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Review Essays

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Marc Bousquet, Tony Scott, and Leo Parascondola, eds. *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers: Writing Instruction in the Managed University*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004. ix–xi + 297 pages. \$25.00 paper.

This collection of essays is about the elephant in the room. The staffing of composition programs with contingent labor governs what is possible in curriculum design, professional development, collegiality, grading practices, assessment, and classroom management. And yet scholarship in composition studies continues to address these other issues as though they were not affected by hiring practices that are unworthy of professional respect.

Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers foregrounds issues raised by unfair labor practices in the academy, discussing them from the points of view of teachers and administrators. The twenty-six contributors to this collection have a good deal that is new to say about academic labor practices, and those who return to old issues confront them with refreshing directness. While most focus on the conditions of academic work or labor organizing, several of the essays included here situate composition instruction within the larger contexts of the managed university and global corporatization. The list of contributors includes people who have been working with academic labor issues for many years (*sixties radicals* to use a term favored in the mainstream press) as well as people who are beginning their teaching careers while working on advanced degrees. The editors of the collection are associated with the online journal *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor*, and all are active in efforts to improve the working conditions of contingently employed faculty. These folks know what they are talking about, and their collection is an important addition to the professional conversation about literacy work.

The contributors have some good news to report. Across the country graduate student unions have become recognized as bargaining units and have achieved measurable improvements in their working conditions. Teachers' unions and activist groups are also making headway toward alleviating unfair salary schedules and securing benefits packages for contingently employed teachers. The Campus Equity Week movement is growing in popularity. Teachers have allied with other university workers to urge campuses to rethink discriminatory and unfair hiring practices. Eileen Schell's contribution to the collection, titled "Toward a New Labor Movement in Higher Education: Contingent Faculty and Organizing for Change," supplies a minihistory of organizing efforts and lots of information for people who are interested in addressing academic labor issues. Schell thinks that the WTO protests in 1999 "signaled a

shift in awareness of labor issues and a building up of strategic alliances between workers and national and international labor organizations" (100). She provides examples that support this claim, demonstrating that issues surrounding the widespread use of contingent labor have brought academic labor organizers together with their counterparts at many levels—local, state, national, and international. Labor activism can be lonely work, particularly on college and university campuses. The Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) has addressed this difficulty to some extent by holding conferences that allow activists to share concerns, learn new strategies, and develop standards for equitable employment.

But such successes are a mixed blessing. Ruth Kiefson acknowledges that while increases in wages and benefits "will ease the economic pressure on the growing number of adjunct faculty, they will not alter management's increasing reliance on part-time labor within higher education" (143). The achievement of better working conditions can ease the conscience of those in higher management to such an extent that they may be reluctant to consider the instructional effects of contingent hiring. In other words, as Kiefson notes, labor activists need to define very clearly what "winning" might mean in a struggle against monopoly capitalism. Richard Ohmann's meditation on "Citizenship and Literacy Work" reinforces the necessity of thinking in larger terms. Ohmann argues that one chilling effect of the corporatization of the university is that "citizenship has a smaller place now than before in official rationales for higher education and no place at all in the play of economic forces that are remaking the university" (43). This is a sobering thought for those of us who aim our pedagogy at the construction of citizenship. My recent teaching experience confirms Ohmann's claim that "for students, citizenship is a recreational choice, an individual taste," although I have discovered that students readily awake to its importance once they are given the tools requisite to read the highly commodified political coverage served up by the media these days.

One thing I like about the essays collected here is that its authors do not engage in euphemism. They do not write about "globalization" (at the level of international corporatizing) or "Total Quality Management" (at the level of local practice); rather, they use the generic name for the ideology/practice that authorizes institutionalized greed: monopoly capitalism. In "From Adelphi to Enron," Paul Lauter supplies readers with an informative history of the extension of corporate desire into higher education. He notes that students are now being taught a "free-market ideology" that has to do with "winning the hearts and minds of young Americans to the fantasy that their interests and those of the Lays, Skillings, and other Enronites are one" (78). In "Composition as Management Science," Marc Bosquet artfully shows that the published dis-

course of WPAs is fully consonant with that of lower management in any large corporation. The distinguishing mark of this level of management, of course, is its close physical proximity to workers while at the same time it maintains a “near-complete ideological identification with upper management” (15). On this analogy WPAs bear about the same relation to provosts and university presidents as managers of local franchises bear to the corporate leadership of MacDonald’s. I know that it is unpleasant for full-time, tenured faculty to think of themselves in such a light, but Bosquet’s systemic analysis is compelling. No collection of essays about the effects of labor practices in composition would be complete without testimony from those who are contingently employed. William Vaughn reports on his career as an adjunct administrator, which career began during his second year of graduate work. He hopes that this trend toward the management of sprawling composition programs by anybody-but-faculty “if trend it be—does mark the point when our profession is forced to admit it has ceased to function as a self-governing, self-responsible discipline” (167). Don’t count on it, William: English departments have been running composition programs without much faculty oversight, and without guilt, since the 1930s at least. Eric Marshall contributes a riveting account of his growing awareness that the standard labor practices used in universities actually governed everything he did as a first-time teacher of composition. William Thelin and Leean Bertocini report on Leean’s harrowing experiences with classroom observations that determined whether her contract would be renewed. Her decision to teach the students actually seated in the room, rather those imagined by the authors of the assigned textbook and the standardized syllabus, cost her job. Their essay is the first (that I have seen) that acknowledges that contingently employed faculty maintain their sanity by teaching current-traditional rhetoric (132). When one is teaching eight (or ten) sections of composition every semester, formalization offers a handy means of coping with the logistics of class preparation and paper grading. Tony Scott underscores the disconnect between composition research and the circumstances under which it is taught: “I often marvel at the difference between the portrait of writing instruction I see in most of our scholarship—where the teacher is typically assumed to be a full-time teacher with her own office—and the material reality I encounter in my everyday working life as a writing teacher” (154). Composition researchers take themselves to be the teacher-subject of their scholarship, and of course those who (can) (are required to) do research are typically not contingently employed.

If the analyses made by these authors are accurate, composition has become a thoroughly managed enterprise, a repetition on a smaller scale of the management of the university as a whole. Hence this book is not an easy read. It is

distressing to realize that the growth of composition studies occurred over the same period during which the university morphed into a corporate wanna-be. It is no comfort to learn that labor practices first used in composition have now made their way into the rest of the academy. And it is unsettling to see the links between the entrepreneurial university and global corporatism outlined so clearly as they are in this collection. Several contributors to the collection nonetheless hold out hope that the progressive legacy of composition, as well as its traditional habit of intellectual skepticism, may yet rescue both from enslavement to corporate values. If this is to happen, we have to be clear-eyed about the situation we are in. This book is a fine place to begin.

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Gerard A. Hauser and Amy Grim, eds. *Rhetorical Democracy: Discursive Practices of Civic Engagement*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2004. 321 pages. \$35.00 paper.

Despite appearances—the glossy cover, the professional binding and typescript, the author and subject indexes, and, dare I note, the price tag—*Rhetorical Democracy* is not a scholarly collection of essays in the usual sense. *Rhetorical Democracy* is the selected proceedings of the Tenth Biennial conference of the Rhetoric Society of America whose theme encouraged participants to reflect upon rhetoric's role in democratic life. The editor's elaborate first chapter, five plenary papers, seven contributions to a President's panel on the rhetoric of 9/11 and its aftermath, and twenty-six selected essays (averaging six pages in length) tackle a significant set of questions, sometimes from usefully competing points of view. What kind of pedagogy will prepare students for citizenship in the twenty-first century (Aune, Eberly, Keith, Norgaard, Simons, and Scott)? How is the Internet transforming civic engagement today (Gronbeck, Killoran, and McAllister)? To what should we attribute the force of turn of the millennium neoconservative, neoliberal, and global rhetorics (Andrejevic, Beer, Cox, Cloud, Farrell, Greene, Hariman, Klien, and Ochieng)? How might our understanding of contemporary emancipatory pro-

jects be enabled by our studying the rhetorical strategies of minoritized populations who struggled for change in the past (Carlacio, Doherty, Emery, Hellman, Iltis, Lain, Logan, Ludwig, and Parker)? And what might we learn if we refuse the presupposition that the formation of collective political will is an effect of rational public deliberation in its strict sense and, thus, critically engage so-called aberrant, unconventional, or atypical discourses and events (Blitefield, Dobyns, Ellis, Gore, Hingstman, Katz, Moghtader, Oswald, Pym, and Romano)? It is inevitable that some answers to these questions will be more insightful, persuasive, and eloquent than others in an anthology of this kind. Be that as it may, the value of *Rhetorical Democracy* can be measured not by the particular strengths and weaknesses of individual essays but, instead, by what the ensemble may be able to tell us about how the terms and the tone of the in-house discussion are being set.

It has long been commonplace for scholars across the humanities to treat actual existing democracies as works in progress and, thus, to regard their shortcomings as either a matter of rigorously implementing democratic founding principles or fully actualizing democratic ideals. The hope that any particular democratic regime may one day become proper to itself or live up to its name is thus kept alive by the presumption of its prepolitical origin (that is, natural rights) or its postpolitical end (that is, a substantive idea of the good life). Within this framework rhetoric is assigned its significant and clearly delimited place in the complex history of democracy's realization or renewal: It is one of the primary means by which, to use Wendy Brown's (*States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, Princeton UP, 1995) eloquent turn of phrase, human beings participate in "the difficult labor of the collective self-fashioning that is democratic politics" (2). By not only promoting identification with its founding principles and ideals but also inspiring action on their behalf, the suasive use of discourse assists in democracy's actualization. In the US context, this has meant, for example, the progressive expansion of the still-exclusionary (but ever less so) category of the citizen through the extension of formal rights and the modulation of the rules by which the game of deliberative democracy is played. Ultimately, of course, these two different ways of addressing the question of democracy's realization converge in the theory of representation and logic of adequation that shores both of them up. The condition of possibility of a democracy-to-come hinges upon the undistorted concretization of its founding principles or transcendent ideals, their *faithful* transposition into the real.

This way of thinking about "the enduring promise of democracy" animates the overwhelming majority of critical essays collected in *Rhetorical Democracy*. Indeed, whether they are analyzing the "signifying practices" of the classroom

or the “speech acts” of the courtroom, the dissident discourse of Maria Stewart or the refeudalizing rhetoric of WTO bureaucrats, prime-time post-9/11 media propaganda or postmodern poetry slams, these authors decipher particular rhetorical practices as either facilitating or frustrating what Slavoj Žižek has called democracy’s tautological return to itself (*Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology*, Duke UP, 1993). But what if neither “the perils” nor “the promise” of democracy can be thought so simply? Or, to phrase the question differently, what might it mean for us to surrender the theoretical guarantee of democracy’s pure origin and end?

To wager the transcendental or privileged signified is, as Jacques Derrida noted long ago in “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” (*Writing and Difference*, U of Chicago P, 1978), risky business since:

Henceforth it [is] necessary to begin thinking that there [is] no center, that the center [can] not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center [has] no natural site, that it [is] not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions [come] into play. This [is] the moment when language invade[s] the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything [becomes] discourse—provided we can agree on this word—that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendent signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification indefinitely. (280)

To refuse the sacredness of any term and to submit all foundations to a mode of rigorous historical critique that does not, by an act of imagination, disavow the irreducibly discursive character of the material conditions of their possibility. Obviously, this is another way of describing what Chantal Mouffe has termed “the return of democracy to the political” (“Rawls: Political Philosophy without Politics,” *The Return of the Political*, New York: Verso, 1993: 41–59). But it is also, less obviously perhaps, a first step in writing a different *kind* of rhetorical analysis of democracy’s history whose task would be neither to measure, by way of the interpretation of individual texts, the more or less satisfactory degree to which the idea of democracy is translated into material order *nor* merely to inflect the contingency of all formulations and foundations of democratic life through the proliferation of textual examples. Such rhetorical analysis would instead work to identify and assess the mechanics of

efficient coding (in the so-called hard and human sciences as well as in law, economics, public policy, and so forth) by which the interminable play of signification is brought to a provisional halt and a democratic idiom set in place. Working from within this analytical frame, then, a rather different set of critical questions come to the fore: By what rules are regimes that are called “democratic” formed? What systems of thought, economies of desire, domains of practice, and order of objects, open those historical fields? What network of referents do they require, and how are they produced? What must be displaced, set aside, or set outside in order for them to cohere? And what instrumentalities serve that end?

Kenneth Burke argued long ago that a shift in our relationship to key terms will bring with it a change not only in our relationship to our own practices but also in our tone. One of the practices of central concern to the contributors of *Rhetorical Democracy* is, of course, the writing of rhetorical criticism. Another is the teaching of rhetoric. So how might our pedagogy be reshaped by taking the deconstruction of democracy’s foundations as its point of departure? At the very least, it would oblige us to think less easily of what we now take to be our basic charge: preparation for citizenship through instruction in “civic-minded” reading, writing, and speech. Here my concern is not simply that as one of the instrumentalities of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century liberal democracy, the rhetoric classroom assists in the reproduction and naturalization of political agency figured as identity, consciousness, and voice. What also gives me pause is the set of marching orders that have begun regularly to flow from the discipline’s interest in fitting our mission “to the streets”: from treating the classroom as a “proto-public sphere” to divesting ourselves of our interests in “unresolvable [academic] debates” that do little more than “stake out positions of institutional power” in an institution that is now perceived to be merely academic. It seems to me, however, that careful instruction in the mechanics of efficient coding will make it possible to reflect critically on the relationship between our own textualizations and a hegemonic political culture that is unabashedly anti-intellectual. Like history, the devaluation of hard intellectual labor (brilliantly recoded in public culture as “character education,” “service learning,” and “vocational training”) has its uses. Thus I end on what, in the current conjuncture, may seem to be a counterintuitive claim: A real virtue of *Rhetorical Democracy* is the unwitting reminder that stopping to think against the grain of common sense is sometimes a radical and democratic act.

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Steve Fuller and James H. Collier. *Philosophy, Rhetoric, and the End of Knowledge: A New Beginning for Science and Technology Studies*, 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2004. ix–xxix + 321 pages. \$39.95 paper.

Steve Fuller and James H. Collier set the bar themselves for judging the success of their recent volume, and they set it high: For both the first, influential edition of *Philosophy, Rhetoric, and the End of Knowledge (PREK)* and this new edition, success “should be measured in terms of its ability to persuade philosophers, theoretical humanists and social scientists, STS practitioners, and rhetoricians of science to see each other as engaged in a common enterprise” (xi). Having achieved, they say, “a modest success” (xi) with the first edition (authored in 1993 by Fuller), they present the second one in light of changes in science and technology studies in the intervening years. Achieving the commonality of disciplinary purpose they seek is, indeed, a high standard, given the sometimes competitive or even adversarial nature of the subdisciplines they name. In this second edition, on their own terms, the authors of this comprehensive and very provocative work achieve a qualified success. Although Fuller and Collier ostensibly respect the autonomy of the various disciplines contributing to science and technology studies (STS), their zeal to argue for the centrality of the academic study of rhetoric to STS sometimes leads them to suggest reforms that could threaten the existence of philosophical and humanistic studies of science (at least as we currently understand them) and could lead to the absorption of the sociology of knowledge into social epistemology. But this rhetorical effect could be exactly what they intend; they imply that STS, along with the university system charged with “knowledge production,” has once again, fallen into some less-than-productive ruts that some provocative discussion might just remedy.

Their telling of the STS story begins on fairly familiar ground: Historians, philosophers, and sociologists of knowledge were struggling to make clear, in the late twentieth century, and especially after Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolution*, that the enterprise of science was not an affair strictly definable by the internal validation structures of scientific practice. The first edition of *PREK*, in that atmosphere, argued for a conception of knowledge in which wider communities of thought were acknowledged to have their due influence on knowledge production—a social epistemology—and universities needed to be opened to “extramural considerations that would serve to shake up ossified disciplinary structures” (xiii).

Subsequently, though, universities have (arguably, at least) opened themselves too much to the market influences of external communities. Rather than

opposing this trend altogether, Fuller and Collier seek to clarify its value and correct its excesses. The value of this “corporatist” impulse (xvi) is in the collapsing of the power structure inherent in the noncorporatist separation of knowledge production and knowledge distribution. Reversing the noncorporatist hierarchy makes knowledge producers responsible to the consumers of knowledge. Overcoming the excesses and errors that may accrue from collapsing a class structure of experts and nonexperts requires a revived rhetoric of science, both for scientists and the STSers who study their practices—and who should be able to provide a bridge between the scientists and their various publics.

With the collapsing or shuffling of hierarchies, especially those related to the production and consumption of knowledge, rhetoric becomes essential in more than the obvious ways. In Parts I and II of the book, Fuller and Collier lay out both what are and what could be the rhetorical influences on knowledge production. First, once the acknowledgment is made that scientific method is not by itself the key to science’s truth-bearing authority, what demarcates good science from bad? Part of the answer is in the power of legitimation accrued to science’s methods, rather than in any justificatory capacity it may have been thought to hold. Legitimation implies audience and is the province of rhetoric and of the rhetorical studies of language use. Should our questions about adequacy of knowledge claims be wedded to the capacity of these claims to be legitimized to various key audiences?

More to the point, rhetoric reflects a conception of language that keeps company with social-constructivist views of knowledge while respecting science’s need for norms of rationality. The authors distinguish between the conceptions of language held by so-called “Deep Science” and “Shallow Science” perspectives (9). Deep Science (12) regards science as having epistemic power because of the training scientists put to use in the application of the scientific method. Efforts to articulate this method in language (say the advocates of Deep Science) fall short in the task of fully reflecting the reality to which scientists have special access. Proponents of a Shallow Science perspective regard language not as a transparent reflection of a reality but as “thick” or constitutive of social orders. For them the power of science lies in its rhetorical success: “The authoritative character of science is located not in an esoteric set of skills or a special understanding of reality, but in the appeals to its form of knowledge that *others* feel they must make to legitimate their own activities” (xxvii). Consequently, rhetoric is essential to the understanding of science in at least two ways: First, rhetoricians can study the multidisciplinary, messy, out-of-lab way in which the authority of science becomes constructed. Secondly, rhetoric as a practice can allow STSers to make needed links among disciplines and between scientists and their various publics.

Fuller and Collier illustrate the usefulness of rhetoric first by invoking “interpenetration” (chapter 2) as a productive way of looking at interdisciplinarity. “Interpenetration” reconceives interdisciplinarity not as a static set of relationships but as active, time-bound sets of strategic moves, made in response to recognition of a common concern and capable of renegotiating disciplinary boundaries. Interpenetration, therefore, is made rhetorically. Four modes of interdisciplinarity, developed thoroughly in Part II, are incorporation, reflexion, sublimation, and excavation. None of the chapters that are devoted to each of these can be reduced to aphorism or brief explication; the authors themselves are consistent with a “thick language” philosophy that makes each chapter an instantiation of a rhetorical move rather than a mere example.

These rhetorics are in some ways Ciceronian, teasing out false similarities and differences that exist around a particular issue and then reconstituting relationships, also around those issues (120). One of the more interesting moves is the sublimation of the differences currently recognized to separate scholars of artificial intelligence (AI) from scholars of the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK). The authors analyze arguments that result in “battle lines” between representatives of the two disciplines and go on to trouble some of the assumptions underwriting those arguments; among those assumptions, that knowledge standards must be located in human capacities and not in the capacities of computers. Revisiting that assumption, the authors contend, may result in strengthening the case made by SSK of the role of convention in knowledge production: “In short, in trying to understand scientific reasoning, AI may unwittingly end up drastically altering the social definition of science” (149).

Part III turns to an examination of the rhetorical relationships among scientists (and the universities that house them), policy makers, and STS practitioners. The authors examine the rhetorics by which science maintains its authority politically and where the authority of scientific expertise as guarantor of funding might appropriately be debunked by STSers. The authors take on such “sacred cows” of scientific practice as value neutrality and replicability by showing that their chief function is rhetorical: to constitute and set apart a scientific community and to influence policy. As for scientists themselves, there is little to push them to become more rhetorically skilled with publics and policy makers when they benefit from the mystification of scientific practice that is the rhetorical status quo. The scientific production of knowledge itself, once the rhetorical functioning of its practices is admitted, may be seen as politically based, helping to maintain disciplinary boundaries even at the expense of fruitful interpenetration. STS practitioners can assist scientists by negotiating more interdisciplinarity, and policymakers by facilitating better rhetorical practices between scientists and their external publics.

In the final, fourth section of the book, Fuller and Collier take on “worthy opponents” familiar to rhetoricians: relativists and antitheorists. In the view of the social epistemologist (but not, perhaps, of *all* constructivists), suggesting that knowledge is a social product is not tantamount to admitting a creeping relativism into an understanding of science. Acknowledging that “knowledge is a product of social organization” (273) is to recognize where particular social structures may allow and even privilege *without question* the claims to authority of some disciplines. Such disciplines threaten to become less productive and more “epistemically suspect” without the challenges of “external resistance” (273). Theory, contra Stanley Fish, serves, among other purposes, to structure the argumentation necessary for knowledge growth, by helping locate where the presumption of truth is, or could be, siting outside locations of resistance and (again, through the enhanced rhetorical skill that STSers should be able to offer) crafting challenges.

Two points of great controversy, both of which beg for the reader’s serious response, emerge from the Fuller and Collier’s conceptions of scientific knowledge and of the role of STS. The first stems from the authors’ endorsement of social epistemology. Whether in the guise of “Big Science,” “pure science,” or “basic research,” the pursuit of ““truth for its own sake”” (273) is seen as inhibiting the achievement of scientific knowledge. Instead of the arguments we are accustomed to hearing—that science needs to develop at its own pace, that knowledge may grow as a result of happy accidents and, especially, that science is best pursued free from interference by the public and policy makers and from scrutiny by other disciplines—the authors’ argument is that science unfettered is not just fiscally wasteful but epistemically wasteful as well. The STS scholar as social epistemologist adopts, instead, a rhetorical view of knowledge, that it thrives when the typical demands of resource shortages and competition push the scientist to be accountable, to make her practices more widely accessible, and to practice more interdisciplinarity.

The second point of controversy stems from Fuller and Collier’s eagerness to establish STS as the arbiter and facilitator of scientific knowledge. STS, especially as it sees itself informed by social epistemology, would seem to need to secure for its disciplinary practices the elite position that it seeks to wrest from science. This leaves such subdisciplines as the historical and philosophical studies of science as handmaidens to STS, or reduces them to seeing themselves merely as the prehistory of STS (chapter 6). These and related points of controversy are stated rather baldly in a postscript to the book, as views of a radically changed future, views that look toward the “end of knowledge” as we presently understand it. Hoping for a rise from their audience is probably, in this case, good rhetorical strategy.

Rhetoricians might wish to see more systematic treatment of specific schools of rhetoric in the book. In a way, rhetoric is so central to the theses of the book as to almost disappear as a complex study in its own right. Although the authors occasionally invoke particular theorists, the nature of rhetoric is generally treated as unproblematic, and Fuller and Collier sometimes move too freely between a sense of rhetoric as instrumental and a sense of rhetoric as constitutive. However, moving from an invocation of “Big R” Rhetoric for the study of social epistemology to an examination of the applicability of various (“small r”) rhetorics should perhaps be left to later theorists.

The authors indicate that *PREK* will usefully serve as a textbook; it includes, for instance, “thought questions” at the end of each chapter and an appendix of suggestions for courses in scientific and technical communication, philosophy of science, and science policy. Although the authors do not make recommendations about the level at which it could be used, the book would seem to be best for graduate students who already have strong backgrounds in STS. Other students might find the book readable if they choose different points of entry than the authors have developed. Although the introduction is a helpful and accessible starting point for any reader, students interested in public policy and science, for instance, might next go to Part III, and students whose chief background is academic rhetoric might enter through Part IV. Certainly, this provocative book deserves to be widely read by whatever means is best.

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Charles Kostelnick and Michael Hassett. *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003. 261 pages. \$50.00 cloth.

Charles Kostelnick and Michael Hassett have written a useful and informative book that explores the relation of textual conventions of all sorts to the visual display of information. *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions* ranges widely across genres, with attention to the conventions of circuit diagrams as well as early modern texts, magazine ads and wind rose diagrams, maps and technical illustrations. Their point is to demonstrate how thoroughly

saturated by convention all texts tend to be, as well as to show how specific conventions emerge and evolve over time, with the systems of visual meaning shifting and accommodating those who design and use the information. The book encourages the reader to be more sensitive to the role of conventions in discourse and to appreciate the subtle interplay of convention and invention that informs the design of texts. The book is characterized by interesting, intelligent discussion and analysis of examples, with a smooth integration along a continuum from the more purely visual text, one that presents data or a physical representation of a device, toward the more verbal text, one that displays meaning across a page through arrangement of words. For those familiar with Kostelnick's work, this book has the virtue of doing less taxonomizing than his other books and articles, and it is less dependent on creating matrices of terms and features that can be used to classify texts and their features or their parameters of variation. In place of this sort of taxonomizing are rich examples, many of historical interest, representing typically novel approaches to information design that later become conventional. It is engaging to consider when cross sections first emerged, or patterns of labeling objects in a diagram, or conventions for making various data plots on axes. Kostelnick and Hassett help us trace the roots of these practices in original diagrams, charts, and mechanical and architectural renderings.

The book is engaging on another level as well: It is written in smooth prose, in a style that is a pleasure to read. Only occasionally does the prose style go over the top, as at the start of Chapter 4, "The Mutability of Conventions: Emergence, Evolution, Decline, Revival":

Users of design conventions quite naturally regard them as the benchmarks against which to measure visual language—the fixed canonical beacons amid a chaotic melange of images. Conventions do indeed provide a refuge from design chaos, but like a slowly shirting canopy of stars, their stability can be deceptive. (119)

Fortunately, such florid outbursts of mixed metaphor quickly subside into more temperate exposition. The book itself is a pleasure to read and hold, with an inviting, open-page design. The quality of design and production is high, compared to most books in rhetoric and composition.

A work like this begs comparison, of course, to Edward Tufte's books, which themselves pursue similar goals both in design and content. Tufte's books are grander, his illustrations richer and better presented (and often in color as compared to the black and white of this text). Tufte's larger format offers more room for display, and his control over his own design and printing processes gives him the ability to craft an object that is at once a book and a work of art.

Kostelnick and Hassett suffer by comparison, as do the self-created diagrams they use to underscore their points or model some aspect of convention. These diagrams, which tend to be heavy line drawings and blocky models, are crude and often evidence a low data-to-ink ratio. The illustrations and sample texts that are reproduced for purposes of example and discussion, in contrast, are typically well chosen, intriguing for their complexity, and well discussed in the text.

This is not a book that relies heavily on the empirical basis for design. The authors make the point quite explicitly that empirical studies have little to offer, since texts and their effects are so context dependent. A good argument is launched that the grip of conventions powerfully shapes any attempt to empirically characterize what represents good or efficient design in terms of reader performance, since readers respond to and are efficient with conventional or familiar forms of text (189ff.). Their line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that there is much less to say about what is “natural” in terms of readers’ performance or text design and much more to say about what readers are accustomed to, what they expect, and therefore what they are good at understanding quickly and accurately. The point is made, too, that “[t]he perception of anything always occurs in the context of the other things in the environment as well as within the person’s own physical and mental state” (223). Thus the interpretation of conventions, it is argued, is a matter of ecological perception, of people moving around individually, interpreting as they go, always within changing contexts.

The tight focus of the volume on convention, and on describing the evolution and workings of convention, means that the book is largely descriptive exposition, showing through particular examples how conventions can be understood. As such, the book is not deeply theoretical. Some attention is given to Gestalt and its appeal in accounting for broad patterns in perception. Not much is said about cognitive or perceptual psychology nor about physiological influences on how readers perceive and make sense of text and graphics. As descriptive exposition, the book may disappoint the reader who expects it to attend to central questions of rhetoric. Granted, a reader is helped to understand how conventions work but not how to leverage that understanding in order to be persuasive, to accommodate given audiences, or to make systematic decisions about effective use of conventions in specific communicative situations. The chapters themselves, each constituting an informed discussion centered on interesting examples, tend to blur one into the next rather than forming a well-defined, progressive argument. We understand, at the end, that conventions saturate texts, that they change over time, that they exercise a strong grip on readers, and that they are somewhat slippery or difficult to control.

That said, the book is certainly worth reading. It affords useful language (and accompanying insight) for talking about visual rhetoric, with its conven-

tions that “roll around everywhere,” keeping readers in a strong “grip,” in spite of the “slipperiness” of those conventions. Most significantly, the book significantly enlarges how we think about conventions, and it will influence its readers to reconsider the arts of visual rhetoric.

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Charles Bazerman and Paul Prior, eds. *What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2004. v-vi + 365 pages. \$37.50 paper.

Charles Bazerman and Paul Prior’s edited book *What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices* seeks to introduce written discourse analysis to “teachers of writing and to those in any field who are beginning to see the need to research the practices of writing (and how people learn them) as well as written products themselves” (5). This book joins two other recent volumes—*Discourse Studies in Composition* (Cresskill, 2002) by first-language composition experts Ellen Barton and Gail Stygall, and *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing* (Pearson, 2000) by second-language composition researcher Ken Hyland—which make a strong case for discourse analysis in composition studies. The renewal of interest in texts follows a period of neglect; the process movement’s focus on the individual writer as well as dampened enthusiasm in linguistics due to sentence combining in the 1970s are often mentioned as the culprits.

Bazerman and Prior set out to remedy the situation by compiling a book that covers writing as well as text, is grounded in North American Writing Studies, provides diverse traditions, and focuses on introducing methods of analysis.

The chapters in the book are divided into two main sections: The first focuses on analyzing text and the second focuses on processes, practices, and contexts. Among the six chapters in the first section, Thomas Huckin’s chapter, “Content Analysis: What Texts Talk About,” and Ellen Barton’s chapter, “Linguistic Discourse Analysis: How the Language in Texts Works,” represent what is most traditionally considered as written discourse or text analysis. They include familiar themes in the two writers’ previously published work. Huckin

focuses on “content analysis” and reviews qualitative, quantitative, and combination sample studies. Barton’s chapter begins with an historical overview of discourse analysis and defines the important discourse terms; a clear introduction, the chapter would have been a helpful lead-in chapter for this section. The major portion of her chapter deals with a “rich feature analysis,” an analysis that identifies significant features to explain significant problems in texts. A step-by-step description of the procedure is useful and can be applied by teachers who are novices to linguistics. Both Huckin’s and Barton’s chapters include helpful, thorough descriptions on how to set up and conduct a text analysis research project and make significant contributions for demystifying text analysis.

Two other chapters, Charles Bazerman’s “Intertextuality: How Texts Rely on Other Texts” and Anne Wysocki’s “The Multiple Media of Texts: How Onscreen and Paper Texts Incorporate Words, Images, and Other Media,” stand out in this section. Bazerman’s strong chapter on intertextuality, that is, text that surrounds texts, provides a comprehensive list of techniques of intertextual representation, and applies these to real texts. A very readable treatment of intertextuality, the chapter also provides highly doable activities and a comprehensive treatment of further readings.

Wysocki’s exploration of multimedia of texts, that is, how texts incorporate words, images, and other media is extremely interesting and timely. Like Bazerman’s chapter on intertextuality, hers furthers our understanding of aspects of texts not usually studied under traditional written-discourse analysis.

Next is Marcia Buell’s contribution, which is the single chapter in the book dealing with second language writers. Her focus is on the code switching in the writing of a nonnative English-speaking student from the Ivory Coast. The approach combines interpretative analysis with intertextual and ethnographic interviewing. Valid as such a qualitative approach may be in today’s postmodern composition studies, students are viewed in fluid motion from one culture and identity into another. One may question the value of this kind of research approach for the teacher of second language writers. Each student has a different story to tell; each student’s language characteristics can be interpreted by a multitude of background variables. This reader longs for a stronger statement about the potential positive and negative influences of the student’s previous languages and cultures.

The next five chapters making up the second section of the book, “Analyzing Textual Practices,” open with two most impressive chapters. Paul Prior’s “Tracing Process: How Texts Come into Being” is a valuable introduction to a variety of methods for studying the production of texts. Sample instructions show how to compile process logs and to conduct think-aloud protocols and text-based interviews. In a similarly thorough manner, Kevin Leander and Paul

Prior, in "Speaking and Writing: How Talk and Text Interact in Situated Practices," provide theory and practice behind oral discourse analysis, applicable to the study of verbal and written interactions in the production of written texts in classrooms.

Another chapter of interest in this section is that of Jack Selzer. Selzer advocates rhetorical analysis for understanding persuasion. He distinguishes between textual rhetorical analysis and contextual rhetorical analysis. Although he admits that there may be overlap between the approaches, he demonstrates the use of both, first using a 1944 E. B. White essay and then a 1989 essay by Milton Freidman that appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*. The first approach uses classical rhetorical strategies, for example, appeals, arrangement, style. The second approach uses analyses that Selzer mentions could be classified as ecocriticism, cultural studies, and frame, reception, or historical analysis, depending on the emphasis. The goal is a rich description of the specific context.

The section ends with Charles Bazerman's "Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems: How Texts Organize Activity and People." The theory of speech acts will be helpful for teachers and researchers. Yet one wishes for a practical application of speech act theory toward the end of the chapter in the same manner that concrete applications of genres and genre systems are shown. The chapter, overall, is impressive and brings together, in a remarkably coherent and readable manner, Bazerman's important and ground-breaking work on genre systems.

In summary, the book is a collection of extremely high-quality chapters. The strength of this edited collection is that the chapters are carefully written and provide thorough introductions of specific methods of discourse analysis and their use. The chapters cover an impressive array of analyses deemed important for the practicing teacher and researcher. They succeed well in this goal although there is some overlap, especially because many of the chapters spell out general research procedures (that is, posing questions, defining constructs, selecting texts, determining units of analysis, collecting data, analyzing data, and so forth).

The book may not be as unique as it claims to be in emphasis on the processes of text production and consumption. Most books on text analysis in the past decade, for instance Ulla Connor's and Ann John's *Coherence in Writing* (TESOL, Inc., 1990), Teun A. Van Dijk's *Discourse as Social Interaction* (Sage, 1997), and Norman Fairclough's *Discourse and Social Change* (Polity, 1992) have neither treated texts isolated from their production and reception, nor have they treated texts as void of social action.

Yet the book is unique in its grounding in North American Writing Studies and in that the chapters offer doable and practical research procedures for the

teacher/researcher. The chapters offer diverse perspectives ranging from traditional text analysis to combining the analysis of text and talk. The book will be a valuable resource for graduate students and teachers of writing interested in learning about how to use discourse analysis as a research and teaching tool.

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Lynn Z. Bloom, Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White, eds. *Composition Studies in the New Millennium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003. ix + 295 pages. \$60.00 cloth.

One could argue that a more appropriate title for this remarkably useful volume might well be *Composition Meets the Apocalypse*. The good news, however, is that composition studies has clearly transcended that apocalypse. The productive results of a conference at Miami University of Ohio in October 2001, immediately following the tragic September that we still mourn, the articles and responses evolving from these meetings bear the professional mark of scholar-teachers in a complex, engaged, and engaging discipline who are more than prepared to take stock, to assess, to forecast.

But this is no mere snapshot of scholars-responding-to-crisis. Rather, the contributors to this book are strong, providing readers with the range of perspectives and conundrums facing composition studies and those who teach and write about writing. The volume also follows its successful predecessor, *Composition in the Twenty-First Century: Crisis and Change*, and I suspect the new collection will serve as another widely used compendium that additionally performs the important, ethical function of accountability. That is, one of my longtime complaints about our field is a collective and individual lack of scholarly responsibility, with articles often published without the clear homework that details what has been published before on the subject at hand. I am pleased, therefore, that the articles deliver what is promised—thoroughgoing, scholarly reminders of our scholarly contexts, accomplished in scholarly ways. I expect that *Composition Studies in the New Millennium* will become one of those highly and widely used texts in proseminars, TA preparation, and other composition courses at the

graduate level. It is equally likely to become one of those texts to-be-legendary, named to appear in those periodic “must-read” lists, for instance, frequently sent around on such venues as the WPA Listserve.

A hallmark of the volume is its mix of celebrated and newer voices, a quality that works in parallel and harmony with the volume’s representation of most if not all of the usefully conflicting and occasionally vexing perspectives in the field. Don Daiker’s introduction sketches the compendium of perspectives in the volume, asking a question, however, the presumptions with which some might disagree, or, perhaps, rephrase: How do we balance our obligations to teach writing with our obligations to teach the world? But, I ask, even if that is so, how do we each (and how do our programs) define that “world?” Is it in the increasing sense of addressing complex issues by (in my view) privileging knowledge of Islam and the recent history of Saudi Arabia to the detriment of other perspectives—Kurt Spellmeyer would say that it’s to provide an adequate response to September 11—to make the composition course, as Spellmeyer notes, “the center of the undergraduate experience”? At the least (and this is no small “least”), *Composition Studies in the New Millennium* forces us to confront the presumptions that frame our work, whether pedagogical, scholarly, political, or institutional, not only within composition programs, but also within what we believe to be the privacy of our classrooms.

Peter Elbow, the keynote speaker at the conference, leads off the collection with “Three Mysteries at the Heart of Writing.” His essay, a Whitmanesque celebration, further extends Daiker’s words of “not ‘composition studies,’ but ‘writing’ or, more accurately, teachers teaching writing and students (and teachers) writing.” Elbow’s essay is in a section of its own, yet this is particularly appropriate placement for Elbow’s detailed exhortation to create conditions of “safety and trust” in our classrooms, as a preamble to the rest (2). Moreover, the shadow Elbow’s essay casts over the others is a long and important one, no matter our feelings regarding his relentless expressivism—a reminder that, ultimately, we are teachers of students of writing.

However, as we well know, and as we must always be aware, we cannot solely isolate ourselves in the world of invention, much as we would like to. The larger institutional and scholarly world is always (perhaps too much) with us, something that is part and parcel of our work and our understanding of the conditions under which we do that work. Lynn Bloom leads part one of the volume, “What Do We Mean by Composition Studies—Past, Present, and Future?” with “The Great Paradigm Shift and Its Legacy for the Twenty-First Century.” It’s an important essay, as Bloom affirms, first, that “process is the default mode in much of our thinking about writing” but then proceeds to question it while ultimately affirming its usefulness as a paradigm (31). Susan Miller’s is the perhaps

more appropriately “gloomy” view (54), but in its constructive critique, it is ultimately more useful, as different points of view in composition studies, she notes, meet “in definitely unsettling ways.” Miller articulates composition’s “persistent worries about novel-traditional self-definition” as they “divert composition studies from its unbroken cooperation with one ethical persuasion, the privileging of the always emerging, never realized ethos, with results apparent in its administrative practices, curricula, and research” (51). As Christine Farris writes in her smart response to the two essays, “While Bloom sees no threat to composition’s disciplinary authority, Miller feels that a combination of outmoded disciplinary assumptions about students and increasingly disparate research agendas call that authority into question” (58). These types of cross-conversational contrasts, augmented by thoughtful, analytical, and summative responses, add further complexity and value to the collection.

The subsequent partitions of the book are similarly structured. A question organizes each section, with two essays, mostly diverging in perspective and context, and a response. Time and word count prevent my discussing each of these valuable contributions as fully as I’d like, as each is in its way worthy of discussion and debate. The seven parts of the book provide a comprehensive prism for any student and scholar of composition studies: Wendy Bishop and Kurt Spellmeyer, each writing about what we do or should teach, with a response by Brenda Brueggemann; Art Young and Mark Reynolds on where composition will be taught and who will teach it, Ellen Cushman responding; Gesa Kirsch and Todd Taylor on theories and philosophies that might undergird our research, with Susan McLeod celebrating “diversity in methodology” in her response; Danielle Nicole DeVoss, Joseph Johansen, Cynthia Selfe, and John Williams talk about literacy in electronic contexts, while Lester Faigley looks at “the challenge of the multimedia essay,” Christine Neuwirth responding; Min-Zhan Lu and Gary Olson each tackle the languages our students will write, Joseph Harris providing the response; and Keith Gilyard and Harriet Malinowitz’s take, respectively, on the post-9/11 world, Richard Miller responding with “Teaching After September 11.”

In their conclusion to the volume, Shane Borrowman and Edward White’s thoughtful piece affirms a new question best articulated by Richard E. Miller in his response to Keith Gilyard and Harriet Malinowitz: “Where were you when the planes hit the towers? And where should it go?” I concur with Borrowman and White that this question is “rooted in a specific moment of crisis and change,” but I agree with them even more when they see the questions as pivotal to the field. In fact, they say “or perhaps not” to the notion that these new questions may demand that we “reread the past and rewrite the future of composition studies” (258).

Indeed, while we do not dismiss or forget the importance of September 11, 2001 to education or the ways in which we live (or don't live very well) in this world, there is nonetheless good news. Despite September 11th's being "the lion in the road" for the speakers and the resulting book, the essays for the most part transcend that one, horrifying day and ensuing series of events. The essays remind us of our past, certainly, but more significantly point out that "we can continuously reread our past" (in accountable and scholarly ways) to "understand and improve our present." And, as Borrowman and White rightly conclude, "That may be as close as we can come to altering the future of our profession and our discipline." With or without the overt framework of September 11, but with lessons that enhance much of what we already argue with constructive productivity in composition studies, this is, indeed, a useful book with which to ensure the necessary if often uncomfortable conversations that further affirm the viable, exciting possibilities for the field and our complexities as practitioners, writers, and thinkers.

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