological or dialogical (e.g., Marx). An *ontological*

perspective focuses on formal properties of language, viewing language as the "dress of thought," and assumes that language is critical to the transmission of knowledge but not in the making of knowledge. An *objectivist framework* challenges this view of language and language use, emphasizing the role of language in constituting reality rather than merely supporting it; such a view locates knowledge in human intellectual activity, so that knowledge depends on discourse or language use. An *expressionist perspective* situates knowledge in human consciousness (imagination). Finally, a *dialogical* or *sociological* view (e.g., Bakhtin) regards language as a social practice rooted in material and historical processes (p. 134).[3]

Claiming that teaching writing is always ideological,[4] Berlin (1982) identifies four dominant schools of thought: (a) the Neo-Kristotelians or classicists, (b) the positivists or current-traditionalists, (c) the Neoplatonists or expressionists, and (d) the new rhetoricians. Each theoretical perspective forms a certain "epistemic complex" of writer, reality, audience, and language that informs our understanding of invention, arrangement, and style in composing. Each also constitutes a unique stance toward problems of knowledge and meaning. This was precisely Young's (1982) argument in discussing what he called the "new rhetoric" or "new classicism" (see also Young, 1978). For Young, the development of a new rhetoric was motivated by an attempt to foster students' thinking and creative discovery through composing. He argued that "the recent work of rhetoricians has been devoted to finding ways of teaching the process of discovery and of making it a part of a rhetoric that is not only new but practical" (Young, 1982, p. 132).

At the same time, Young pointed out that the response to the inadequacies of current traditional rhetoric was not so homogeneous. D'Angelo's (1975) "new romanticism," for example, "maintains that the composing process is, or should be, relatively free of deliberate control, that intellect is no better guide to understanding reality than nonlogical processes are, and that the act of composing is a kind of mysterious growth fed by what Henry James called 'the deep well of unconscious cerebration' " (cited in Young, 1982, p. 132). By contrast, the new classicism held that certain aspects of the creative process can be taught. This new rhetoric fused classical rhetoric with cognitive and linguistic theories of creativity and problem solving[5] and drew insights from tagmemic linguistics.[6] Berlin (1988) also explores the ideology in three related rhetorics—cognitive, expressionist, and social-epistemic—explicating the underlying premises of each posi-

tion. He suggests that cognitive rhetoric (e.g., Bruner, Emig, Flower, and Hayes) claims to be scientific in its investigation of the writing process.[7] Its starting point is the individual, and what is most important is what can be studied rationally (e.g., "the mind is regarded as a set of structures" [p. 482]). On this point, cognitive rhetoric may be linked to current traditional rhetoric. For expressionistic rhetoric (e.g., Elbow, Murray, McCrorie, Coles, Gibson), the starting point for analysis is also the individual,[8] and conceptions of power are always linked to the individual.[9] Finally, social-epistemic rhetoric (e.g., Burke; Young, Becker, and Pike; Lauer; Berthoff; Faigley; Bartholomae) embraces the notion that "rhetoric is a political act involving a dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as the agency of mediation" (Berlin, 1988, p. 488).[10]

These studies usefully contrast various conceptions of writing, chronicling especially efforts to professionalize composition instruction. Nonetheless, these studies neglect the emergence of scholarly thinking and empirical research about writing qua writing, the emergence of a writing research community, and the question of why composition studies started when they did. Certainly the start of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (the 4Cs) in 1949 marks an important event in this history, as both Berlin (1988) and North (1987) note, although North (1987) points to a number of papers presented at the 1963 4Cs Convention as marking the emergence of composition as an academic field of inquiry (see also Connors, Ede, & Lunsford, 1984).[11] The publication of Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's (1963) *Research on Written Composition* also serves as an important bench mark. Miller (1991) argues that departments of English permitted the emergence of composition studies to protect elite graduate programs in literature during a time when policies such as open admissions increased the proportion of nontraditional students in universities. Faigley (1992) discusses the emergence of composition studies in terms of postmodernism as "a new structure of sensibility" (p. 13), viewing the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963 as a watershed event. We submit, however, that although these events and many others were necessary, they were, in and of themselves, insufficient to establish composition studies as a scholarly discipline, which did not occur until the 1970s.

We focus on the 1970s for several reasons. Although many important conceptualizations of writing predate the 1970s (notably Moffett, 1968b)[12] and although a number of empirical methodologies had been brought to bear on the effectiveness of writing instruction before 1970

(most notably Braddock et al., 1963), it was not until the 1970s, with research on the composing process, especially by Flower and Hayes (1977), that coherent research programs emerged marrying empirical methods to theoretical conceptions. Not until the 1970s, moreover, did a writing research community emerge and, by 1980, become institutionalized. With renewed interest in rhetorical studies, for example, new Ph.D. programs were formed in rhetoric and composition at Carnegie Mellon, Purdue, and the University of Illinois at Chicago (all in 1980)—the majority having come about in the 1980s[13] (see Chapman & Tate, 1987; Lauer, 1984). During this period, new refereed journals were launched (e.g., *Journal of Advanced Composition* [1984], *Rhetoric Review* [1981], and *Written Communication* [1983]); publishers in the social sciences, including Ablex,[14] Academic Press,[15] Lawrence Erlbaum,[16] and Sage[17] first issued volumes of writing research; and the National Institute of Education founded a program of writing research. An American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group (SIG) in writing research was formed in 1983. It is these developments, related to the emergence of a compostion research community, that marked the evolution of composition studies. In this time, the study of compostion emerged from the strictly pedagogical domain of composition instruction to become a vital area of research on discourse and language processes, akin to psychologists' studies of reading, psycholinguists' investigations of speaking and language development, and anthropologists' and sociolinguists' research on speech communities. Basic issues concern the nature and structure of composing processes, the context and course of writing development, the indirect effect of readers on writing, and, most important, the problem of meaning in discourse.

Investigating the historical dimensions of this new field raises questions such as the following: If conceptions of writing have evolved from text to individual/cognitive to social, why did they evolve in this particular order? Faigley and Bizzell's histories, which focus on dominant trends, treat each of these phases discretely and atomistically. They fail to explain why these orientations have occurred in the order that they did. Nor do they link the debates, issues, and questions motivating each school of thought with those of either their predecessors or their successors. Consequently, these earlier histories neglect to point out important connections between evolving trends, that is, how one builds on another, at once responding to and conditioning the positions of those that come both before and after. They fail, moreover, to situate the evolution of these debates in an ongoing,

general intellectual context. Why, for example, did composition studies emerge during the early 1970s and not earlier? Why did North American scholars in writing, reading, and literature all begin to focus on cognitive processes at about this time as an important avenue of inquiry in their fields? How did writing become the focus of sophisticated social science methodologies? Why during the subsequent decade did each of these fields undertake to reorient scholarship according to a more social cast? And why did scholarship in linguistics play a seminal role in each of these transformations and evolutions? Addressing such questions requires not just a history but rather an intellectual history of composition studies, an account relating the evolution of various conceptions of writing to those events and ideas affecting their development.[18]

The story of composition studies has a much broader and more penetrating scope than has heretofore been examined. Contrasting various orientations of writing and writing instruction, these intramural and sometimes parochial typologies and histories have too exclusively limited their focus to work concerning only composition, especially in terms of instruction. A richer drama concerns what happened when scholars began to entertain conceptions of writing apart from instruction. As Phelps (1984) points out, composition studies have since 1970 come to differ from most other academic disciplines precisely because of a disjunction between the central problems motivating the field and the content of writing instruction. Composition studies thus emerged as a discipline as its focus began to transcend traditional problems of effective pedagogy. During the 1970s, in addition to writing teachers wondering how to teach writing better, researchers began to investigate what sort of phenomenon they were dealing with. More than anything, the field evolved in its efforts to understand the central problem of meaning in discourse. This inquiry has involved issues of language, text, and semiotics, which transcend the writing research and instruction community. Composition studies have consequently drawn increasingly from rhetoric, linguistics, cognitive science, sociology, and thought about language in general—indeed, these areas of inquiry have fundamentally altered compositionists' thinking about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between language and meaning. Although composition theory has largely neglected the role of language in writing, as Faigley (1989) notes, recent work in linguistics, discourse studies, and literary criticism—especially research inspired by Halliday and Bakhtin—has helped reinvigorate issues of meaning in discourse.

Because of all these developments, the advent of composition studies needs to be understood less as a local weather disturbance in departments of English and more as part of a fundamental climate change involving the evolution of general epistemologies animating thought about discourse. We seek to reassess conceptions of language as they have historically affected our understanding of writing, text, and meaning. On the one hand, we try to capture the drama and rhetoric whereby one school of thought has responded to another. On the other hand, we try to stress the coherence of thought and perspective that has frequently transcended writing programs and departments of English, extending not only to other academic departments but also to the general intellectual climate.

This intellectual history is evidenced by the fact that recent developments in composition studies as well as both critical and linguistic theories have paralleled each other in fundamental and revealing ways. The 1950s were largely a period of formalism in each discipline. In literature studies, understanding a text meant explicating how each of its parts worked in the service of all the others. Linguists of the time were primarily engaged in the business of building extensive taxonomies of the discrete forms (e.g., phonemes, morphemes, lexemes) that were said to combine in larger and larger units to constitute language. In composition, learning to write meant learning to avoid text errors, and the essay was commonly defined in terms of how many paragraphs it had (it was supposed to have five). This age of text was largely succeeded in the disciplines by a 1970s celebration of cognitive theories as formalism gave way to structuralist orientations that examined reader response in literature, abstract underlying structures in linguistics, and composing processes in composition. In the 1980s, these cognitive studies were supplemented by social analyses that, in each of the disciplines, probed the character of interpretive and discourse communities and, later, investigated the dialogical nature of written communication.

We recognize a basic irony in our use of such categories to characterize the evolving schools of thought that have constituted the field, despite our contention that much is to be lost when we begin to see these as historically isolated, fixed "entities," rather than as related tendencies. Yet as Knoblauch (1988) points out, the stipulation of "difference" among competing classes is the fundamental ground of dialectical inquiry. In other words, what might be regarded as "the trap of oppositional thinking" is also the very quality of dialectic that moves us toward enriched understandings and interpretive resolu-

tions. In this article we seek to trace the changing centers of gravity that have carried composition, linguistics, and literary studies across the last half century, not to define hard boundaries or set strict chronologies between the evolving intellectual positions. The irony is that it is only through an articulation of differences in formalist, structuralist, and dialogical approaches that we can begin to see important connections among them.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, departments of English became a fertile field for many innovations, including composition studies. Thus the recent inception of composition studies as a scholarly discipline—that is, research on writing, texts, and discourse—should be viewed as but one particular result of the consciousness raising that occurred as departments of English began to poke beyond the boundaries of texts themselves and confronted problems like the modality of text production (orality vs. literacy; written texts vs. oral utterances), the language processes of reading and writing, and the roles of authors, readers, and interpretive communities in the phenomenon of text meaning. Fully understanding the intellectual history of composition studies requires situating the field in this more general intellectual history.

1. 1940s-MIDDLE 1960s: FORMALISM IN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION

By the 1950s, the New Criticism articulated by Brooks and Warren (1938) in *Understanding Poetry* and by Ransom (1941) in *The New Criticism* had come to dominate thinking about literature and text at all levels of instruction in the United States. This school of criticism emphasized poetry qua poetry, that is, as neither paraphrase, autobiography, inspiration, nor as the poet's expression or, especially, an embodiment of beauty or any noble sentiment. Understanding poetry, the New Criticism held, required rigorous, "close" readings of texts with minimal reference to facts of the author's life and situation. Yet whereas the New Criticism conceptually characterized texts as formal, autonomous embodiments of meaning, pedagogically it functioned as a method of teaching reflective and careful reading.

During this formalist period, many analogous ideas informed composition as well as literature instruction. Dominated by the study of prescriptive grammar, usage, and rhetorical principles, writing

instruction focused on features of good ("model") texts, and much time was spent teaching students to avoid common, egregious text errors (Squire & Applebee, 1968). An emblematic innovation of the time was the *five-paragraph theme*, a pedagogical form of exposition (of unclear origin) consisting of an introductory paragraph, three points developed in a three-paragraph body, and a concluding paragraph. This unique school genre, which prescribed a three-point text structure regardless of writer purpose or argument, came to define the essay genre for a generation of American students. John Warriner (1950), author of the most popular elementary and high school rhetoric of the time, captured the tenor of 1950s writing instruction when he wrote:

> A good writer puts words together in correct, smooth sentences, according to the rules of standard usage. He puts sentences together to make paragraphs that are clear and effective, unified and well developed. Finally, he puts paragraphs together into larger forms of writing—essays, letters, stories, research papers. (from J. Warriner, *English Grammar and Composition. Complete Course*, 1950, chapter 11; cited in Emig, 1971, p. 21)

We do not mean to imply that formalism had no competition. The general semantics movement, for example, influenced communications courses in the 1940s, but as Berlin (1987) argues, these courses "were never a dominant force in either English or speech departments" (p. 104; see also Russell, 1990). As Berlin also points out, structural linguistics began to influence teachers of both composition and literature in the late 1950s (Berlin, 1987, pp. 111-114). Still, formalist principles, or current-traditional rhetoric, prevailed despite changing conceptions of language study. If textbooks reveal the standard practices of writing instruction, then Warriner's *English Grammar and Composition* serves as a primary example of the kind of instruction that was dominant at this time (see also Emig, 1971).

This conception of both literature and composition is perhaps best revealed in New Critical premises about text meaning. In teaching students to read and analyze texts critically, teachers and scholars assumed a univocality of text meaning: For any given text, readers sought a stable, singular, and universal core meaning—a public and objective truth—inscribed, as it were, in the text itself. Such an understanding could be revealed only through analysis, or "explication," of formal text elements, including images, figures of speech, rhythm, and rhyme, as well as "tensions" among the various elements. In this way, explicating a text was analogous to solving a math problem.

Student writers were taught to create unambiguous, explicit texts by manipulating text elements, including topic and clincher sentences, usage, and syntax. The purpose of the text was to fix the meaning in a stable, objective representation, or what Olson (1977) eventually popularized as "autonomous text." Strunk and White's (1959) quintessential *The Elements of Style* taught students to think of texts as efficient transmitters of meaning unencumbered by needless words, much as Lanham (1979) later instructed writers on how to compute a "lard factor" measuring the leanness of their prose. "Readability" was commonly treated as a function of long sentences and polysyllabic words (for review, see Klare, 1974-1975). English composition had come at this time to mean, as Connors (1985) notes, only one thing: "the single-minded enforcement of standards of mechanical correctness in writing" (p. 61).

Writing assessment during this same period above all standardized reader response and enforced a univocality of text meaning. Paul Diederich, the father of holistic essay evaluation for the College Entrance Examination Board, discovered that any student paper will receive any possible rating—from exemplary to inferior—if it is simply read and assessed by enough readers (Diederich, French, & Carlton, 1961). In a factor analysis of reader categorizations, Diederich identified five factors responsible for this variance: quality of ideas; usage and mechanics (sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling); organization and analysis; wording and phrasing; and "flavor" and personality. He interpreted this variability in reader response as a problem of reliability in writing assessment, and to solve it, he apparently weighted all of the factors equally—that is, ideas were to count no more than spelling, style no less than organization, and so forth. This proposal was in effect a psychometric fiat; no validity studies were undertaken to determine appropriate weights. In 1961, then, Diederich could plausibly argue—and in so doing shape an entire generation of writing assessment—that writing could be effectively, reliably assessed by reading but one sample on one topic in one genre per writer if—*mirabile dictu*—readers could only be made to agree. In short, he achieved interrater reliability by forcing readers to agree on the relative salience of various text features.

Our contention that the New Criticism was but one articulation of a more general disposition toward the formal study of language during the first half of this century is offered in view of developments in language studies outside the Anglo-American critical tradition. For example, although Russian formalism developed independently of the work of the early New Critics during the 1920s, parallels between the two traditions are striking. Like the New Critics, Jakobson, Shklovsky, and other Russian formalists were largely motivated by a dissatisfaction with the philological and impressionistic methods of 19th-century literary studies. Poetic or literary language, they believed, was purely a function of linguistic form. The formalists, like their counterparts in the United States and England, regarded texts as autonomous units of meaning (encoded propositions) with their own contextually independent internal structures.

At the same time that formalism was evolving in language and literary studies in Europe, Bloomfield and his followers were developing their own brand of formalist inquiry in the United States. This tradition of American descriptive linguistics pursued the aim of constructing a new empirical "science of language" that would catalog the complete inventory of formal elements and features of language. Like the autonomous structures of poetry that were the object of New Critical inquiry, elaborate autonomous phonological and morphological systems were the focus of the formal linguists' descriptions. Linguistic formalism also incorporated into its theory many of the influential behaviorist principles that dominated the intellectual climate of the day. Thus language learning was said to entail the conditioned response of language users to repeated and highly patterned verbal stimuli, much as, for the New Critics, learning to read a poem properly entailed practice in following highly disciplined and conventionally sanctioned interpretive procedures.

To sum up: Formalism assumed an objectivity of text elements, contending that all important issues about text and text meaning could be addressed through analysis of text elements and their interrelationships. Olson (1990), for example, claimed that "written texts have certain objective properties which are invariant across the intentions of the writer and the interpretations of the readers" (p. 119). Evidence concerning language processes such as writing, reading, and thinking was held to be unobjective, unreliable, and spurious. Such premises dominated not only composition and literature during the 1950s and early 1960s but can also be seen in the prevailing empiricist views among linguists during the first half of this century, who held that language could be adequately "read" only with reference to observable language behaviors themselves, and that any presumptions about mental processes underlying these behaviors would only muddle the picture. Formalist studies emphasized the following:

1. Language is composed of objective elements organized into fixed systems.
2. The meaning of texts is encoded in "autonomous" texts themselves and is explicit to the extent that writers spell things out.
3. Written texts are more explicit than oral utterances.
4. Texts are properly interpreted only when readers avoid inferences about the writer or the context in which the text was written.

2. LATE 1960s-EARLY 1980s: LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION THROUGH THE STRUCTURALIST LENS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

In the late 1960s, formalist conceptions of both literature and composition came under attack and began to wane, and scholars began to think of writing not in terms of texts or products but rather in terms of the cognitive processes of reading and writing. In composition studies, Braddock et al. (1963) documented the inadequacies of instruction that emphasized formal features of writing, and advised researchers and teachers alike to examine what is involved in the act of writing (p. 53). Specifically, they called for more research on (a) the role of students' prior knowledge and engagement in their performance, (b) socioeconomic background, (c) instructional context, and (d) the relationship between oral and written discourse—in short, the importance of direct observation of actual writing. The authors urged researchers and teachers to move beyond the narrow range of strategies taught in the schools to consider the role that certain rhetorical considerations play in composing, such as the situations and tasks that stimulate a desire to write well and the effect that having different readers can have on what students write.

At about the same time that NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) published this report, Corbett's (1965) *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* also appeared, motivating a number of writing teachers to reassess the value of teaching rhetorical invention as a means of guiding students' thinking. As educators such as Rohman and Wlecke (1964) pointed out, the study of texts independently of their rhetorical context could not solve the most important writing problems. After all, writing entails making choices and decisions about a given rhetorical problem, audience, and possible constraints that could influence the shape and direction of one's argument (see also Bitzer, 1968).

The 1966 Dartmouth Conference also challenged the adequacy of formalist principles of teaching writing. On that occasion, John Dixon, James Moffett, James Britton, and other reformers emphasized students' lived experience more than the transmission of information about a given subject or about writing. Moffett (1968a) wrote, "The stuff to be conceived and verbalized is primarily the raw stuff of life, not language matters themselves. Rendering experience into words is the real business of school, not linguistic analysis . . . or rhetorical analysis, which are proper for college" (p. 114). Dixon (1967) proposed that the English teacher's art "lies in taking a pupil where he is interested and in some sense sharing with him the search for new possibilities" (p. 86): ergo the title of Dixon's book, *Growth Through English*. Writing and literature were valued for their power to help students in such explorations, a potential made more realistic at this time by the advent and widespread availability of cheap paperbacks (see Fader & McNeil, 1968).

Moffett's essays, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (Moffett, 1968a), and his *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum: K-13* (Moffett, 1968b) did much at this time to promote the idea of writing as a cognitive process. Arguing that writers never just "write" but always write *about something to someone*, Moffett theorized that discourse is (a) reflective and relational (dealing with the writer's relation to topics at various levels of abstraction) and (b) rhetorical (dealing with the writer's relation to a reader). Writing development therefore entails, he claimed, learning to write (a) about increasingly more abstract topics (b) to an increasingly wider audience. Through such "abstractions" writers transform experience "into mind" (Moffett, 1968a, p. 18), and in building such representations of meaning (signifying external and conceptual realities), writers select information based on some relevance principle; they notice what they want to notice and have learned to notice. Consequently, their prior knowledge shapes their focus and helps make connective inferences: "What happens . . . is that features are not only selected but reorganized, and . . . integrated with previously abstracted information" (Moffett, 1968a, p. 22). In short, Moffett argued, language learning is a "cognitive matter," and the "sequence of psychological development should be the backbone of curriculum continuity . . ." (Moffett, 1968a, p. 14).

In his critique of traditional conceptions of writing and writing instruction, Britton (1970; Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975) also promoted a cognitive conception of writing. Drawing from cognitive theory (e.g., Harding, Kelly, and Piaget), linguistics (e.g.,

Hymes, Jakobson, and Sapir), and Dewey's ideas on progressive education (Russell, 1991), Britton viewed language not only as the predominant, "organized, systematic means of representing experience" (Britton, 1970, p. 21)[19] but also as the individual's chief way of operating on or revising the resulting representation. Britton saw *poetic language* as one of two essential ways writers (and speakers) verbally shape their experience, typically involving them as spectators or onlookers of experience. By contrast, he characterized writers' efforts to influence others (for example, through persuasion or exposition) as *transactional language*. Poetic and transactional language typically had their sources in *expressive language*, involving the closely held values and opinions of the writer. Because expressive language is close to the self—he called it "loaded commentary on the world"—it can foster exploration and discovery. Too often, Britton charged, school writing muted or silenced expressive language especially through "dummy-run" exercises that required student writers only to practice and master prescribed forms.

In these Dartmouth-era critiques of school writing, Moffett and Britton each anticipated (a) Kinneavy's (1971) theory of discourse emphasizing discourse purpose over text form, (b) Emig's (1971) critique of Warriner, as well as (c) Flower and Hayes's (1977, 1981) description of composing. Both critiques stressed (a) the role of task representation in school writing, (b) classroom discourse as context for school writing, and (c) the linguistic resources of the writer. Britton's study of students' writing led him to speculate that language learning involves the interaction of social conditions and the individual mind, suggesting that people build into their representation of meaning "a network of social relationships."

In her pioneering monograph, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, Emig (1971) argued that the central concern of writing teachers should be composing processes rather than texts. Conventional writing instruction had trivialized composing, she said, through such empty formalisms as the five-paragraph theme: "One could say that the major kind of essay too many students have been taught to write in the American schools is algorithmic, or so mechanical that a computer could readily be programmed to produce it" (Emig, 1971, p. 52). She contended that composition instruction was misguided by teachers' prescriptive obsession with identifying key features of exemplary texts, on the one hand, and eradicating errors in student papers, on the other hand, and she proposed a self-consciously scientific research program to study the composing processes of ordinary students. In

contrast to the process of Warriner's writer, who, we have noted, "puts words together in correct, smooth sentences, according to the rules of standard usage," actual writers' "processes of writing do not proceed in a linear sequence: rather, they are recursive" (Emig, 1981, p. 26). Emig defined the composing process in terms of the writer's purpose, contending that school writing almost always vitiated student writers' authentic purposes by inhibiting "reflexive" (self-sponsored or personal) writing focusing on the writers' thoughts and feelings concerning their experience.

Emig's call for empirical research on composing was answered by many cognitive studies during the late 1970s and early 1980s, including Applebee's research on writing in the secondary school (Applebee, 1981); Bissex's (1980) case study of her son's written language development; Bracewell, Frederiksen, and Frederiksen's (1982) study of writing and reading; Daiute's (1981) psycholinguistic study of the writing process; Faigley and Witte's (1981; Witte & Faigley, 1983) studies; Flower and Hayes's (1977, 1981) model of composing processes; Kroll's (1978) study of egocentrism and audience awareness; Bereiter and Scardamalia's (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Scardamalia, Bereiter, & Goelman, 1982) studies of writing processes;[20] and Read's (1971) study of invented spelling. This new genre of writing research found particularly fertile ground at Carnegie-Mellon University in the collaboration of rhetorician Linda Flower and cognitive psychologist John R. Hayes. Flower and Hayes, who followed up Emig's work by developing a cognitive model of writing processes, contended that "the process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 366). By the early 1980s, writing was commonly thought to be a fundamentally dynamic, meaning-making process. In structuralist terms this process was described as the writer's translation of an underlying, hierarchically organized cognitive representation into text (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Combining insights and methods from cognitive psychology and rhetoric to investigate the composing process, Flower and Hayes and others sought to understand how planning and revision vary in different situations and for different writers, especially novices and experts. This research has been instrumental in describing differences between experts and novices, particularly in the processes of planning. It has shown, for instance, "the way planning allows writers to construct far more elaborated and sophisticated representations of the rhetorical problem or the impact on writing when writers actively

recognize and resolve conflicts in their own thinking" (Flower & Greene, in press). Viewing research on writing processes as a study of mind, Flower and Hayes challenged traditional conceptions of text and text meaning. Readers and writers do not simply "find" meaning, they argued; rather, they "construct" it by organizing, selecting, and connecting information in terms of mental structures.[21] Nor is the resulting mental representation necessarily linguistic; it may also be imagistic or kinetic. Furthermore, it was said to evolve as people read situations, revise their goals, write and revise their texts (Flower & Hayes, 1984); in these ways, writing was viewed as a form of situated mental action.[22]

About the same time Emig was completing her own study of composing processes, Stanley Fish was making many similar points about reading literature. Fish differed sharply with the New Criticism on several key issues. Fish (1970) wrote, "The objectivity of the text is an illusion" (p. 43). Text meaning is not, he categorically asserted,

> an object, a thing-in-itself, but an *event*, something that *happens to*, and with the participation of, the reader. And it is this event, this happening— all of it and not anything that could be said about it or any information one might take away from it—that is, I would argue, the meaning of the sentence. (p. 25)

Like Emig and Flower and Hayes, Fish sought to focus scholarly attention away from the text onto the cognitive processes of the writer/reader, characterizing these processes in dynamic, temporal terms. Meaning for Fish, unlike the New Critics, was not the message object the reader recovers or extracts on successful reading; rather, meaning was the reader's dynamic experience—"all of it," Fish (1970) repeatedly insisted—resulting from an encounter with the text.

Fish's ideas about the role of reader response in the meaning of texts raised many questions concerning stability of text meaning, critical anarchy, and solipsism. If reader response determined text meaning, why couldn't a text mean anything each reader willed it to mean? How could meaning be stable, indeed how could communication be possible if interpretation were determined by each reader's whim and fancy? Fish replied that reader response is not really solipsistic because the process is informed by (a) linguistic competence (as defined by Chomsky [1957]), (b) semantic competence (as defined by Wardhaugh [1969] and Katz and Fodor [1964]), and (c) literary competence (Fish, 1970, p. 48). In short, Fish's reader was an informed (competent) reader. In Fish's later, social constructionist work, of course, reader response was informed by the social norms of an "interpretive community," but his early work is more cognitive, considerably influenced, as was Emig's, by constructivist premises about knowing, meaning, and language processes.

By the early 1970s, then, many scholars in both composition and critical theory had resolutely renounced texts as the main focus of their inquiry. In particular, scholars in both fields vigorously refuted the premise that texts are loci of meaning. For the New Critics, meaning had taken the form of a proposition, or kernel truth, fixed by formal text features. The reader's role was to extract, decode, discover, or receive this meaning by carefully analyzing text features and their relationships. In reader response, by contrast, meaning was in the reader; it was a dynamic cognitive event actively constructed and enacted during reading. For the New Compositionists, texts were the realization of writer purpose, although in school, they claimed, their features had too often been trivialized into a counterproductive fetish. Some scholars, for example, Kinneavy (1971) and Olson (1977), continued to interpret purpose and meaning in terms of text features. Nonetheless, for most researchers at this time, the real action in writing was in thinking and shaping purpose through revision over time, not in text features.

How are we to account for the development of these striking, parallel themes and schools of thought in both composition and critical theory? What happened? One might suppose that a historical cross-fertilization of the two fields occurred in postsecondary departments of English where composition and literature instructors encountered each other and where some instructors even taught both courses. But whereas composition and literature have recently cross-fertilized each other, this was not the case in 1970; at that time writing was barely more than a pedagogical concern. The intellectual seed for conceptions of writing and reading as cognitive processes was not in departments of English at all but rather in the cognitive psychology, linguistics, and psycholinguistics of Cambridge, Massachusetts, of the 1960s, specifically the work of Noam Chomsky, George Miller, and Jerome Bruner. Emig was a graduate student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education at this time,[23] and *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, which was originally her dissertation, is filled with references and allusions to insights from this work. Fish's early (1970) work on reader response freely cites Chomsky. At this time, ideas about writing did not come from literary theory; rather both compo-

sition and literature in the early 1970s drew important insights from linguistics.

The Cambridge psycholinguistic revolution began as a rejection of the empirical and behaviorist tenets of linguistic formalism of the first half of the century. Like the New Critics, who were never able to match their success in analyzing short, highly structured poems with equally trenchant analyses of longer and more complex prose works, formal linguists were unable to transcend their early successes in classifying the relatively finite system of English phonology by systematizing the infinite structural complexity of English syntax. It was against the backdrop of this failure that Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar burst on the scene in 1957 (Chomsky, 1957).

In response to the failure of formal linguistics to develop taxonomic descriptions of English syntax, Chomsky and his followers shifted the focus of linguistics from formal language structures per se to the constructive, structure-building operations of the individual mind; linguistics became a part of cognitive psychology (Chomsky, 1972, p. 1). The goal of the new linguistics was the description of "universal grammar," the highly abstract and therefore necessarily innate language faculty that enables—ensures—the practical development of any individual's linguistic competence. This shift from formalist to constructivist aims of linguistic description was significant. "Put in simplest terms . . . the shift of focus was from behavior or the products of behavior to states of the mind/brain that enter into behavior" (Chomsky, 1986, p. 3). Indeed, Chomsky surpassed even Saussure's early structuralism by shifting attention from language as an abstract system to the more abstract "deep structures" of the human mind itself. Whereas Saussure's *la langue* had been a "given" because of its nature as a "social fact," Chomsky's universal grammar was innately, biologically given—"hard-wired" in the very structure of the mind as linguistic competence. In short, the structure of language that Saussure sought became for Chomsky and generative linguists nothing less than the structure of mind. Moreover, Chomsky was scathing in his attacks on the old behaviorist views of language learning embraced by his formalist predecessors, where children arrived in the world essentially as blank slates to be filled up by repeated exposure to patterned—and in the school context, carefully prescribed—models and stimuli (see Chomsky's [1959] review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*).

The use of classifications like "formalism" and "structuralism" is often problematic, especially in the context of historical studies like this one, where schools of thought are only contingently defined.

Hence labels like formalism, structuralism, and so on need to be continually reassessed according to changing historical perspectives. Chomsky, of course, claimed to be attacking the tenets of Bloomfield's linguistic *structuralism* with his new transformational-generative framework, not *formalist* language theory, as we are suggesting here. Yet in hindsight—from the point of view of current dialogically oriented frameworks for the study of language—it seems more instructive now to think of Chomsky as occupying a central role in the mainstream of structuralist inquiry (cf. Marková, 1992) and to distinguish that tradition from Bloomfield's more formally oriented analyses.[24]

This view of language as a cognitive, constructive process motivated scholars like Emig (1971), Fish (1970), Iser (1978), Smith (1971), and others to reconceptualize writing and reading as dynamic processes of constructing meaning.[25] In this constructivist view, language orders and gives shape and thus meaning to experience. These meanings were said (by cognitive psychology) to be generated and then stored as mental representations, or schemata, which not only organize perceptions, understandings, and memories but also focus expectations. The net effect of the Cambridge revolution was nothing less than the validation of the role of mind in shaping human experience. Consequently, cognitive language processes became thoroughly interesting and credible as the source of meaning and hence ripe for serious study by countless academics in both the humanities and the social sciences. Given this revolutionary intellectual climate, it is no surprise that the New Criticism waned, making room for interest in language processes such as reader-response criticism and the upstart composition studies in departments of English.

3. 1980s: LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION THROUGH THE STRUCTURALIST LENS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

If the 1970s focused on cognitive language processes in both literature and composition, the 1980s quickly became dominated by social interpretations of language use. Subsequent to Chomsky's (1957) definition of *grammatical* as whatever is "acceptable to a native speaker" (p. 13), sociolinguists like Labov (1970) outlined the "logic of nonstandard English," in effect problematizing Chomsky's criterion by asking, *Which* native speaker? Whereas Emig (1971) characterized composing processes by interviewing Harvard professors about their

writing styles and studying a few Chicago north-suburban 12th graders, Shaughnessy (1977) demonstrated a much more complicated social phenomenon as she outlined the logic and history of errors in the writing of 4,000 basic writers, many if not most of whom represented the first generation of their families to pursue a postsecondary education. And whereas Stanley Fish, by explicating Milton, could raise questions about whether literature was a text-based or a dynamic, reader-response phenomenon, subsequent critics debated the validity of a canon composed overwhelmingly of Milton and other white male European authors. Each of these debates transformed univocal conceptions of language and meaning into a pluralist semiotic, complicating easy generalizations about "the composing process," "the reading process," and "cognitive processes." Consequently, researchers began to view language as a social as well as a cognitive process. Just as reader-response criticism refuted the formalist premise that meaning resides in texts (true only so long as readers read the same way), socially oriented scholars challenged the premise that meaning can be uniformly cognitive (univocal) in a pluralist world.

Even by the late 1960s, Chomsky's mentalist views of language, virtually unchallenged only a decade before, had begun to face wide-ranging criticism, from both within and beyond the generativist community. An increasing number of influential linguists (e.g., Fillmore, 1968; Lakoff & Ross, 1976; McCawley, 1968; Postal, 1972) attempted to expand the scope of transformational-generative linguistics beyond issues of language structure in isolation to show how deep structures convey and preserve meanings as well, thus collapsing Chomsky's strict distinction between autonomous semantic and syntactic levels of analysis. For the most part, however, few of these early attempts to enlarge the scope of the generativist framework to include notions of meaning ever challenged Chomsky's basic structuralist assumptions of an abstract, autonomous language system and innate language competence (Newmeyer, 1986).

Also at this time, distinctive sociolinguistic and functionally oriented approaches toward language as discourse emerged to challenge more directly some of the fundamental assumptions behind Chomsky's views. Labov's (1970) influential studies of nonstandard English, for example, not only demonstrated the importance of empirical evidence to validate fashionable mentalistic and introspective methods but also problematized key structuralist and constructivist constructs, including grammaticality and linguistic competence. New work on the "ethnography of communication" by scholars like Hymes (1974),

moreover, delineated a much broader scope of linguistic analysis than Chomsky's views about language competence could accommodate. Hymes proposed to resituate syntax and autonomous language forms within the full set of "conventional resources" one draws from to communicate within a given "speech community." In effect, Hymes and others attempted to subsume the notion of linguistic competence within a broader sociolinguistic or "communicative competence" of the language user. Moreover, the new popularization of important studies in the pragmatics of language use by philosophers of language like Austin (1962), Grice (1975), Searle (1969), and others during the mid-1970s offered a strong and persistent reminder that, despite the considerable explanatory power evident in Chomsky's abstract descriptions of language as a referential symbol system, language was also—or perhaps even more so—a socially conditioned and highly conventionalized repertoire of "speech acts." Language was a "way of doing" as much as a "way of knowing." Thus the very basis of Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance was brought into question.

These challenges to Chomsky's theory combined with other new advances in text studies (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978), discourse analysis (Brown & Yule, 1983; Coulthard, 1977; Stubbs, 1983; van Dijk, 1972, 1977; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983), and linguistic pragmatics (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983) to build a conception of language as a social (vs. individual) and functional (vs. formal) phenomenon (for review, see Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). Searle (1976) in particular argued for a more principled examination of how form and function interact in real contexts of language use. He strongly objected to the abstract mentalism that characterizes the syntactic "rules" generated by Chomsky's constructivist framework, arguing that their utter complexity alone was enough to frustrate any sense of "intuitive plausibility" by language users. According to Searle, Chomsky was playing a cool methodological game, an observation which, in hindsight, seems to fit a whole body of structuralist studies whereby theoretical abstractions generated to account for empirical phenomena are ultimately reinterpreted to count themselves as part of the empirical data being analyzed.[26] Structuralist schemes ultimately fail, Searle suggested in his critique of Chomsky, when they confuse their theoretical system (grammar) with the object of their study (language).

These developments toward a social theory of language use— especially Labov's insights about the logic of nonstandard English, Hymes's concept of *speech community,* and the more general reorien-

tation of analyses by Searle and others from syntax (form) to discourse (function)—found considerable influence among composition scholars in the late 1970s and 1980s. These include, for example, (a) Shaughnessy's (1977) discussion of the logic of error in the writing of "nontraditional" student populations; (b) Sommers' (1980) work treating revision in terms of writer's anticipation of discrepancies between readers' expectations and their texts; (c) Heath's (1984), Scribner and Cole's (1981), and Smitherman's (1986) studies of the impact of individuals' membership in various discourse communities on their orientations toward writing and their abilities to meet the demands of typical school writing tasks; (d) Teale and Sulzby's (1986) research on emergent literacy and Dyson's (1990) studies of children's writing; (e) research on response groups in writing instruction (e.g., Gere & Stevens, 1985; for review, see DiPardo & Freedman, 1988); and (f) Steinmann's (1982) and Nystrand's (1986) efforts to construct pragmatic, functionally oriented accounts of written communication. In particular, researchers began to investigate the role language plays in enabling individuals to position themselves with respect to specific social situations and discourse communities (see, for example, Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gundlach, Farr, & Cook-Gumperz, 1989; Philips, 1975).

Moreover, this social reorientation of the field demanded that composition scholars reevaluate some pet cognitivist assumptions that had virtually swept the field by the early 1980s. Assessing the value of cognitive theory in composition studies, for example, Bizzell (1982a) concluded that "what's missing here is the connection to social context afforded by the recognition of the dialectical relationship between thought and language. . . . we can know nothing but what we have words for, if knowledge is what language makes of experience" (p. 223). She argued that researchers needed to focus less on the formal features of writing or students' goals in composing and more on the kinds of genres that are typical of different social situations. Faigley (1985) agreed, observing that "within a language community, people acquire specialized kinds of discourse competence that enable them to participate in specialized groups" (p. 238). Elsewhere, Faigley (1986) noted that "when students write in academic disciplines, they write in reference to texts that define the scholarly activities of interpreting and reporting in that discipline" (p. 536).

An emerging emphasis on social aspects of writing resulted from the very success of the writing process movement itself, which began to spread beyond departments of English as other departments and academic units incorporated more writing into their instruction. In response to the literacy crisis of the 1970s, for example, schools, colleges, and universities gave more attention not only to the monistic Freshman English Essay—Olson's autonomous text—but also to writing in all its myriad and sundry genres across the curriculum. The resulting "writing across the curriculum" movement made problems of text, social context, and genre more salient and interesting to writing researchers, who, during the 1970s, had been interested almost exclusively in the composing process in some generic sense.[27]

Some researchers began to interpret the different genres of academic writing in terms of discourse communities (Bizzell, 1982b; Faigley, 1985; Porter, 1986), a relatively abstract notion derived from a philosophical and literary tradition investigating the sociology of knowledge and meaning—what Bruffee (1986) and others have called *social constructionism*—to describe the social and historical nature of writing.[28] Such a view suggests that individual writers compose not in isolation but as members of communities whose discursive practices constrain the ways they structure meaning. Thus the problems students face in writing could be explained by their lack of familiarity with the forms and conventions of academic discourse, a point made by Shaughnessy (1977), who was one of the first composition scholars to claim that "writing is a social act" (p. 83).

Shaughnessy's (1977) sensitive and close reading of basic writers' essays in *Errors and Expectations* revealed the failure of current-traditional rhetoric in dealing with the problems that a shifting population of students had posed for educators in the mid-1970s. Shaughnessy argued that effective basic writing instruction requires a fundamental understanding of the logic and history of basic writers' errors: "Part of the task of helping . . . students . . . depends upon being able to trace the line of reasoning that has led to erroneous choices" (p. 105). Moreover, she observed, students' "failure" in school could not be explained simply in cognitive terms because it resulted largely from students' lack of practice and familiarity with the forms and conventions of academic discourse (see also Bizzell, 1982b; and Shaughnessy, 1976). Hence learning to write for Shaughnessy was essentially a process of socialization into the academic community.[29]

Bizzell (1982a, 1982b, 1986) similarly argued that literacy problems should be understood as difficulties in joining unfamiliar discourse communities, not simply as difficulties in thinking. Bizzell (1982a) recommended examining and teaching patterns of language use and reasoning common to given disciplinary or interpretive communities.

Literacy instruction, she reasoned, should focus on the idiosyncratic forms and conventions of academic communities. Drawing from radical sociology of knowledge (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966), Bizzell (1982a) recognized the implications of this line of thinking for attacking instructional practices that disempower and marginalize students by focusing on "deficits" in their thinking rather than on differences between their own culture and socioeconomic background and those of the mainstream (see also Hull, Rose, Fraser, & Castellano, 1991).

Similarly, Bartholomae (1985) argued that, more than learning certain universal cognitive strategies, students "need to learn . . . to extend themselves by successive approximations, into the common-places, set phrases, rituals and gestures, habits of mind, tricks of persuasion, obligatory conclusions and necessary connections that determine 'what might be said' and constitute knowledge within the various branches of our academic community" (p. 146). Brodkey (1987) documented the extent to which academics create and sustain the culture and social reality of the Academy through their writing. Student writers in a discipline must learn to make certain rhetorical moves if they are to contribute to the ongoing conversations of a field. As Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman (1987) suggested, these moves reflect an understanding of the issues and problems under discussion, the relevant concepts and their relationship to one another, and the research programs and methodology that a community acknowledges as legitimate. Thus those who write within a given community must not only acquire content knowledge but must also be able to manage this knowledge within certain linguistic and rhetorical conventions.[30]

Compositionists' treatment of discourse communities was directly inspired by Stanley Fish's discussion of the role of interpretive communities in reader response. As Fish (1976) explored the organization of reader response, his initial use of literary competence as a cognitive concept elucidating the source of the informed reader's "informedness" eventually gave way to his seminal social concept of interpretive community:

> Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around. (p. 483)

It is the function of literary education, Fish went on (ironically echoing Cleanth Brooks on pedagogy), to socialize readers by teaching them appropriate, common interpretive strategies. It is this idea that Bartholomae, Bizzell, and others in composition adapted when they characterized college composition instruction as a process of socialization into the academic print community.[31]

Faigley (1986) contended that social-constructionist approaches such as these are inherently poststructuralist because they emphasize the role of discourse communities in the construction of meaning. Yet Knoblauch was surely right when he said that this perspective represents only a slight modification of "objectivist assumptions which include 'social context' among other 'objective constraints' acting upon discursive practice" (Knoblauch, 1988, pp. 136-137). By reifying discourse communities, social constructionists suggest that students can gain entry into disciplines if they merely learn the right forms and conventions (a position that moves very close to formalism). The structuralist character of social constructionism is best revealed by its premises about language and meaning. By claiming that readers are representatives of interpretive communities and that their interpretations are therefore structured by the critical norms of these communities, Fish (1980) set about to delineate the underlying structure of these interpretations:

> Communication occurs only within . . . a system (or context, or situation, or interpretive community) and . . . the understanding achieved by two or more persons is specific to that system and determinate only within its confines. (p. 304)

Like Kuhn (1970), Durkheim (1966), and other structuralists, Fish sought to explain human behavior by way of a mediating, underlying system or structure. He concerned himself with deciphering readers' interpretations of literature, as well as the nature of literature, by explicating the norms of their interpretive communities, which in Fish's analysis assume a primacy akin to Kuhn's "paradigms" or Durkheim's "social facts."[32]

Or, we want to argue, Saussure's la langue. It is easy to forget that Saussure postulated la langue as an underlying social entity, and in fact Saussure, like Durkheim, Kuhn, and Fish, attempted to explain individual behaviors—speaking, committing suicide, doing science, and interpreting literature, respectively—through the mediating lens of a social construct—la langue, social facts, paradigms, and interpre-

tive communities, respectively. More than this, each theorist explained his respective phenomenon by first identifying patterns from a given social domain and then positing these patterns as explanations, causes, and/or contributing factors to the behaviors of individuals in these domains. This method of explaining individual behavior and social institutions is the very definition of structuralist method in the human and social sciences: In each case, analysis proceeds by first "bracketing off" content, social relations, and historical forces and then isolating a transcendent, hierarchical, and autonomous system. Saussure, for example, argued that the "speech facts" of discourse, which he called *la parole*, are so "heterogeneous" and continuously novel as to be unsuitable for systematic study. "We cannot put [speech] into any category of human facts, for we cannot discover its unity," Saussure (1959, p. 9) claimed. If, however, one examines enough data, he pointed out, "some average will be set up" among them (1959, p. 9). By such analysis we learn that in English, for example, plurals are normally formed by adding the morpheme *-s* to nouns and past tense is typically marked by adding *-ed* to verbs. Rules and patterns such as these constitute la langue, which is said to "inform" la parole. Chomsky broadened the scope of Saussurean linguistics by extending the analysis to syntax (Chomsky, 1957) and, most important, by treating the human mind as a natural, rule-governed structure determining linguistic competence (Chomsky, 1968).[33] Through his concept of interpretive community, Fish addressed basic issues of critical theory and literary interpretation through a similar approach. It is a philosophical method as old as Plato, who sought to explain reality by postulating its ontological source in some underlying domain or form.

To sum up: Structuralism, in both its constructivist and social constructionist incarnations, generally superseded formalism and assumed, as noted above, that human behavior and institutions can be explained only by elucidating the mediating structure of an underlying abstract system. Although such structures are neither visible nor tangible, they can nonetheless be deciphered, structuralists believed, "like a foreign language" (Gardner, 1972, p. 6). Whereas formalist critics like the New Critics focused on text elements to *uncover their meaning*, structuralists examined such elements to *decode an underlying, universal system*. According to Gardner (1972), structuralism has been characterized by three key aspects and objectives:

1. a *strategic aspect* concerning the identification of universal patterns in the flux of everyday experience,

2. a *formal aspect* involving the derivation of rules and general laws informing human behavior and institutions, and

3. an *organismic aspect* concerned with identifying the dynamics of whole organisms, behaviors, and institutions especially as such transformation affect the parts. (pp. 171-172)

Chomsky, for example, postulated that language *performance* is informed by the speaker's *competence*, which he articulated through a set of generative rules and transformations. Influential early structuralists included Saussure, who created linguistics as the investigation of la langue, the rules and patterns informing ordinary speech and discourse; and Durkheim, who established social norms and social solidarity as essential, abstract social facts. Following Saussure and Durkheim, structuralism has cut across both cognitive and social investigations. On the one hand, the explanatory apparatus of structuralist cognitive analyses has included, in addition to Chomsky's competence and Saussure's la langue, the schemata and mental representations of cognitive science and developmental and cognitive psychology, including Piaget. On the other hand, the abstract domains of structuralist social analyses have included such axiomatic categories as communicative competence (Hymes) and paradigms (Kuhn), as well as the norms of interpretive communities (Fish) and discourse communities (Bizzell, Faigley, and Porter). Each of these domains is said to be manifest through language processes, which transform the underlying forms into accessible real-world forms. Each such manifestation, like the shadows cast by a fire in the opening of Plato's cave, is considered a pale, partial, distorted image of its source, which is assumed to be inaccessible to direct human experience.

4. DIALOGISM IN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION

Just as Saussure foreshadowed many essential tenets of structuralism, Bakhtin anticipated many central claims of poststructuralism. Indeed, one of the many reasons Bakhtin's work has recently captured the imagination of scholars in language, literature, and composition is the extent to which he grappled with all of the schools of thought treated in this essay, some even before they became known as schools of thought. In his work on language, for example, Bakhtin disagreed with both the Russian formalists and those we now call constructivists.[34] In *The Formal Method in Literary Study* (Bakhtin & Medvedev,

1928/1978), he argued that "the [formal] linguistic analysis of a poetic work has no criteria for separating what is poetically significant from what is not" (p. 85).[35] In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Vološinov, 1973), he attacked the "abstract objectivism" of structuralists such as Saussure seeking to reduce language to a system of laws governing phonology and syntax. At the same time, he disagreed with the "individualistic subjectivism" of Wundt, Vossler, Croce, and Husserl, protoconstructivists who viewed language as the expression of inner states and fixed meanings (Holquist, 1983). According to Bakhtin (Vološinov, 1973),

> In point of fact, the speech act or, more accurately, its product—the utterance, cannot under any circumstances be considered an individual phenomenon in the precise meaning of the word and cannot be explained in terms of the individual psychological or psychophysiological conditions of the speaker. *The utterance is a social phenomenon . . . the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addresee* (pp. 82, 86; emphasis in original).

Confuting both the formalist contention that meaning is in the text and the constructivist contention that meaning is in the speaker, Bakhtin proposed a radical third position known as *dialogism* (cf. Holquist, 1990). For Bakhtin, the self comes into existence only by virtue of its relationship to all that is other. It can exist only dialogically because "any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69; see also Clark & Holquist's [1984] discussion of Bakhtin's *Architectonics*, especially pp. 65-77).[36] For Bakhtin, meaning does not reside within an individual consciousness but is determined by context of use, animated by the interaction of different voices.[37] In neither case is context or voice construed as something material or literal. Instead, meaning is "dialogic," reflecting writers' attempts to balance their goals with the expectations that they believe their readers bring to a text. According to Bakhtin (Vološinov, 1973),

> The *word is always oriented toward an addressee*, toward *who* that addressee might be. . . . Each person's inner world and thought has its stabilized *social audience* that comprises the environment in which reasons, motives, values, and so on are fashioned. . . . *The word is a two-sided act.* It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. . . . I give myself

> verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. . . . A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee. (pp. 85-86)

For Bakhtin, as for contemporary language scholars, it is the relationship between the individual psyche and the forces of social ideology and interpretive convention that focuses our efforts to characterize meaning in discourse. Taken individually, each pole of the structuralist framework is inadequate. The principal fallacy of individualistic subjectivism (what more recently is called constructivism), Bakhtin asserts, is its failure to recognize the character of linguistic utterances as a social phenomenon, whereas the fundamental omission of abstract objectivism (what more recently is called social constructionism [Nystrand, 1990a]) lies in its rejection of "the speech act—the utterance—as something individual" (Vološinov, 1973, p. 82). In contrast to these positions, Bakhtin viewed discourse as a forum where the forces of individual cognition, on the one hand, and social ideology and convention, on the other, "dialectically interpenetrate" each other (Vološinov, 1973, p. 41), where "the truth is not to be found in the golden mean and is not a matter of compromise between thesis and antithesis, but lies over and beyond them, constituting a negation of both thesis and antithesis alike, i.e., constituting a *dialectical synthesis*" (Vološinov, 1973, p. 82). In other words, the individual and the social provide neither competing nor even alternative perspectives on meaning in discourse; rather, context and cognition operate always and only in an interpenetrating, cocon-stitutive relationship.[38]

Perhaps no issue has defined Bakhtin's thinking more than his insistence on *situating language and meaning in the everyday social context* in which it unfolds. Hence, whereas Saussure believed that language could be studied systematically only if utterances and texts could be isolated from their tumultuous cultural, social, and historical context, Bakhtin (1981) argued that such "stratification, diversity and randomness . . . is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics" (p. 272). This dynamic view of language as discourse was promoted by the Soviet scholar throughout his career. Bakhtin (Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1978) elaborated elsewhere:

> Every utterance, including the artistic work, is a communication, a message, and is completely inseparable from intercourse. . . . [A com-

munication] is not transmitted from [author] to [reader], but is constructed between them as a kind of ideological bridge, is built in the process of their interaction. . . . Every element of the work can be compared to a thread stretching between people. (pp. 151-152)

Following this line of reasoning, Bakhtin's fundamental unit of language is not Saussure's isolated, monologic utterance but rather the conversation turn (Bakhtin, 1986), remarkably presaging by an entire half century the scholarly investigation of conversation.[39] Saussure sought to anchor the vicissitudes of la parole in the stability of la langue, at the same time fixing the meaning of any given signifier in its signified. Bakhtin, by contrast, anticipating Derrida and other literary deconstructionists, insisted that *the meaning of any utterance is always relative to other utterances*, whose meanings therefore are unstable and continuously transformed by, while simultaneously transforming, the context in which the utterances are made.[40]

Bakhtin also anticipated Fish's (1980) view of literary interpretation and comprehension as a *process of negotiation between conversants in particular contexts* (pp. 315 et passim): Rather than being structured by some abstract system, Bakhtin argued, communication takes shape and utterances gain meaning only dynamically through the interaction of conversants; in other words, meaning is to be found, in Holquist's (1983) metaphor, "between speakers." According to Bakhtin (1981), the essence of language is dialogue, continuously "oriented toward the 'already uttered,' the 'already known,' the 'common opinion' and so forth. The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is . . . a property of *any* discourse" (p. 279).[41]

Bakhtin's dialogical account of situated language anticipates much that might be characterized as post-Chomskyan or functionalist in 20th-century linguistics, as well. Insofar as functional linguistics entails a theory of la parole, or language performance (i.e., discourse or "language as event" rather than structuralism's "language as object"), all of the research noted previously on the pragmatics of language use, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics has challenged both Chomsky's generative framework and Saussure's broader structuralist legacy. These competing traditions have focused on situated discourse (including conversation, classroom talk, and other genres of institutionalized discourse) and more often on spoken rather than written discourse. In functional linguistics, conversation or dialogue is treated as the prototype of all discourse, both spoken and written (cf. Bakhtin, 1986; Rommetveit, 1974), so that even writing is viewed as a kind of

"covert dialogue," to be analyzed and evaluated in terms of principles of everyday conversation. This approach is exactly opposite structuralism's method of analyzing permissible speech utterances of a given language on the basis of paradigmatic written structures like complete and grammatical sentences and paragraphs.

One of the most fully developed alternatives to Saussurian and Chomskyan structuralism has been articulated by the London school linguists, who draw their basic principles from the sociolinguistic tradition of Malinowski and Firth and who find perhaps their fullest expression in the systemic-functional and social-semiotic theory of language outlined by Michael Halliday (1978, 1985) and Halliday and Hasan (1985).[42] In contrast to Chomsky's "nativist" views regarding innate, highly abstract language rules and structures (which Halliday [1978] calls a mentalistic "intra-organism perspective"), London school linguists practice an "environmentalist" (or "interorganism perspective") that centers on language as situated action; language is a functional resource for constructing and sharing meanings. The latter perspective rejects the structuralist competence-performance distinction, arguing rather that language is both a way of knowing (its *mathetic* function) and a way of doing (its *pragmatic* function); language is always fundamentally multifunctional.[43]

Bakhtin's dialogical principle anticipates the social-interactive perspective of systemic-functional and social-semiotic frameworks of language study. Halliday (1978) echoes Bakhtin's claim that a dynamic "intertextual dialogue" characterizes language in use, noting "the essential indeterminacy of the concept of 'a text'. . . . A text, in the normal course of events, is not something that has a beginning and an ending. The exchange of meanings is a continuous process. . . . It is not unstructured, but it is seamless, and all that one can observe is a kind of periodicity in which peaks of texture alternate with troughs" (p. 136). Like Bakhtin, Halliday (1978) views texts—and language, for that matter—not as the fixed objects (or abstractions) that Saussure, Chomsky, and the structural linguists posit, but rather as sites of an unfolding process of negotiation and contention over meaning among conversants: "The essential feature of text, therefore, is that it is interaction. The exchange of meanings is an interactive process, and text is the means of exchange" (p. 139). As for Bakhtin, texts function dialogically to mediate the respective interests and understandings of their users.

Halliday demonstrates how language functions to mediate the dialectical relationship between context and cognition. In Halliday's

view, we use language and other semiotic systems both to organize our experience of the world and to communicate or otherwise share that experience with others.[44] So, for example, conventional "teacher talk" not only reflects the context of school as a social institution, with all of its attendant power relations, sociocultural agenda, and so forth, but also functions to recreate and thereby sustain in our thinking the integrity of the school as a social institution. Thus Halliday shows how language functions semiotically to mediate context and cognition. At the same time that context is an ongoing, contingently accomplished construct of individual cognition, context fundamentally enables cognition and hence our private experiences of the world.

Whereas structuralists seek to construct elaborate grammars and taxonomies of all possible forms of a language (accounting for the complete set of all grammatical English sentences), functionalists seem to be just as interested in characterizations of what texts *leave out*. Hence Halliday (1978) argues, "In a sociolinguistic perspective it is more useful to think of a text as *encoded* in sentences, not as composed of them" (p. 109). In other words, when conversants work together in dialogue to share meanings, it is what *is said* in the context of choices regarding what *might have been said*, or *said differently*, that largely carries the exchange. Speakers and listeners (and writers and readers) work constantly to weigh what is said or what needs to be said against what can be (and perhaps must be) left unsaid in a given textual exchange. From this insight about the dialogical quality of shared meanings, Rommetveit (1974) offers the marvelous post-Chomskyan observation that perhaps *ellipsis* is the prototypical structure of linguistic communication after all.[45]

One recent account of writing that embodies some of these ideas is Nystrand's (1986, 1989) social-interactive model of writing in which the meaning of any text is neither (a) found in the writer's intentions, which, according to cognitive models of writing, the writer "translates" into text, nor (b) embodied in the text itself, as proposed in such formalist accounts of exposition as Olson's (1977) doctrine of autonomous text. Rather, texts are said merely to have a potential for meaning, which is realized only in use, for example, when a text is read (even by the writer). This meaning is dynamic, which is to say, it evolves over the course of reading, a view consistent with both Bakhtin and Fish; it is not exactly the same from reader to reader; and it manifests the cultural and ideational assumptions readers bring to the text. This is not to say that readers completely determine the meaning of the text; instead, whatever meaning is achieved is a

unique configuration and interaction of what both writer and reader bring to the text (Nystrand, 1989; see also Tierney, Leys, & Rogers, 1986; Tierney & LaZansky, 1980).[46] Because meaning is not encoded in the text itself, writers do not achieve explicitness by saying everything in autonomous texts. The writer's problem in being explicit, then, is not saying everything—a surefire recipe for being tedious and boring. Indeed, the writer's problem is knowing just which points need to be elaborated and which can be assumed (Nystrand & Wiemelt, 1991). This in turn depends on what readers already know, or more specifically on what the writer and reader share. Explicitness consequently is not a text phenomenon but rather a social-interactive, or dialogic one. Hence skilled writers anticipate what Bakhtin (1986) terms "responsive understanding" at each point of their text.[47]

Brandt (1990, 1992) explores other related themes when she argues that convenient (structuralist) fictions like "the cognitive" and "the social" need to be dissolved if we are to understand how writers actually negotiate the interface of private thought and public expression. To the contrary, she argues that we need to recognize how private and public operations in language and thinking are mutually constitutive, how writing, for instance, functions personally to "account for" one's thinking about a text so far, as well as to give shape to further thinking about what might be written next. Working from the think-aloud protocols of graduate students in English, Brandt (1992) shows how, as students compose, they continuously justify what they have already written and what they plan to say. That is, think-aloud protocols elicit justifications (especially perhaps when student writers compose aloud for their instructors)—"Here's what I'm doing now and why." Their "sayings and doings," moreover, continuously straddle their own interests with the kinds of justifications they believe are required by "the sense-making practices of a particular group" (Brandt, 1992, p. 330). In this sense, writing is not just a private act of expression or even a semiprivate exchange between a writer and a particular reader. More to the point, writing is also an expression of solidarity, a way of affiliating not just with readers but also with some group of significant others, for example, English department colleagues and professors. In these terms, the context of writing is not somehow exterior to the writer but rather is created and justified while writing. In writing, the writer constructs and continuously justifies a unique social world. For these reasons, the social world should not be "treated as something that is *taken in* as a kind of raw material, mixed with the ingredients of long-term memory and rhetorical purpose, and put

through the recursive mental operations of goal setting, planning, organizing, and so on" (p. 324). Echoing Bakhtin's view that "discourse does not reflect a situation, it *is* a situation" (Holquist, 1990, p. 63), Brandt challenges recent efforts by Flower (1989) and others to make cognitive-process models of writing somehow more "contextually sensitive." Written discourse, she claims, is not merely situated; writing is itself *situating*.[48]

To sum up: Dialogism and functionalism have attacked the neoplatonic strategies of structuralism, challenging the validity of underlying universal forms. Poststructuralists such as Barthes, Brodkey, Derrida, and Foucault argue that knowledge and meaning are socially constructed, context dependent, political, and historical—and therefore unstable, partial, and multiple (for review, see Solsken & Bloome, 1992). Bakhtin and Rommetveit contend that language processes, rather than operating on underlying forms and somehow translating thought into words, are dynamic, temporal processes mediating social interaction between conversants. Ethnomethodologists such as Garfinkel (1967) and conversation analysts such as Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) show that these language processes are highly contextual and that context itself is an ongoing accomplishment of practical reasoning. Composition scholars such as Brandt (1992) and ethnomethodologists such as Heap (1991) argue for dissolving such artificial categories as "the cognitive" and "the social" to recognize the mutually constitutive nature of private and public operations in language and thinking. After all, Brandt (1992) observes, "Writers don't really represent context to themselves when they write. They make it" (p. 326). In other words, cognition itself is a thoroughly public, that is, publicly "accountable," sense-making practice. Important themes in dialogism include the following:

1. Discourse is a *dynamic, temporal process of negotiation* among conversants, including writers and readers, in particular sociocultural contexts.
2. The meaning of any utterance or text is an *intersubjective* phenomenon—that is, meaning is in neither texts nor users but rather in interaction between users.
3. Discourse functions to *semiotically mediate* interactions between self and other, between cognition and context, and between self and society.
4. Cognitive and social domains interact and overlap in a *dialectical*, coconstitutive relationship: The work of cognition is "always already" social. "Discourse does not reflect a situation, it *is* a situation" (Holquist, 1990, p. 63).

5. The main focus of functionalism in rhetoric, linguistics, composition studies, and critical theory is *situated discourse* in everyday, disciplinary, and professional social contexts in which conversants interact with each other.

For a related view, see Phelps's (1984) summary of themes emerging from the "interpretivist" tradition of modern discourse studies: "Briefly modern discourse studies see written language as *ecological* or *contextualized*; *constructive*; *functional* and *strategic*; *holistic*, with a strong *tacit* component; *dynamic*; and *interactive*" (p. 34, italics in original).

Table 1 summarizes many of the critical contrasts we have made in our discussions of formalism, constructivism, social constructionism, and dialogism.

5. THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT IN CONCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION SINCE 1940

As we look back on the material we have covered in this article, certain themes emerge characterizing the evolution of thinking about language, meaning, and text since 1940. These themes have strikingly manifested themselves in linguistics, literary theory, and composition studies. Each discipline has witnessed a structuralist revolution in previously formalist thinking and conceptions. More recently, each has reacted to pressures brought on by both dialogism and functionalism. These epistemologies have not coincided precisely with the chronological categories that others have outlined. Dialogism, moreover, has had much to say about texts and has affected the recent development of cognitive models of writing. Epistemologies such as formalism, structuralism, and dialogism are more fundamental than theories and models and far more basic than categories such as text, cognitive, and social; there certainly are no easy, one-to-one alignments among them. More to the point, "text," "cognitive," and "social" have all been redefined and their relations reconfigured as epistemologies have evolved and been transformed. A sensitive intellectual history, therefore, must examine how the thinking of important scholars has changed, not seek merely to pigeonhole their thinking. We have sought to situate the evolving intellectual history of composition studies within the broader context of these evolving views about the nature of language and meaning.

Table 1

Formalism, Constructivism, Social Constructionism, and Dialogism: Critical Contrasts

	Formalism	Constructivism	Social Constructionism	Dialogism
Unit of analysis	Text as object	Individual act of writing, reading	Canon, community	Text as discourse
Concept of text	Autonomous embodiment of meaning; more explicit than oral utterance	Translation of writer's plans, goals, thoughts	Set of discourse conventions	Semiotic mediation (between writer and reader, conversants)
Concept of writer	Transmitter of meaning	Rhetorical problem solver	Socialized member of discourse community	Conversant
Concept of reader	Receiver of meaning	Active, purposeful interpreter	Socialized member of interpretive community; reified	Conversant
Key principle	Imitation	Rationality, individual purpose	Consensus	Reciprocity
Characterization of typical discourse	[No concept of typical discourse]	Rule governed, strategic, purposeful	Normal	Heteroglossic
Key terms	Autonomous, explicit	Purpose; goal directed, strategic; mental representation; competence; synchronic	Social construct, reflection; community	Mutual, dialogic, intertextuality
Locus of meaning	Text	Individual user: writer, reader, speaker	Norms of interpretive community	Interaction between writers and readers, conversants
Model of language production	Transmission	Translation of thought into text, construction of meaning	Consensus building	Negotiation, interaction
Model of language development	Pedagogical socialization	From individual to social; acquisition, nativism (Chomsky)	Institutional, disciplinary socialization; initiation into community	From social to individual; sociohistorical
Philosophical method	Empiricism	Structuralism	Structuralism	Dialogism (cf. Holquist, 1990)
Direction of analysis	From formal language elements to whole texts through explication	From thought to language	From group to individual	Dialectical
Level of social analysis	[No social analysis]	Situated cognitive processes	Culture, community	Dyad

In our view, the evolution of these schools of thought reveals more of the intellectual history of composition studies than other, more narrowly focused accounts. First, the evolution of these schools of thought more clearly relates the intellectual history of composition studies to the development of ideas about literature and language. In addition, we think that the term *social* has recently been overused and has begun to conflate fundamentally different and even incompatible approaches to writing, text, and sources of meaning. Not all social models are poststructuralist; many social accounts might better be called "neostructuralist" whereas others are dialogical. Cognitive models of writing that treat texts as "translations" of underlying thoughts are structuralist insofar as they trace the source of a real-world event such as writing to an abstract, underlying mental representation. So too are social constructionist models of literary interpretation such as Fish's conception of reader response, which invokes first an underlying literary competence (Fish, 1970) and later an abstract interpretive community (Fish, 1980) to account for text interpretations. And clearly there are profound distinctions between Fish's social constructionism and Bakhtin's dialogism.

As noted, Bizzell and Faigley have shown that the focus of composition studies has evolved from examination of text to cognition to, most recently, social issues. This shift applies not only to composition but also to literature as the New Criticism first gave way to reader-response criticism and more recently to studies of interpretive communities and the politics of representation. In the study of language, Chomsky redefined linguistics as a branch of cognitive psychology, leaving behind the formalist bent of his Bloomfieldian predecessors. More recently, linguistics has seriously entertained social issues concerning pragmatics, speech acts, communication, conversation, and social interaction. In each shift, starting with Chomsky's structuralism of mind and then with the inception of sociolinguistics, linguistics has been at the leading edge of this evolution as it has affected both literature and composition.

Expanding Scope of Analysis

Literary theory, composition studies, and linguistics have also progressively broadened the scope of their respective inquiries. Whereas midcentury literary studies concerned only a relatively narrow range of elite, canonical texts, recent developments such as feminism, multiculturalism, and the new historicism, as well as studies of popular culture, have expanded the boundaries of literature scholarship, provoking continuing controversies about the canon. Similarly, midcentury (and earlier) thinking about composition focused on model texts of the sort collected in countless freshman English readers—typically featuring the "prose mastery" of "Bacon, Burke, Addison, and their titled brothers" (Taylor, 1932, p. xiii)—and most research on writing by far has concerned expository writing and has been oriented by "strong-text" views (Brandt, 1990). More recently, however, composition studies has ventured far beyond *belles lettres* and school contexts to investigate preschool, nonacademic, professional, and business writing. A major innovation on Emig's part was to treat ordinary student writing as a topic of useful research. The focus of writing research now extends far beyond school-based literacy, encompassing everything from the emergent literacy of preschoolers (cf. Bissex, 1980; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) to studies of writing in the workplace (Hull, 1991), nonacademic writing (e.g., Bracewell & Breuleux, 1992; Geisler, 1992; McNamee, 1992; Palmer, 1992; Schriver, 1992), and writing in corporate cultures (Barabas, 1990). Witte's (1992) analysis of grocery lists and other writing in everyday social contexts, including graphic as well as alphabetic text,[49] is only the latest example of how the field has expanded the scope of its inquiry from exemplary texts to ordinary discourse.[50] In linguistics, there has been a steady evolution away from the formalism of Bloomfield to the competence of Chomsky's informed speaker to, more recently, widespread interest in problems of real-time discourse, pragmatics, and conversation; everyday discourse is no longer assumed, as it was by Chomsky, to be inherently "defective." Literature, composition, and linguistics have each shifted focus away from elite text forms to far more blurred genres (Geertz, 1983) increasingly associated with popular culture and the everyday social world. Even hard and fast distinctions between cognitive and social domains, as well as oral and written language, have become harder to defend.[51] Context, once spurned by formalists, has become an essential factor conditioning writing performance for sociocognitive researchers; dialogical and functional researchers contend that context is actually accomplished through writing. And finally, texts have been "dethroned" as the locus and repository of meaning, vacated in favor of informed readers trained in critical methods (reader response and social constructionism) and, more recently, in the ordinary interactions of ordinary writers and ordinary readers (dialogism).

Expanding Conceptions of Writing

From Prescriptive to Descriptive Formalism

In composition, this evolving scope has been accompanied by expanding conceptions of writing. Whereas ideas about composition were traditionally limited to analyses of text features, subsequent and more recent models have conceptualized writing in terms of cognitive and social processes. One effect of this shift was the displacement of the prescriptive and pedagogical formalism of Warriner and Strunk and White by the more descriptive formalism of David Olson and E. D. Hirsch. Responding to the new empirical mood of the 1970s, Olson (1977) and Hirsch (1977) claimed to characterize and explain the nature of written language in some universal sense; by contrast, Warriner and Strunk and White never sought to do more than give sound advice. Hirsch, for example, argued that written language needs to be understood as a *grapholect*, qualitatively different from oral dialects. He fully sheathed his arguments in the fabric of research reports from reading, cognitive psychology, and psycholinguistic research. Yet in the end Hirsch used all of these empirical findings to defend conventional pedagogical prescriptions, spuriously finding, for example, that the relative ease with which modern readers process modern translations of Boccaccio compared to 18th-century translations vindicated the formalist recommendations of Strunk, McCrimmon, Crews, and others. Similarly, Olson argued that written and oral language are inherently and normatively different in terms of their relationship to the context of production. Yet Olson's dichotomization of oral and written language was a skewed and unstable contrast of the way speech utterances *are*—dependent, he claimed, on the context of their production for their meaning—with the way written texts *must be*—"autonomous" and meaningful independently of context. What is more, despite the subtitle of his article "The Bias of Language in Speech and Writing," Olson's contrast was never between all speech and all writing but only between informal conversation and academic exposition; he did not include lectures, sermons, or seminar discussion, on the one hand, or letters, notes, or lists, on the other (Nystrand, 1983).

In retrospect, it appears that the descriptive formalism of Olson and Hirsch was a rearguard effort that temporarily revived the declining fortunes of formalist models of composition. By the mid-1970s, such

formalism could be defended only if couched in descriptive, empirical, and universal terms. The considerable resonance Olson's work in particular struck among writing teachers and researchers alike was largely due to his success in finding a new and scholarly way of discussing writing.[52] In the final analysis, Hirsch's work was old wine in a new bottle.

From Cognitive to Sociocognitive

Another instructive example of the expanding scope of composition studies has been the recent sociocognitive research of Flower (1989, in press), Daiute and Dalton (1989, in press), Greene (1990), Hull and Rose (1989, 1990), and others, who build on the earlier cognitive work on writing processes. Early studies of composing such as Flower and Hayes (1981) identified key places where social and contextual knowledge operate within a cognitive framework, but they did little more than specify the task environment as an important element in the process. At the same time, Flower and Hayes assumed that both inquiry and purpose are responses to rhetorical situations (cf. Bitzer, 1968). Thus it should not be surprising that cognitive researchers would seek to supplement the main cognitive focus of their early work to understand writing as *situated cognition* (cf. Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; see also Berkenkotter, 1991). We view this recent sociocognitive research as an important response to the increasing pressures of dialogism and functionalism on the early cognitive research on writing. Key issues have included how individual intention and agency insert themselves within culturally and socially organized practices.

Think-aloud protocol studies have begun to reveal the cognition associated with students' writing difficulties. Yet as Flower (in press) notes, understanding the full dimensions of these problems requires investigating not only students' thinking but also the contexts in which they write. Students must negotiate "intelligent, difficult, and problematic paths" amidst often-conflicting demands of writing within both the culture of school and a discipline. In a recent study of students' reading to write, for example, Flower and her colleagues (Flower et al., 1990) explored the approaches that 72 students took in writing essays requiring them to synthesize and interpret information from several short texts. Despite receiving the same prompt for writing, the students interpreted the task in a variety of ways.[53] Analysis

of students' think-aloud protocols and data based on retrospective interviews revealed that students' approach to this task was shaped not only by cognitive processes but also by a legacy of schooling that values recitation of given information over original insights. Most students did not feel that they could challenge the authority of received opinion, nor did many students believe that they were really invited to develop their own ideas (Ackerman, 1990).[54] Not surprisingly, McCarthy (1987; Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990) and others have shown that students' understanding of what is expected in writing often comes into conflict with their instructor's interpretation of the same task (see also Geisler, 1991; Greene, 1993; Nelson, 1990).

One explanation for these "mismatches" is that students are often uncertain about what points, facts, and issues are appropriate for examination or what constitutes evidence and validity in a given class or, for that matter, how the reports they write for, say, history differ from those they write for chemistry experiments. Students must grapple, moreover, not only with varying disciplinary distinctions (e.g., history vs. chemistry) but also with the uniquely pedagogical problem of writing for an instructor. In a study contrasting historians' and students' interpretations, for example, Greene (in press) found striking differences between students' and historians' sense of audience. Whereas the students saw their audience as someone who would evaluate their work, the historians wrote for readers interested in learning about history.

The ways writers approach a given task can be a function of how they construct a context for writing. One way to think about context is to consider the culture of the classroom, where students rely on their interpretive and social skills to define and negotiate academic tasks. Students rely on each other as valuable resources for accomplishing academic work (Doyle, 1983; Nelson, 1990); they depend on the history of the class itself, using a teacher's response to their writing as a cue to what is important. Understanding a teacher's expectations, through this kind of response or through the kind of talk promoted within the evaluative climate of the classroom, can influence the ways students interpret and perform the same writing assignment. Those who view a teacher as an examiner are, perhaps, less willing to take risks than those students who envision their teacher as someone who values their ideas and helps them cultivate a sense of ownership and engagement in instruction (Greene, 1993). Indeed, the classroom context, or rather students' representations of context, can determine the form, substance, and style of what gets said as they balance their own

goals as writers with the expectations they believe their readers bring to reading. In turn, readers measure their understanding of a text in keeping with their sense of a writer's intentions. Seen in this way, reading and writing, as well as instructional discourse, are reciprocal, dialogic processes of meaning making, at once both social and cognitive (cf. Nystrand, 1992).

Other work that has examined social and cognitive domains as tightly interwoven has been inspired by Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) sociohistorical view of language development. A key function of all sign systems, Vygotsky believed, is self-regulation and coordination of one's interactions with others. For children, self-regulation is possible only after a period of interaction with adults. Vygotsky argued that thinking therefore has its origins in the social interactions between children and adults. In this interaction, speech plays a key mediating role so that over time, activities first carried out on a social-interactive ("interpsychological") plane evolve into a cognitive ("intrapsychological") function. In this way, discourse provides the foundation and origin of thinking. Recent studies investigating writing development from this view include Langer and Applebee's (1984, 1987) studies of school writing, as well as studies of collaborative writing by Daiute and Dalton (1989, in press) and Dale (1992). Daiute and Dalton have shown that, even in the absence of a knowledgeable adult, peer collaboration can engage students in their zones of proximal development when, in working together on tasks of mutual interest, for example, each conversant stretches to realize the potential of their joint project. Although most contemporary discussions of instructional scaffolding refer to adult guidance of children's problem solving, Vygotsky (1978) did refer to *problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers* (p. 86, italics in original). In their study of the collaboration of third graders working in pairs to compose narratives, Daiute and Dalton (in press) found expertise is relative: Some students provided support on such technical matters as spelling and punctuation, and others contributed ideas on narrative structure. In her study of collaborative writing, Dale (1992) found that the strongest groupwork, which developed the most substantive ideas, was characterized by the most extensive cognitive conflict. In these studies, it was the social collaboration and interaction of peers that defined and conditioned their cognitive activities.

Sociocognitive theory has also affected recent research on basic writing. Although teachers often try to evaluate and make inferences about students' thinking on the basis of their writing, Hull and her

colleagues have begun to probe the kinds of knowledge that underprepared learners bring to the complex tasks of interpreting a literary text (Hull & Rose, 1990) or writing a summary (Hull & Rose, 1989). On the surface, the strategies students use in reading and writing appear idiosyncratic. Following a line of inquiry started by Shaughnessy (1977), Hull and Rose show, however, that these students' performance has both a history and a logic. The choices and decisions that learners make include their past experiences with school. However, this legacy of schooling often remains hidden from view when we look at students' texts alone. Without close analysis of students' thinking in context we can easily lose sight of the cognition that motivates students' performance in school. More recently, Hull et al.'s (1991) study of classroom discourse has revealed the extent to which our assumptions about remediation not only shape classroom practices, but also influence the kinds of assessments we make about students' ability to think. Even the most enlightened teachers locate difference and failure in the minds of individual learners. In place of worn-out assumptions about learning, they argue that we "need to develop conceptual frameworks that simultaneously assert cognitive and linguistic competence while celebrating in a non-hierarchical way the play of human difference" (p. 326). Recently the work of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1962) has found new audiences in this country in this regard. Like Bizzell (1982b), Freire attacks the "banking" model of education, wherein learners—especially the underprivileged members of lower economic classes—are seen to arrive at school carrying a "deficit account" of school knowledge that is to be filled up with deposits of knowledge by a benevolent banker-teacher.

Stephen Witte (1992) contends that composition studies have been unduly limited by research programs that have examined only alphabetic texts. Because many, if indeed not most texts include graphic as well as verbal material, Witte argues that any comprehensive account of written communication must deal with such multimedia, "blurred genres." Defining a text as "any ordered set of signs for which or through which people in a culture construct meaning" (p. 269), Witte argues that an adequate theory must also successfully interrelate both cognitive and social factors. Basing his proposed construct on Peirce's (1931-1958) account of constructive semiosis, Witte shows that texts are never "receptacles" for meaning but only bear a potential for interpretation.[55] Citing Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic, Witte concludes by arguing that the actual meaning of any text is always the result of writer and reader interpretation, "processes of negotiating the intellectual and emotional space between the 'self' and the 'other,' between the individual and the social, as the multiple voices of distinct constructive semioses mix on what might be called the battlefield of the 'trace' " (p. 287).

Current interest in and research on writing assessment, especially using portfolios, also reflects this expanded understanding of writing. Rather than viewing reader response as extraneous to the meaning and value of any given text, reader response is now considered, along with topic and genre, to be an essential component. Studies by Nystrand, Cohen, and Dowling (1993) and Witte (1988a, 1988b), for example, refute the premise that a single writing sample can comprehensively reveal a skill as complicated as writing, which normally varies with topic, reader, and genre. Instead of neutralizing reader response by forcing readers to agree, writing assessment needs to account for reader response by investigating how writers write for different audiences. Portfolio assessment (see Belanoff & Dickson, 1991), which examines multiple writing samples on diverse topics done in actual course settings, is currently one interesting development based on this new approach to writing assessment.

New Directions for Social Constructionism

In a seminal paper on genre, Miller (1984; Herndl, Fennel, & Miller, 1991) defined genre not in terms of "the substance or the form of discourse" but in terms of "the action it is used to accomplish" (Miller, 1984, p. 151); genre, in short, is *social action*: "typified rhetorical actions based on recurrent situations" (Miller, 1984, p. 159). Other social-constructionist studies that treat writing as "situated cognition embedded in disciplinary activities" (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1992, p. 2) include Berkenkotter (in preparation), Bazerman (1986, 1988), Myers (1985, 1990, 1991), and Swales (1990). Bazerman's and Myers's textual and historical studies have examined the role social context plays in writing: for example, an individual writer responding to an exigence or to a set of factual conditions, interests, motives, or constraints that prompt inquiry and the production of discourse in a public forum. In ways such as these, discourse communities condition the goals and problems that writers address and elaborate based on their own values and beliefs. In this view, cognition and social context dialectically inform one another.

Bazerman (1991) has investigated the textual aspects of social constructionism, revealing a fundamental relationship between text and context. In this view, the production of texts is shaped by context, a complex matrix of social, historical, cognitive, and rhetorical activities. At the same time, texts precipitate various contexts and actions that constitute the work of a given community. This approach to studying text and context, shared by new historical studies of literature, marks an important departure from traditional modes of literary criticism that focus on single texts in isolation from their social, historical, and ideological sources. Echoing Bakhtin, Bazerman's (1986) research on the sociology of knowledge has emphasized that the formation of knowledge rests on a dialectical relationship between a community and its members, a dialectic that is mediated by language and influenced by the discipline's history. He also argues, however, that perceiving statements only within the process of social negotiation ignores individuals' power of observation and their ability to contribute to the growth of disciplinary knowledge.

Similarly, Myers's work (1985; see also 1990) illustrates the extent to which researchers respond to and develop consensus as they make tactical appeals to authority, establish a theoretical base for their work, resist assertions about newness or originality, and, to an extent, reorient their projects to fit with previously existing knowledge. At the same time, researchers are accountable to a discipline's past—to its shared concerns and shared knowledge. This perspective suggests how writers in a disciplinary community are part of a discourse tradition, thus calling attention to the social, historical, and intertextual nature of text production. Myers's (1991) recent research has called attention to the social functions of genre. He sees the review of the literature in science writing as a lens through which we see the shaping of a field. Reviews provide an unfolding narrative of a discipline's progress, establish consensus, and frame the work that still needs to be done.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have traced the emergence of composition studies during the past 20 years as but one part of a more general intellectual history concerning the problem of meaning in discourse, a history spanning nearly a half century and encompassing the study of litera-

ture and language as well as composition. As we and others have noted, the immediately precipitating context for the scholarly study of writing seems to have been the literacy crisis of the mid-1970s, which gave impetus to research on writing in hopes of improving writing instruction. Yet it seems entirely possible that the impact of studies by Emig and other early scholars might have been far more muted but for the considerable resonance that these studies struck, especially in departments of English. Here, students of both literature and language were busy accommodating fundamental challenges to their own respective enterprises. A new group of deconstructionists and reading-response scholars, for example, increasingly challenged bedrock, New Critical assumptions concerning the objectivity of texts, and the formalist idea that meaning somehow "resides" in texts became increasingly untenable.

In hindsight, the New Criticism seems to have succeeded in establishing the formalist premise that stable, singular meanings reside in texts essentially by socializing readers and training them in New Critical methods of reading and explication: Meaning can indeed seem to reside in texts and each text can indeed seem to have a single meaning if indeed everyone reads that way.

Like the changing of the intellectual guard, the waning New Criticism was met by the ascension of the language-process movement as the Cambridge psycholinguistic revolution asserted compelling new ideas about language as a constructive, generative process. Reader-response criticism[56] and social models of writing evolved,[57] and in time Olson (1991, 1992) abandoned all defense of his seminal (1977) doctrine of autonomous texts. A new consensus in both literature and composition affirmed the premise that meaning is largely a function of writer and reader interpretation, as well as text, and especially interpretation in particular contexts of use. This new insight seemed to resonate with a more general cultural disposition to validate social pluralism including different—sometimes conflicting—readings of the same text. It was in this context, then, that new descriptions of writing as process rather than prescriptions about good texts could be explored and take hold. The rise of composition studies was emblematic of a much larger intellectual shift, especially about the nature and locus of meaning in discourse, a shift touching most of the human and social sciences.

In composition, as in literature and language, the study of language and text was transformed from a set of formal issues to cognitive ones as explications of model texts gave way to descriptions of ordinary

student writing. In literature, focus on canonical, exemplary texts was complemented and sometimes challenged by new interests in popular culture, this latter shift recalling an earlier one in linguistics when Bloomfield and others supplanted philological analyses of texts with the study of ordinary spoken language. In literature and composition, meaning moved from texts to writing and reading processes. In the 1980s, the parallels continued as both literature and composition sought to understand the social dimensions of their domains. Interpretive and discourse communities became central issues for students of literature and composition, paralleling sociolinguists' interest in speech communities: Whereas meaning in the 1970s was mainly a cognitive issue, by the 1980s, it had become "socialized." Whereas Locke's essays could be treated credibly by Olson in 1977 as the epitome of written language development, composition scholars in the late 1980s and 1990s were more likely to focus on grocery lists, refrigerator notes, business communications, and other genres of everyday social life. These latter concerns echoed linguists' interest in conversation and discourse analysis, as well as literature scholars' investigations of feminism, multiculturalism, and the new historicism.

Well into the 1970s, key insights into the character of writing emerged as often as not from the work of insightful, reflective practitioners, especially Britton, Emig, Moffett, Murray, and Shaughnessy. During this same time, however, the character of the field began to shift as important insights about writing also emerged from systematic research apart from instruction, including work in psychology by Hayes and Flower and Bereiter and Scardamalia; in linguistics by Chafe, Halliday, and Tannen; and in anthropology by Heath and Cook-Gumperz. All the cognitive sciences became interested in discourse and "real-time" language processes. During the 1980s, interest in the social character of writing emerged not only from the pedagogical experience of gifted instructors working with response groups but also in direct reaction to the hegemony of cognitive research in the early 1980s. Current interest in amalgamating cognitive and social orientations into either dialogical or sociocognitive perspectives seems to derive almost entirely from responses to theoretical frameworks and research agendas rather than from the demands of instruction. In short, a new scholarly discourse has emerged during the past two decades so that the context for ideas about writing—the site of action projects—is now an interdisciplinary writing research community as well as a pedagogical forum.

This, we believe, is where composition studies have come from.

NOTES

1. According to Bizzell (1982a), cognitive ("inner-directed") theorists appear mainly concerned with "the structure of language-learning and thinking processes . . . prior to social influence." Social ("outer-directed") theorists are more interested in how "language-learning and thinking capacities are shaped and used in particular communities" (p. 215). "Answers to what we need to know about writing will have to come from both . . . theoretical schools if we wish to have a complete picture of the composing process. We need to explain the cognitive and social factors in writing development, and even more important, the relationship between the two" (p. 218).

2. In short, Faigley (1985) argues that writing is a social act: "The central questions are ones that concern the contexts in which texts are written and read" (p. 242). Such a view forces researchers to address issues of language in the development of thought (Vygotsky, Bakhtin).

3. Many positions aligned with this perspective "appear allied with structuralist arguments about fully enclosed, ahistorical 'genres' and 'discourse communities,' suggesting only a slight modification of objectivist assumptions to include 'social context' among other 'objective constraints' acting upon discursive practice" (Knoblauch, 1988, pp. 136-137).

4. According to Berlin (1988), "Ideology is transmitted through language practices that are always the center of conflict and interest. . . . Ideology also . . . always includes conceptions of power" (pp. 478-479).

5. For further discussion, see Ackerman (1992). Problem solving is associated with the art of discovery or invention in classical rhetoric. But theorists and teachers in composition have also turned to research in mathematics (e.g., Polya, 1957) and psychology (e.g., Festinger, 1957; Hayes, 1981; Perkins, 1981), which has shown that experts in different fields develop a set of heuristic procedures that enable them to identify, analyze, and solve problems. For a writer, a problem can "arise when one becomes aware of inconsistencies in his own image of the world" (Young, Becker, & Pike, 1970, p. 71) or the exigencies within a rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1968). Heuristic procedures, which are not rule governed, can provide a "series of questions or operations" to guide inquiry and thinking (Young, 1982, p. 135). A primary concern for the new classicists was to teach students heuristics to help them locate what was at issue in a given rhetorical problem, inquire systematically into the nature of possible solutions, and determine the appropriateness of one's choices in taking a particular approach in writing. Drawing from the work of Bruner, Young (1982) observed that "the exploratory procedure can be seen as a way of moving our mind out of its habitual grooves, of shaking it loose from a stereotypic past that wants to be retrieved, of helping the writer get beyond superficial to levels tapped by the romantic's muse" (p. 138).

6. Tagmemic linguistics is a theory of language that sees language as "a way of selecting and grouping experiences in a fairly consistent and predictable way" (Young et al., 1970, p. 27). For example, we understand a given experience by studying its features: we compare and contrast it with other experiences, change its focus, and so on. Such a theory could provide students with the principles of making choices about arrangement and strategy in composing. Although incorporating certain psychological principles described by those working in creative problem solving, the new classicists underscored the social dimension of a new rhetoric as well. Constructing meaning "is the result of a transaction between events in the world 'out there' and the individual's previous experience, knowledge, values, attitudes, and desires" (p. 25).

7. Earlier, Berlin saw the cognitive rhetoric of Flower and Hayes as a version of epistemic rhetoric or part of "the new rhetoric" (Berlin, 1982; see also Berlin, 1987).

8. According to Berlin (1988) "While the reality of the material, the social, and the linguistic are never denied, they are considered significant only insofar as they serve the needs of the individual. All fulfill their true function only when being exploited in the interests of locating the individual's authentic nature" (p. 484).

9. According to Elbow (1986), "If I want power, I've got to use my voice" (p. 202).

10. Social-epistemic rhetoric, with its emphasis on the intersubjective and linguistic nature of knowledge construction and material and historical processes, challenges teaching practice and research that locates knowledge in human consciousness and in fixed essences that exist apart from human activity (Berlin, 1982, 1988; cf. Leff, 1978; Scott, 1967, 1976). In addition, viewing knowledge as a site of ideological conflict, social-epistemic rhetoric seeks to demystify political, economic, and social arrangements that enforce a particular way of seeing the world, practices that alienate and disempower those who do not contribute to consensus. In place of teaching discrete skills or the expressive function of written language, Berlin (1988) urges that we "situate students in a social process," engaging them in a radical critique of ideology in order to help them "identify the ways in which control over their lives has been denied them . . ." (p. 490). In short, "social-epistemic rhetoric views knowledge as an arena of ideological conflict" (p. 489). Understanding how language serves economic and political interests can liberate students as they learn how social processes both empower and marginalize. In turn, Berlin and others (see, for example, Shor, 1980) suggest that students can use this knowledge to resist the social and political practices that deny access to power and control.

11. In particular, Kitzhaber's (cited in North, 1987) address to the 1963 convention, "The 4Cs and Freshman English," echoed Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's concern that composition instruction be based on formal inquiry.

12. Moffett (1968b) argued that making intelligent decisions about writing instruction should not wait for basic research on the writing process.

13. Important exceptions include the University of Southern California (1972) and Ohio State University (1970).

14. Tannen (1982).

15. Nystrand (1982).

16. Gregg and Steinberg (1981); Whiteman (1981); and Frederiksen and Dominic (1981).

17. Cooper and Greenbaum (1986).

18. A compelling, if difficult, philosophically oriented treatment of some of these issues, as well as the fundamental interdisciplinarity of composition studies, can be found in Phelps (1988). Our intellectual history differs from this important synoptic treatment to the extent that we attempt to provide a more close-grained view of the decade-by-decade evolution of the field as it emerges in the historically situated work of composition scholars and their peers in related fields. Curiously, Phelps has very little to say about the internal working scholarship that has driven the field since its inception.

19. "We construct a representation of the world as we experience it, and from this representation, this cumulative record of our own past, we generate expectations concerning the future; expectations which, as moment by moment the future becomes the present, enable us to interpret the present" (Britton, 1970, p. 12). "The primary task for speech is to symbolize reality: we symbolize reality in order to handle it" (Britton, 1970, p. 20).

20. An important volume of cognitive papers on writing at this time was Gregg and Steinberg (1981). For reviews of cognitive research on writing, see Humes (1983), Kucer (1987), and Spivey (1990).

21. According to cognitive psychology, information has meaning when the knower can somehow fit it into an existing cognitive framework, or schema. Piaget defined this process as assimilation. When the knower is unable to assimilate information, either the individual must revise an existing schema to accommodate it or the information remains either unnoticed or nonsense.

22. In a more top-down and less interactive interpretation, Kintsch (1980) wrote, "We assume that at [the] point [of translation], the writer has available both the macro- and microstructure of the text, that is, its complete semantic representation. . . . This is what the writer needs to put into words now" (p. 28). Writing, then, is the intricate process of "translating" this complex network of information into text, which is typically less abstract than the mental representation itself (Flower & Hayes, 1981). In short, according to Flower and Hayes, writing is a dynamic problem-solving process in which writers "strategically" (purposefully) represent, adapt, and transform information and meaning in response to a given rhetorical situation.

23. Other Harvard Graduate School of Education students at the time whose research contributed to cognitive research on writing and reading include Applebee (1974), Moffett (1968a, 1968b), Read (1971), and Smith (1971). Mellon (1969) conducted research on sentence combining based on Chomsky's transformational grammar.

24. This interpretation suggests, obviously, that some fundamental overlap must exist between categories like formalism and structuralism. Indeed, from the point of view of many functionally oriented linguists (e.g., Halliday), it makes considerable sense to say that *both* Chomsky and Bloomfield are formalists; in contrast to a functionalist framework, the two share more in common than they differ.

25. Chomsky, of course, has always insisted that his generative framework is not a model of the psychology of language processing (a matter of linguistic *performance*, in his view, and thus beyond the scope of systematic study). Nevertheless, it is precisely on this point that his structuralist distinction between competence and performance seems most problematic. Our practice of conflating *generativism* with *constructivism* (the process-oriented stance par excellence) is motivated less by Chomsky's own formulations than by the application of his framework by a whole generation of scholars investigating the psychology of language processing.

26. According to Searle (1976), "The abstractness and complexity of Chomsky's syntax is accounted for by his version of the innateness hypothesis and by the abstract theory of linguistic competence, but the chief evidence for the innateness hypothesis is the abstractness and complexity of the grammar" (p. 1120). Searle implies here that Chomsky's method of using the complexity and abstractness of his grammar to argue for its innateness, and then leaning on this innateness hypothesis to justify the complexity and abstractness of his system, like other structuralist analyses that privilege theoretical abstraction over empirical data, ultimately collapses under the centripetal forces of its own inward-looking self-referentiality.

27. See Russell (1991) and Ackerman (1992) for more detailed accounts of the impact of writing across the curriculum (WAC) on the field's emerging interests in social aspects of the writing process.

28. See Bruffee's (1984) bibliographic essay for a discussion of Kuhn, Rorty, Fish, and others.

29. For an alternative view, see Lu (1991).

30. Hirsch's (1987) highly influential *Cultural Literacy* has also addressed the importance of "content knowledge" in learning to write and has had considerable impact on national policy regarding the teaching of writing at primary and secondary school levels. Rose's (1989) equally influential *Lives on the Boundary* has popularized among writing scholars and teachers the powerful metaphor of "entering the conversation" that complicates and challenges Hirsch's views.

31. In their now-classic work, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1966) give equal weight to the negotiations of social interaction, on the one hand, and the resulting socially constructed beliefs, norms, and so forth, which they call "objectifications," on the other. "Society does indeed possess objective facticity," they write. "And society is indeed built up by activity that expresses subjective meaning" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 30). Recent North American composition studies rooted in social constructionism (e.g., Bartholomae, Bizzell, Brodkey, Bruffee), has not presented such a balanced view, however, emphasizing the objectifications of community and group norms (especially text conventions) far more than social interaction. For more, see Greene (1990) and Nystrand (1990a).

32. The shape of Fish's argument is essentially the same as that of Kuhn's (1970) treatise on scientific revolutions, in which Kuhn argued that scientists' observations, hypotheses, and problems are largely shaped by the disciplinary conventions or paradigms they operate under. It is also analogous to Durkheim's (1966) research on the sociology of suicide in which he showed that suicide cannot be explained entirely as a phenomenon of individual tragedy and unhappiness but must also be understood as a result of abstract social facts beyond the control of any individual. Durkheim also demonstrated that social factors affecting suicide vary from group to group.

33. Chomsky departed from Saussure's view of *la langue* as a social fact to focus instead on linguistic *competence* as a fact of the *individual mind*.

34. Bakhtin (Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1978) charged that the formalists were plagued by "the insipid empiricism of positivism" and that the constructivists were afflicted with "the abstract disinterestedness of idealism" (p. 6).

35. According to Bakhtin (Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1978), "Attempting to separate the work from the subjective consciousness, the formalists at the same time sever it from the objective fact of social intercourse, with the result that the artistic work turns into a meaningless thing analogous to a commodity fetish. Every utterance, including the artistic work, is a communication, a message, and is completely inseparable from intercourse" (p. 151).

36. Of particular interest to Bakhtin was not just the relationship between self and other, however, but also issues of difference: What, for example, insures the integrity of different forces? What makes them unique, and what is the ground of difference in our consciousness? In answering these questions, Bakhtin ultimately turned to the notion of *authorship*, focusing less on the dichotomy between self and other than on the strategies involved in creating meaning out of the encounter between what is given and what the mind conceives. For Bakhtin, authoring was the "structuring force that organizes communicative relations—whether between self and self, self and other, different selves, or self and the world" (Holquist, 1990, p. 84).

37. Some theorists (e.g., Bruffee, 1986) have suggested that Bakhtin's work reflects a strong social constructionist position, which reifies the role of social structures and language in the process of interpretation. Clark and Holquist (1984) and Holquist (1990), however, have pointed to Bakhtin's attempts to connect "self and other" and his

insistence that subjectivity results from a dialectical interplay of an individual consciousness and ideological forces.

38. Constructed within a Marxist milieu, Bakhtin's "social context" is, in fact, a complex notion that is difficult to assimilate to our contemporary frames of understanding. The abstract objectivism he sought to reconcile with individual cognition certainly entails conventional understandings of a "community of voices" and to this extent is treated by his principle of dialogism. To the extent that Bakhtin also construed abstract objectivism as a "natural" outcome of historical materialism, however, his notion of social context also implicates the specific material conditions (i.e., social-cultural institutions, power relationships, etc.) that circumscribe experiences and shape attempts to construct meaning in discourse. It is when dialogism's "community of voices" becomes reified as the material conditions of discourse (i.e., as social types, ideologies, conventions, and institutions) that his principle of dialectical relations becomes necessary.

39. In their research on conversation as turn taking, ethnomethodologists Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) demonstrate that the dialectic between context and cognition that makes language use meaningful is a function of the ongoing, contingent (dialogical) accomplishment of language users.

40. Halliday (1978) demonstrates how language functions to mediate the relation between social and cognitive domains. For Halliday, the dialectic Bakhtin describes turns on the potential of language to both reflect the communicative contexts that constrain and enable shared meanings and in so doing reconstitute those contexts as the contingent accomplishment of particular language acts.

41. Clark and Holquist (1984) construe Bakhtin's attempts to describe the dialectical relation between self and society as an "innovative cognitive sociology" (p. 86), pointing out that Bakhtin's interest in dialogic or "relational thinking"—the concept that the meaning of an utterance is realized through the interaction of speaker and listener, reader and writer—led Bakhtin to conclude that language is both a cognitive and social practice that holds a community together.

42. Halliday's systemic-functional, social semiotic framework has found considerably more influence in England and Australia than in the United States, particularly in efforts to construct an educational linguistics by scholars like Stubbs (1984) and Widdowson (1984). See especially the Australian *Language Education* series (edited by F. Christie, 1985) for an impressive effort to apply Halliday's "critical linguistics" systematically to diverse educational concerns ranging from understanding the difference between speaking and writing to confronting issues of power and gender difference in the classroom. In this country, Halliday's theory has been applied productively by composition scholars like Witte (1983) in his study of topical structure in revision, Brandt (1986) in her exploration of the contexts of writing, Faigley (1989) in reviewing the general evolution of composition studies as a discipline, Vande Kopple (1991) in his study of theme and thematic progression in writing, and Nystrand and Wiemelt (1991) in their account of the nature of explicitness in written discourse.

43. When asked to comment on Chomsky's (1972) assertion that "linguistics is a part of cognitive psychology," Halliday (1978) replied, "I'm not really interested in the boundaries between disciplines; but if you pressed me for one specific answer, I would have to say that for me linguistics is a branch of sociology" (p. 38).

44. We are able to do so, Halliday reasons, because language itself is organized internally as a resource by which language users can establish and maintain as an ongoing practical accomplishment of their concerted interactions the contexts that make

their discourses both personally and publicly meaningful. "Presumably the semantic system [language] evolved as symbolic interaction among people in social contexts, so we should expect the semiotic structure of the contexts to be embodied in its internal organization" (Halliday, 1978, p. 117).

45. Sociologists and ethnomethodologists like Garfinkel (1967), Cicourel (1973), and Sacks et al. (1974) have proposed principles like the "et cetera" principle, the reciprocity of phenomenal perspectives, indexicality, and reflexivity to account for the role of dialogically oriented, situated discourse in the organization (i.e., the *semiotic mediation*) of "common sense" in everyday human affairs. The principles of dialogic interaction and semiotic mediation were central to Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) conceptions of inner speech, language development, and higher-order cognition and therefore contrast sharply with the structuralist perspectives of Piaget and Chomsky.

46. For review of this work, see Tierney and Shanahan (1991).

47. On this point, see also Nystrand's (1982) contrast of the effects of writers on readers versus the effects readers have on writers. Nystrand's (1986) theory posits that written communication is governed by reciprocity between writers and readers, and his model (Nystrand, 1989) outlines the textual "moves" that writers make vis-à-vis readers to initiate and sustain their interaction. Because Nystrand's theory is based on reciprocity between writer and reader and presents a dialogic conception of meaning, it differs fundamentally from Grice's cooperation model of communication, as well as other conceptions and models of the composing process, which seek to explain writing in terms of effects writers seek to have on readers.

Other work investigating discourse as manifest in communicative interaction include studies of (a) specialized discourse (e.g., Redd, 1992; Salyer, 1992), (b) classrooms as discourse communities (e.g., Freedman, 1992; Gutierrez, 1992; Nystrand, 1992), (c) collaboration and collaborative writing (Burnett, 1992; Daiute, 1992; Daiute, Griffin, & Reddy, 1993; Dale, 1992; Flower, 1992; Hartman, 1992; Shanahan, 1993; Sitko, 1993), and (d) genre (e.g., Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1992; Evensen, 1993; Freedman, 1993; Swales, 1990).

48. Other recent research exploring the interaction of the cognitive and the social includes studies addressing (a) social models of discourse (e.g., Ackerman, 1992; Dyson, 1992; Haas, 1992; Penrose & Fennell, 1992), (b) cognitive social synthesis (e.g., Bazerman, 1992; Brandt, 1992; Sperling, 1993; Sulzby et al., 1992).

49. According to Witte (1992), "Attending only to traditional language will not permit us to account for either the production or use of many 'written texts' we all encounter on a daily basis—labels on cereal boxes, traffic signs, [etc.]—all of which rely on nonlinguistic sign systems" (p. 240). See also Nystrand's (1986) analysis of notes (pp. 97-99).

50. See also Odell and Goswami (1982), Jolliffe (1989), Barabas (1990).

51. See Olson's (1989) review of Nystrand's (1986) use of reciprocity to characterize written as well as oral language and their subsequent exchanges (Olson, 1990; Nystrand, 1990b, 1990c).

52. Cazden (1989) accounts for this resonance by characterizing it as a "myth."

53. Some saw the task, which required them to analyze and synthesize information, as requiring them to summarize the reading passages they were given; others interpreted the task as inviting them to talk about what they already knew, thus using the sources as a springboard to introduce their own ideas. For the most part, however,

students focused primarily on the sources they were given, with only a small number of students developing their own rhetorical purpose—that is, adapting and transforming information from the sources and their experiences to make an original claim.

54. Nelson's (1990) research has also shown how contextual factors can shape students' evolving interpretations of a given task and the strategies they use in writing research papers. Her study of college freshmen suggests that students' approaches to writing in a number of different fields depends, in large part, on the quality and frequency of teachers' feedback on students' drafts, their criteria for evaluating writing, and their stated goals for assigning writing. Similarly, Herrington's (1985) investigation of students writing proposals and lab reports in chemical engineering has demonstrated how both task and context can shape the social purposes for writing, the persona writers adopt in composing, and their understanding of what it means to think and act in different disciplinary forums.

55. Halliday (1975) discusses the *meaning potential* of texts. Rommetveit (1974) contrasts *semantic potential* with *semantic content*, arguing that texts can never have more than the former.

56. Including Bleich (1988), Fish (1970), and Iser (1978).

57. Including Brandt (1990), Brodkey (1987), Nystrand (1986), and Witte (1992).

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