

RECOGNITION, REPRESENTATION, AND REVISION

We should not be surprised that our students so often consider revision as a chance to get “it” right the second time around.¹ Despite recent attempts to differentiate editing and rewriting, most English teachers probably continue to instill the idea that revision is like taking another swing at the ball or shooting again for the basket. The idea of revision as correction is, like readability formulas and sentence combining, consonant with a view of language as, merely, a medium for the communication of our views of a reality *out there*: we have ideas and we put them into language. (Sometimes we might get the wrong slot: try again.) Language is often seen as a window which keeps us from enjoying an immediate vision. The pedagogical corollary is that the best we can do is to teach window washing, trying to keep the view of what is “really there” unobstructed by keeping the prose clean and clear. Revision, in this view, is polishing. I argue in the following that we can learn to teach revision as itself a way of composing if we consider it analogous to acts of mind whereby we make sense of the world.

One rainy afternoon last fall I stopped by to browse among some miscellaneous journals in the gaudy reading room of a graduate school library where, as it turned out, I witnessed a basic writer at work. He sat in a low-slung, purple velour settee, a pad of lined paper on his knee, a nice new yellow pencil and a pack of cigarettes at the ready, and a Dixie Cup of coffee to hand. He seemed prepared for the labors of composition. He would write a sentence or two, light a cigarette, read what he had written, sip his coffee, extinguish the cigarette—and the two sentences. He had pretty much worn out the eraser by the time I left. (That would be an

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¹This finding is reported by Susan V. Wall and Anthony R. Petrosky in “Freshman Writers and Revision: Results from a Survey,” *Journal of Basic Writing*, 3 (Fall/Winter 1981).

interesting research index: how long does the eraser last, if it is not bitten off in momentary despair?) My eyes glazed more quickly than usual as I leafed through *Research in the Teaching of English* because my mind was otherwise engaged in formulating what I would have said to this earnest graduate student, if I had had the nerve. Something like this:

You need to get some writing down on paper and to keep it there long enough so that you can give yourself the treat of rewriting. What you need is a ball point pen so you can't erase and some cheap paper so you can deliberately use a lot of it—and one very expensive sheet of creamy foolscap for your inventory of glosses: it's a sensuous pleasure to write on a beautiful surface after you've been scratching away on canary pads. But wait a minute! Where are your notes to yourself? Where are your lists? Where are your points of departure? Where are your leads? Where is your lexicon? Where are your quoted passages? Where is your chaos? Nothing comes of nothing! Here you are in this spaceship pod of a chair, this womb, with essentials like coffee and cigarettes, but without the essential—language! How can you know what you think until you hear what you say? see what you've written?

I think it is instructive to consider how the “writing behaviors” of this graduate student resemble those of our basic writers. There is, of course, a difference: whereas the graduate cannot get beyond the compulsive readjustment of the (doubtless) insubstantial and formless generalization he has begun with, our students hate even to start—for a dozen reasons which have been carefully formulated and studied in recent years—and once they do have something down, they are loath to touch it: those few words are hard-won and therefore precious, not to be tampered with. The graduate destroys by re-statement because he does not know how to get the dialectic going; the undergraduate cannot conceive of adjustment or development because his fragile construct might collapse. But insofar as neither knows how to make language serve the active mind, they both are basic writers: they do not understand rewriting because they do not understand how writing gets written in the first place.

My tendentious claim is that the same is often true also of their teachers: revision is poorly taught, or is not taught at all, because composition teachers and composition textbook authors often do not know how writing gets written. Without a substantial understanding of composing as a dialectical process in which the *what* and the *how* continually inform one another—a non-linear process motivated by both feedback and what I. A. Richards calls “feedforward”—there will be no way for teachers to differentiate between revision and editing, no way to

teach revision not as a definite phase, a penultimate stage, but as a dimension of composing. Revision is, indeed, re-seeing and it goes on continually in the composing process.

There is, of course, a great deal of talk currently about “the composing process,” but there are very few pedagogies which are consonant with the kind of process composing actually is. I have elsewhere discussed the reasons for this state of affairs: current rhetorical theory has provided little guidance for our classroom practice because it has no philosophically sound way of accounting for how words work.² There is no understanding in current rhetorical theory that in composing everything has to happen at once or it does not happen at all. If there is not something to think about, if there are not ideas to think *with*, if language is not in action, if the mind is not actively engaged, no meanings can be made. The pedagogical challenge is to help students take advantage of *atonceness*, to see it as a resource, not the mother of dilemmas.

The linear sequence by which “the composing process” is commonly represented -prewriting, writing, rewriting- is antithetical to the “audit of meaning,” I.A. Richards’ term for dialectic. Instead of atonceness, it suggests that there is a non-reversible order, a sequence of activities which unfold in a predetermined manner. The inter-relationships of the triad are obscure; the notion, for instance, that pre and re have anything to do with one another, logically or psychologically, seems unheard of. If prewriting is, in many instances, presented as a matter of amassing the slottables, rewriting is considered a matter of checking out what has been slotted. “Think of what you want to say” in prewriting is matched by such instructions as these for rewriting: “Go back over what you have written. Are there any unnecessary words? Does everything you say refer to your thesis? Is your main point at the end of the paragraph? Are there any mechanical errors?” These questions are only transformations of the old imperatives: “Do not use unnecessary words. Assure that all statements support your thesis. Avoid mechanical errors.” Get law and order. Plant a tree. Love your mother. People who have done a lot of writing themselves frequently consider it a self-evidently sensible thing to teach the use of this kind of checklist to inexperienced writers. What they leave out of account is that the experienced writer has criteria which are brought into play by asking such questions: that’s what it means to have “experience.”

²See *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models and Maxims for Writing Teachers* (Montclair, N.J.: Boynton/Cook, 1981).

I think it is fair to say that the linear model of composing as prewriting, writing, rewriting fosters a pedagogy of exhortation. Now, if we are to undertake to teach composing as a dialectical process of which revision is not a stage but a dimension, how can we prevent what was earlier described, the write—erase—write again—erase it all syndrome? The short answer is, as I have noted, to teach students to take advantage of the atoneness of composing, to assure that they continually rediscover how forming, thinking, and writing can be simultaneous and correlative activities. Beginning writers need the experience of seeing how it is that consciousness of the *what* leads to understanding the *how*. This is what Paulo Freire means by “conscientization,” the chief principle of his “pedagogy of knowing.”³ If a pedagogy of knowing is to be the successor to the pedagogy of exhortation, we will need as models of knowing those acts of mind which are logically and psychologically analogous to writing, namely, perception and concept formation.

Taking perception as a model for writing lets us exploit the ancient wisdom that seeing and knowing are radically alike. Our word *idea* derives from the Greek *oidea* which meant both *I have seen* and *I know*. The eye is not a passive recorder; Ruskin’s notion of “the innocent eye” has been superseded by that of “the intelligent eye.”⁴ When we see, we compose. Rudolf Arnheim lists as the operations involved in visual perception the following: “Active exploration, selection, grasping of essentials, simplification, abstraction, analysis and synthesis, completion, correction, comparison, problem-solving, as well as combining, separating, putting in context.”⁵ Is there any aspect of the composing process not represented in that list?

From Arnheim, E. H. Gombrich, R. L. Gregory and other philoso-

³ Paulo Freire, “The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 40 (1970), 217. Both Freire and Richards argue the importance of the learner’s consciousness of his learning. It is the very opposite of the commonly held principle of letting well enough alone: if students can do something easily, naturally, why bother telling them how they do it? Conscientization does not depend on a teacher “telling” students what they are doing; Freire rejects this digestive theory of education. Richards comments, in *Design for Escape* (N. Y.: Harcourt, 1968), p. 111, that what learners need are “assisted invitations . . . to find out just what they are trying to do and thereby how to do it.” I have used “assisted invitations” as a name for the exercises in my textbook, *Forming/ Thinking/ Writing* (Rochelle Park, N. J.: Hayden, 1978).

⁴ Richard Coe brought to my attention the fascinating book with this title by R. L. Gregory (N. Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1970). Coe’s textbook, *Form and Substance* (N. Y.: Wiley, 1981), is one of the few which present perception as profoundly conceptual, as an act of mind.

⁵ Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969), p. 13.

phers and scientists, we can learn that perception involves matching and re-ordering, from the molecular level on up: *Vision* is through and through a matter of *revision*. Indeed, seeing is actually contingent on re-seeing. To clarify this fascinating fact, I have students read Owen Barfield's explanation of how it is that cognition depends on recognition. He asks the reader to suppose that

he is standing in the midst of a normal and familiar environment. . . . when suddenly he is deprived by some supernatural stroke of every vestige of memory—and not only of memory, but also of all those assimilated, forgotten experiences which comprise his power of recognition. He is asked to assume that, in spite of this, he still retains the full measure of his cognitive faculty as an adult. It will appear, I think, that for the first few moments his consciousness—if it can bear that name—will be deprived not merely of all thought, but even of all perception. It is not merely that he will be unable to realize that that square, red and white object is a “house”. . . .; he will not even be able to see it *as* a square, red and white object.⁶

Seeing the point, my students speak of “Barfield’s meaningless man.” We can make meaning because we see in terms of what we have seen. Without remembered forms to see *with*, we would not see at all. Seeing is thus the primal analogizing in which thinking has its origin.

Now these philosophical principles of perception—seeing is knowing, seeing is contingent on re-seeing, the intelligent eye forms by analogizing—provide the foundation for a pedagogy of knowing. How can we use what we can learn about perception in order to make observation not a preliminary exercise but a model of the composing process?

The atoneness of composing is well-represented by looking and writing in tandem. Since learning to record observations has a self-evident usefulness for everybody from nuclear physicists to nurses, from parents to doctors, and since observing our observations *requires* language, assignments which involve looking and looking again can rationally involve writing and writing again. Exercises which make recording and commenting correlative and virtually simultaneous have an authenticity which is unusual in composition assignments. One procedure which helps writers enact revision as a mode of composing is what I call a dialectical notebook: notes, lists, statements, critical responses, queries of all sorts

⁶Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (1928; rpt. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 56. This passage appears, along with others from works by Gombrich, Ogden, Burke, *inter alia*, in Part I of *Forming/ Thinking/ Writing*.

are written on one side; notes on these notes, responses to these responses are written on the facing page. The inner dialogue which is thinking is thus represented as a dialectic, the beginning of thinking about thinking. This double-entry journal encourages a habit which is of immediate usefulness, since this format is the best there is for taking notes on lectures and reading. And it is easily adapted to what my colleague Dixie Goswami calls a “speculative draft,” a procedure for writing papers which allows students to take advantage of atoneness by keeping notes and queries, formulations and re-formulations in continual dialogue on facing pages.

The dialectical notebook teaches the value of keeping things tentative. Without that sense, the atoneness of composing is dangerous knowledge that can cause a severe case of writer’s block. Unless students prove to themselves the usefulness of tentativeness, no amount of exhortation will persuade them to forego “closure,” in the current jargon. The willingness to generate chaos; patience in testing a formulation against the record; careful comparing of proto-statements and half-statements, completed statements and re-statements: these are all expressions of what Keats famously called “negative capability,” the capacity to remain in doubt. The story is told of a professor of internal medicine who brought home to his students the value of this attitude in diagnosis with the slogan: “Don’t just DO something: Stand there!”

Along with the value of tentativeness, practice in observation teaches the importance of perspective and context, which become ideas to think *with* as students practice observing natural objects, for instance, and observing their observations. A shell or pebble on the beach has one kind of appearance; if you bring it home, it has another. Such facts call for recognition, formulation, and articulation. In the practice of looking and looking again, of writing and writing again, as students learn to compare kinds of appearances, they are also learning that perception depends on presuppositions, remembrances, anticipations, purposes, and so on. In my own teaching, I hand out weeds and grasses, seeds and bones because natural forms are themselves compositions, pedagogically useful emblems of historical process. Friends and colleagues have occasionally argued that nature is an alien point of departure and that such an exercise as Ira Shor’s examination of the contents of a wastebasket is more likely to engage the attention of basic writers.⁷ Detective work or archaeology is

⁷Ira Shor’s *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life* (Boston: South End Press, 1980) is a thoughtful adaptation of Freire to the Open Admission composition classroom. See especially “Re-Experiencing the Ordinary” and “Learning How to Learn.” George Hillocks, in his NCTE pamphlet, *Observing and Writing*, offers some excellent suggestions which keep interpretation at the center.

certainly as useful a metaphor for interpretation as nature study: the point is to make the transformation of the familiar to the strange and the strange to the familiar an exemplification of what goes on in all interpretation; to foreground the process of “reading,” of construing, of making sense of whatever is under observation, from different perspectives, in different contexts.

Freire shows us how. The peasants in his culture circles, who are learning *how* they make meaning and *that* they make meaning simultaneously with learning to recognize words and sounds, study pictures depicting familiar scenes, reading them as texts, translating and interpreting them and interpreting their interpretations in dialogue.⁸ What Freire calls “problematizing the existential situation” is a critical act of mind by which historical contexts for objects and pictures are developed: careful observation of what is depicted works together with the interpretation of its significance. Perception thus provides the point of departure for a pedagogy of knowing because it is through and through conceptual.

Problematic symbols and problem-posing pictures at one end; organic structures in the middle; at the other end, abstract designs and diagrams which we can ask students to observe, translating in the process from pictorial to verbal language. I. A. Richards, in a valuable essay called “Learning and Looking,” suggests just how challenging that translation can be.⁹ He is ostensibly discussing the problems of literacy training in societies in which depiction is not thought of as representational, but in the course of demonstrating how “reading” certain diagrams exercises the translation-transformation capacity necessary for handling the graphic code, he does much more. For one thing, he shows how comparing depends on the principle of opposition, which is essential to all critical inquiry into “what varies with what while the rest is treated as remaining constant.” Even more important, he provides a superb demonstration of how perspective and context function heuristically. Careful looking and experimental translation teach the observer to use oppositions to limit the range of choices. Just as learning to keep things tentative is an all-important support structure for the concept of the atoneness of composing, so learning the use of limits is essential if beginning writers are to understand that composing necessarily involves choosing. Limits are their means of defining and controlling choices; unless we teach the

⁸ An explanation of this procedure, together with a sequence of pictures, can be found in Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (N. Y.: Seabury Press, 1973). These passages are reprinted in *The Making of Meaning*, pp. 159-73.

⁹ *Design for Escape*, pp. 93-124.

function of limits, no amount of exhortation will persuade our students to tolerate the risks which revision entails.

By keeping looking and writing together, we can teach revision as analogous to recognition in perception. If we can keep thinking and writing together, our students can learn how revision is analogous to the representation which language makes possible. Language has, of course, an indicative function, but it is its power to represent our interpretations of experience which is vital for a pedagogy of knowing. No thinking—no composing—could happen if we had no means of stabilizing images of what we have seen, of recalling them as forms to think about and to think *with*. Language is our means of representing images as forms: *forming* is our means of seeing relationships from one or another perspective and in different contexts.

Writing teachers have not, generally speaking, taken advantage of this power of language and mind—it was once called *imagination*—because linguistics, as institutionalized by current rhetorical theory, has no way of accounting for it. The conventional notion of thinking finds no room for the dialectic which language makes possible. It is based, rather, on the dichotomy of induction/deduction: either, it is thought, we go from “the data”¹⁰ to one or another principle, or we go from “high level abstractions”¹¹ to the substantiating particulars. *Forming* is, I think, the working concept we need in order to benefit from the fact that everything that happens when we think, when we form concepts, has an analogue in the composing process. Consider the following passages, the first, Lev Vygotsky’s formulation of the dialectical character of concept formation; the second, I. A. Richards’ characterization of what goes on when we compose.

When the process of concept formation is seen in all its complexity, it appears as a movement of thought constantly alternating between two directions, from the particular to the general, and from the general to the particular.¹²

¹⁰The superscripts would be question marks in I. A. Richards’ “Meta-semantic Markers,” a signal indicating a highly problematic term. Nothing is given to us but a formless *Firstness*, in Peirce’s terms.

¹¹The positivist “Ladder of Abstraction,” promulgated by the general semanticists, is a muddle indeed, since it is not *abstraction* which is hierarchical but *generalization*.

¹²Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, tr. Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1962), p. 80.

Composition is the supplying at the right time and place of whatever the developing meaning then and there requires. It is the cooperation with the rest in preparing for what is to come and completing what has preceded. It is more than this, though; it is the exploration of what is to come and of how it should be prepared for, and it is the further examination of what has preceded and of how it may be amended and completed.¹³

The logical ground for the analogy of thinking and writing is *forming*—seeing relationships, recognizing and representing them. Understanding that principle can show us how to start with thinking and writing together, and if we start with them together we will be more likely to keep them together. The way to bridge from so-called personal writing to so-called expository writing, from creative to critical writing, and, I will argue, from writing to re-writing is not to allow a separation in the first place. I want to concentrate now on one particular implication for classroom practice and course design of the premise that thinking and writing involve us in *seeing relationships*: how that can help us to teach revision not as a definite phase but as a dimension of the composing process.

From the idea that composing is a matter of seeing relationships, we might profitably conclude that at the pedagogical center of any composition course there should be not the grammatical unit of the sentence but the rhetorical unit of the paragraph.¹⁴ Cognition depends on recognition; the presence of experience is mediated by the representation of language; sentences depend on how they relate to other sentences. It is therefore easier to construe several sentences than it is one. The writer as reviser is a writer reading. Reading a paragraph, he has many points of entry; if he does not see a relationship as he starts to read, he might catch hold of another as he goes on. He can then re-read and apprehend the earlier sentence. Because it articulates a structure of relationships, the paragraph provides a more appropriate focus for learning revision than the single sentence does. Apprehending the logical and rhetorical relationships of sentences in a paragraph is analogous to perception and

¹³I. A. Richards, *So Much Nearer* (N. Y.: Harcourt, 1960), pp. 119-20.

¹⁴I agree with those who argue that the paragraph is a rhetorical convention and that a single sentence may constitute a paragraph. See "The Logic and Rhetoric of Paragraphs," *Forming/ Thinking/ Writing*, pp. 155-73. For the time being, I use the term to mean a sentence sequence which displays logical coherence.

concept formation in a way that apprehending those articulated according to grammatical conventions within the sentence is not. That is why Gertrude Stein is right: "So paragraphing is a thing that anyone is enjoying and sentences are less fascinating."

Seeing relationships, as an idea to think with, can help offset the effects of certain theories of learning which, taking motor activity as the model, lead to the idea that because we must walk before we can run, we must therefore study sentences before paragraphs. Surely first things come first, but wherever language is concerned that will always mean that complexity comes before the allegedly simple. That is because meanings are not elements but relationships. It is by virtue of its complexity that the paragraph is simpler to take hold of than the sentence. This kind of paradox is central to the pedagogy of knowing.¹⁵ I do not mean that we ignore sentence structure when we teach revision. My point is that although errors are best identified in isolation, sentences are best revised in context, in the relational terms which the paragraph provides or which the would-be paragraph can be brought to the point of supplying. We are taking advantage of the atoneness of making meaning when we teach our students to compose paragraphs in the course of revising sentences.

Along with the dialectical notebook, "glossing" paragraphs can raise consciousness of the interdependence of saying and intending. I ask students to summarize their paragraphs in oppositional form, to represent in a double phrase in the margin what is being set over against what. Thus identified, the logical structure of the paragraph can be used as an Archimedean point from which to survey the individual sentences. If it is impossible to formulate a gloss, that will tell a student more than exhortatory comments on incoherence ever could. Or it may be that in the process of glossing the student will express a hitherto unspoken intention which the paragraph can use. In that case, the gloss can be revised in sentence form and incorporated. Invention of needed sentences is contingent on recognizing the need; in my opinion, that recognition is inspired not by asking empty questions about what the audience needs to know but by seeing what the paragraph needs to say. To discover logical and rhetorical needs is to discover purpose, a process which is at once more complex and more manageable than trying to ascertain audience needs directly. They, of course, must be hypothesized and considered in

¹⁵I have discussed this principle in "Tolstoy, Vygotsky, and the Making of Meaning." *College Composition and Communication*, XXIX (Oct., 1978), 249-55.

conjunction, dialectically, with purposes. But to instruct the student to determine “the audience’s needs” is frequently only an updated version of asking him to ask himself “What am I trying to say?” That is not, I think, a heuristically useful inquiry.

A way to encourage students to ask what a paragraph needs—what their argument or explanation or description or narrative needs—is to have them read their own paragraphs (a day or so after they have been written) a sentence at a time with the remaining sentences covered, anticipating at each period what the next sentence will be, will *do*, by writing one in its place. The writer can do this on his own, of course, but it is best done in conference or in company with other readers, dialogue being the best model of dialectic there is. The newly-framed sentence can then be compared with the original sentence, of which it may, of course, be a replica: having two ways of saying to work with, or one way twice, is important in the practice of revision. The choice can be made, then, of which serves better in answering the perhaps newly felt need, but nothing should be thrown away, since the paragraph might well require the old original sentence in a new setting.

Developing a sense of rhetorical and logical form is in large part a matter of anticipating what comes next, of knowing what is needed, recognizing its emergence. That is not a “skill” but a power of mind, and it is exactly comparable to recognition in perception and representation with language. We do not need to teach this power, but we should assure that it is exercised. These simple techniques of paragraph review can serve that purpose because they keep the dialectic of intending and forming lively. Glossing and anticipating can help students see to it that the “what I mean” does not remain an amorphous, ghostly non-presence but is embodied over and over again. To find out if you have said what you meant, you have to know what you mean and the way to determine that is to say “it” again.

Only when a paragraph has been reviewed in the light of its gloss, the various sentences abandoned or re-written, restored and re-ordered according to emerging criteria, is it time to work on sentence correction. Error identification is often tantamount to error correction and, as I have noted, that is best carried out if the sentence can be “heard” in isolation from its support system, the context which makes meaning rather than grammatical structure predominate. The procedure I recommend is to read the paragraph backwards aloud, sentence by sentence—an old proofreader’s trick. If the student stumbles or hesitates, that is a sign of recognition and actual re-writing can begin. Nothing will come of this or

any other such procedure, of course, if the student cannot recognize a faulty sentence when he hears one. By assuring that there are occasions for reading good prose closely, carefully, and frequently aloud, we can help our students to develop an “ear” for syntax, like an “ear” for music, to expect the way a sentence will go or can go so that when it goes awry, they can hear the error. The remedy for a deficient “ear” is hearing good prose, and that means that student writing will not be the exclusive “text” in a well-designed composition course.

When it is a simple matter of agreement, pronoun reference, tense consistency, or punctuation (in some cases), there is a cause for grammatical instruction. But sentences which fail because of pleonasm, faulty parallelism, misused idiom or mixed constructions are, generally speaking, a different matter. They will yield to our grammatical analysis or the student’s, but that analysis will serve no heuristic function.

Take, for instance, the following sentences:

The elemental beach and the music of the sea was more preferable than that other summer beach.

North Carolina is a state where the long straight roads that lead to small quiet places has an unusualaly loud bunch of inhabitants.

I have always seen that as a silver lining behind the cloud.

Teachers judge the quality of the student’s performance much like that of the farmer’s grading his beef.

In my opinion, the best way to work with sentences like these is for everybody in a small group, or for both student and tutor in conference, to revise the sentence by means of composing several interpretive paraphrases, using the parent paragraph as a sounding board. Restating, representing is a way to recognize intention: interpreting by means of paraphrase, rather than tinkering with the incorrect sentence as it stands, allows a student to call upon the resources he has for making meaning which are independent of any explicit knowledge of grammatical laws. I do not mean that rhetorical and logical forms are simply “generated”: written discourse is not natural in the way that speech, in a social setting, is. (The notion of a Language Acquisition Device is hazardous even as a model of the processes by which we learn language, let alone as a model of how one learns to compose.) I have no faith that well-formed intentions will surface from the deep if only grammarians will step aside. Returning to intention is a hard journey, but it is profitable because of what can be learned on the way about the making of meaning.

Syntactical structures are linguistic forms which find conceptual forms:

making them accessible to our students is one of our chief duties. Kenneth Koch's experiments are important to us all because they remind us of the value of teaching syntactical structures as generative forms rather than as slots to be filled or inert elements to be combined. We can learn from Koch and others how to make syntax itself a heuristic. The procedure I have found most useful is called "persona paraphrase," in which the teacher selects a specific passage, illustrating a particular kind of structure, and requires the student to copy its structure, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence, substituting completely different subject matter.¹⁶ Kenneth Burke's conception of recalcitrance explains the principle on which persona paraphrase is based: "A statement is an attitude rephrased in accordance with the strategy of revision made necessary by the recalcitrance of the materials employed for embodying this attitude."¹⁷ Insofar as it recognizes the dialectics of recalcitrance, the paradox that complexity is simple, the fact that concept formation is dynamic, the fact that saying and intending inform one another—insofar as persona paraphrase is a technique which can teach revision as a mode of composing, it is the antithesis of sentence combining. This is not surprising. It presupposes a philosophy of language entirely foreign to the conceptions which underlie the manipulations of sentence combining.

Revising at this level in these ways means slowing things down: atoneness always does. Composing a persona paraphrase can take a full hour; composing interpretive paraphrases for a single conceptually faulty sentence can take up the entire class or conference time. It is time well-spent, but there is a very difficult pedagogical challenge in seeing to it that this necessarily slow, deliberate pace is not the only one at which the composition course moves. Others have probably long since discovered the paradox I have been slow to come to, namely, that atoneness requires a double track, if not a triple focus. Students should work independently on a long-term project for which the dialectical notebook is the enabling means of making meaning; they should continually be revising paragraphs with their fellow students; every day, in class or not, they should focus on the analysis and correction of a single sentence. The difference between the 101 section for basic writers, the non-credit course

¹⁶Phyllis Brooks, "Mimesis: Grammar and the Echoing Voice," *College English*, 35 (Nov., 1973), 161-68. As Brooks notes, persona paraphrase is highly adaptable. I have described certain uses which my students have made of it in *Forming/ Thinking/ Writing*, pp. 222-26.

¹⁷Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change* (1935; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), p. 255.

required of graduate students, and the Continuing Education workshops in writing should be a matter not of which elements are included but only of the ratios among them and the pace at which the entire course proceeds.

If we reject the linear model of composing and the pedagogy it legitimates—teaching the allegedly first things first; subskills before skills; the *know how* before the *know what*; walking (sentences) before running (paragraphs)—we will be free to invent courses which are consonant with the idea of the composing process as a continuum of forming. I have been claiming that recognition and representation, as the central operations of perception and concept formation, provide the models of forming which can help us teach revision as a way of composing.