View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

English Dissertations | Department of English

5-6-2019

# Ann Berthoff from the Margins: An Infusion of All-at-once-ness for Contemporary Writing Pedagogy

Paige Davis Arrington
*Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA*

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_diss

Recommended Citation
Arrington, Paige Davis, "Ann Berthoff from the Margins: An Infusion of All-at-once-ness for Contemporary Writing Pedagogy." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2019.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_diss/220

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

ANN BERTHOFF FROM THE MARGINS: AN INFUSION OF ALL-AT-ONCE-NESS FOR CONTEMPORARY WRITING PEDAGOGY

by

PAIGE DAVIS ARRINGTON

Under the Direction of Lynée Lewis Gaillet, PhD and Michael Harker, PhD

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that contemporary scholarship in the field of composition and rhetoric largely marginalizes and misconstrues the work of Ann Berthoff, one of the field's founders. Employing a feminist rhetorical, dialogic methodology, this study resources the scholarship of Ann Berthoff, the newly available archival collection of her papers, a personal interview with Berthoff, and a survey of contemporary and historical texts in the field that enroll Berthoff into their discussions. I enroll these sources in order to trace the origins of, and explain, the misconstruance of Berthoff's work. This study suggests that the field pays a price in continuing to get Berthoff wrong: underlying the ebb and flow of calls for disciplinarity in the field of comp/rhet is the inadequacy of postmodern theories of language to account for the field's value and identity. If the field is going to break free from mere discussion of disciplinarity, it will have to reckon with the work of Ann Berthoff and fully account for her theory of language, Peircean triadicity.

INDEX WORDS: Berthoff, Triadic semiosis, Poststructuralism, Writing pedagogy, Rhetoric, Composition

# ANN BERTHOFF FROM THE MARGINS: AN INFUSION OF ALL-AT-ONCE-NESS FOR CONTEMPORARY WRITING PEDAGOGY

by

PAIGE DAVIS ARRINGTON

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2019

Copyright by
Paige Davis Arrington
2019

ANN BERTHOFF FROM THE MARGINS: AN INFUSION OF ALL-AT-ONCE-NESS FOR CONTEMPORARY WRITING PEDAGOGY

by

PAIGE DAVIS ARRINGTON

Committee Chair: Lynée Lewis Gaillet

Michael Harker

Committee: Mary Hocks

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2019

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to John, Wyatt, and Jeff—who teach me how to love, how to live, and how to make the most of all this thinking, learning, and hoping.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is a product of conversations—dialogues gracious and probing and soul-nourishing. Without these dialogues, the project could not have happened. So deepest thanks go to Michael Harker, whose powerful questions and suggestions shaped this project from its inception. Lynée Gaillet, for introducing me to the magic of the archives. And to Mary Hocks, whose encouragement sparked my imagination for a much needed, 21st century Berthoff.

Thank you, too, to colleagues Kristin Ruccio, Jessica Rose, Robin Wharton, Elana Arnold, and Simona Chitesku Weik, friends and colleagues so patiently talking through ideas with me. And for all the scholars who granted me conversations about the history of the field, especially Eli Goldblatt, Keith Rhodes, Jim Zebroski, and Hepsie Roskelly… I have lived for these conversations.

And a very special gratitude to Ann Berthoff. Ann's kindness, generosity, honesty, and directness help me sense rich possibilities for a good, teacher-scholar life. I can't imagine a more valuable gift than her mentorship and conversation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ........ **v**
**LIST OF FIGURES** ........ **viii**
**1 INTRODUCTION** ........ **1**
**1.1 Abbreviations** ........ **1**
**1.2 Purpose of the Study** ........ **1**
**1.3 Chapters** ........ **6**
**1.4 Methods & Methodology** ........ **11**
**2 Berthoff's Triadic Semiotics & Allatonceness: A Gloss** ........ **14**
**2.1 The Elements of Berthoff's Pedagogy: Five Terms to Think With** ........ **17**
***2.1.1 Triadicity*** ........ ***18***
***2.1.2 Meaning-Making*** ........ ***22***
***2.1.3 "Dynamic Reciprocity"*** ........ ***28***
***2.1.4 Allatonceness*** ........ ***33***
***2.1.5 Conscientization*** ........ ***39***
**3 Berthoff's Allatonceness: Mending the Social/Individual Split** ........ **48**
**3.1 The Social/Individual Split: Berlin, Berthoff, and "the New Rhetoric"** ........ **51**
***3.1.1 1982: Berlin's "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories"*** ***52***
***3.1.2 1990: The Polylog*** ........ ***61***
**3.2 The Polylog: An Embrace of Pluralism** ........ **68**
**3.3 Dobrin & Jensen: The social/individual split** ........ **78**
**3.4 Mending the Social/Individual Split: Allatonceness** ........ **84**
**4 Allatonceness & the Dialogue/Dialectic Split** ........ **86**
**4.1 McComiskey's Dialectical Rhetoric: The Dialectic/Dialogue Split** ........ **91**
**4.2 Bizzell's Letter: Nature/Culture, Dialectic/Dialogue** ........ **96**
**4.3 Dialogue/Dialectic in Dynamic Reciprocity: Allatonce for Disciplinarity** ........ **100**
**5 Berthoff's 'method': Mending the theory/practice split** ........ **107**
**5.1 Joseph Harris' *A Teaching Subject*: Theoretical Berthoff** ........ **110**
**5.2 Palmeri & Rutherford: Practical Berthoff** ........ **120**
**5.3 Mending the Theory/Practice Split: Berthoff's "Method"** ........ **124**
**5.4 "Post-pedagogy"?** ........ **134**
**6 Teaching to the Learning Imagination: Classroom Models** ........ **147**
**6.1 Montessori** ........ **152**
**6.2 Freire** ........ **160**

**6.3 Berthoff ... 166**
**6.4 The Learning Imagination: Unifying Steps towards Disciplinarity ... 171**
**7 Conclusions: Berthoff & the "Discipline of Composition & Rhetoric" ... 177**
**Bibliography ... 184**
**APPENDICES ... 195**
**Appendix A: Interview with Ann E. Berthoff ... 195**
***Appendix A.1 Method ... 197***
***Appendix A.2 Intellectual Heritage ... 205***
***Appendix A.3 The Digital & Analogy ... 206***
***Appendix A.4 Montessori ... 208***
***Appendix A.5 Paulo Freire ... 213***
***Appendix A.6 Expressivism & The Paradigms ... 216***
**Appendix B: The Ann E. Berthoff Papers: An Extended Finding Aid ... 220**
***Appendix B.1 Introduction ... 220***
***Appendix B.2 Topics & Exchanges ... 224***
***Appendix B.3 Materials & Marginalia ... 234***
***Appendix B.4 Takeaways ... 237***
***Appendix B.5 Bibliographic Details from the Archive ... 240***

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: How meaning mediates meaning .................... 19
Figure 2.2: Meaning mediates meaning exercise .................... 21
Figure 5.1: Methods for teaching writing .................... 125
Figure 5.2: Outside of an overarching praxis .................... 141
Figure 4.1: The Montessori "red rods" material .................... 157

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Abbreviations

Books by Ann E. Berthoff

| | |
|---|---|
| TMM | *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers* |
| TSL | *The Sense of Learning* |
| FTW | *Forming/Thinking/Writing: The Composing Imagination* |
| TMB | *The Mysterious Barricades: Language and its Limits* |

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

This project is about a place. Like a great summit, valued from below as a means of identity and orientation, or admired from afar as an extraordinary point of view. I think of K2. Sagarmāthā-Chomolungma-Everest. The great Denali. Most of us will never experience the world as it seems from up there, and yet—not the scene itself perhaps, but the specialness of it—we can imagine*,* even from the valley floor, even in a photograph, the shrunken peaks pressed flat, neatly framed on the glossy page of a magazine we leaf through between bouts of grading papers.

This project is about a point of view, the one built by composition/rhetoric scholar Ann E. Berthoff. I discovered Berthoff's work early in my doctoral studies, finding she is the only scholar in the field of composition/rhetoric (comp/rhet) who references consistently, and in all seriousness, the work of Dr. Maria Montessori. As a once-certified Montessori Elementary teacher and teacher trainer, I have read comp/rhet scholarship—especially contemporary conversations in multimodality, embodiment, digital pedagogy, and "new materialisms"—sparked by the intuition that Montessori's deployment of materials in the classroom, her notion of "the prepared environment" and her "liberatory" teaching methodology hold great potential to

inform these conversations. I'd hoped to find someone in the field who had noticed this potential, too, and to my great fortune the search led me to Berthoff, one of the "founding mothers" of the field, whose unique voice and perspective gave rise to the celebrated Berthoff/Laurer debates of the 1970s and the CCCC Exemplar award in 1997. Not only did I discover Berthoff's scholarship, however, I found Ann Berthoff, herself. 93 years old and still thinking about writing theory, Berthoff was encouraged that I had noticed Montessori in her work, genuinely surprised that current scholarship still wrestles with her ideas, and more than willing to speak with me about Montessori, and about writing pedagogy in an age of digital media.

My conversation with Berthoff can be found as a curated account in Appendix A. Also included, as Appendix B, is an extended finding aid of the recently processed Ann E. Berthoff Papers housed at UMass/Boston's Joseph Healey Library Special Collections. I draw from this material throughout the dissertation, in part because doing so is consistent with the methodology I have adopted for this project—a hybrid, feminist rhetorical and archival approach that requires me to honor, as much as I can, my subject in her own words, in her own place and time in life—and in part because her current wisdom is utterly congruent with the scholarship instantiated in the large body of work she produced during her forty-plus-year career. This isn't to say her ideas, her theories and pedagogies, never evolved. What is striking, however, looking back from our interview over the landscape of her writings—both in published scholarship and in her archive—is the clarity and consistency of her theory of language, the pedagogical theory that stems from it, and the intensity of her passion as she has tried to inspire writing teachers to imagine the task of teaching writing from her point of view, to ask "If we put it [her] way, what difference will it make to our practice?" (TSL 141). This dissertation aims to inspire future scholarship to pursue answers to this question, particularly in light of contemporary writing instruction.

The implication is that Berthoff's point of view *could* make a substantial difference to our practice today, and this is what I assert in this dissertation. Berthoff's point of view, I will show, has the power to ground disparate conversations in the field. And the existence of myriad potential lines of inquiry offered as "Writing Studies" (or "Rhetoric and Composition," or "Composition/rhetoric"…) points to an exigency recent scholarship addresses directly: Addler-Kasner and Wardle's 2015 *Naming What We Know*, for instance, and Heilker and Vanderberg's 2015 *Keywords in Composition Studies* claim that "we are [still] not coherent; we do not share a core set of beliefs and values" (Yancey, "Reflection"). These works are referenced in the 2018 collection, *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*, edited by Rita Malenczyk, Susan Miller-Cochran, Elizabeth Wardle, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, a volume that identifies consequences of our field's "ambivalence" concerning what to call ourselves (location 74). The volume claims that "disciplinarity" can aid in securing for us greater scholarly respect and professional investment, and it suggests that we are on the cusp of what Yancey calls "the disciplinary turn." This view is not without controversy. The editors write: "...some in Rhetoric and Composition resist the idea of disciplinarity because such a status carries with it a sense of being fixed and hegemonic, often more interested in pursuing its own expertise than on teaching students, developing programs, or serving other purposes aligned with the origins of the field…" (location 87). This fear of "being fixed" echoes the embrace of "pluralism" in the 80's and 90's I will discuss in chapter two of this dissertation. It's an embrace, I argue, that has contributed to the marginalization and misconstruance of the work of Ann Berthoff. Berthoff's marginalization, I will show, can be conceived as symbolic of the larger "cost" stemming from a fear of declaring common beliefs and values. Fearing becoming "fixed and hegemonic," and so ignoring that which might unite our disparate conversations, contributes to the professional precariousness

identified by the authors of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*. This includes the "labor issue" as they call it (location 7975), tied closely with recognition and respect from other disciplines, a sense of "legitimacy" that our field has worked for from its inception (Miller, Berlin, Harris).

Ironically, comp/rhet's struggle for legitimacy as a field has emerged out of a (mostly) commonly-recognized need, the need to counter at best ineffective, at worst inhumane, writing pedagogy—everyday teaching that "... [marches] lockstep to the demands of fixed school curricula, standardized tests, and calls for improved skills and increased cultural unity" (Harris 2), or Berlin's recognition of "the dehumanizing status quo" in *Rhetorics, Poetics, Cultures*. I make a case in this dissertation for the recovery and centralizing of Ann Berthoff's point of view for the purpose of countering the "dehumanizing status quo" of writing pedagogy as it manifests today. And here I'm thinking of Linda Adler-Kassner's EIC (Education Industrial Complex) and her 2017 CCCC address in which she identifies "dilemmas" about writing that continue to plague writing classrooms and programs. Adler-Kassner shows us that expressed attitudes about writing taken from 1962 might be mistaken for current ones (64). In light of her argument, "new" situations brought about by "turns" experienced in the field historically—and there have been many—have served, on important levels, only to entrench pervasively reductionist perceptions of writing. I argue here that, ironically, the ineffectiveness of the field of comp/rhet to communicate clearly what it is, what it does, its importance, and its needs, speaks to the field's struggle to appreciate the complexity of writing as a way of forming and thinking, not just communication.

But this dissertation is not about disciplinarity for the field of composition and rhetoric; it's about what the work of Ann Berthoff—as it focuses on the relationships between forming, thinking, and writing—can contribute to conversations about disciplinarity. In this dissertation, I

find that scholarship in the field of comp/rhet more often than not gets Berthoff wrong. And this misapprehension reveals something vitally important, I think, about our field's fractured state of "disparate research interests" (Malenczyk, et. al), our seemingly cyclical identity crisis as a "teaching field" *or* a field of scholarly research. Resourcing Berthoff, I argue, can ground disparate conversations in comp/rhet and provide for us grounds for uniting the teaching and scholarly mandates of our profession. This resourcing, however, requires first a rescuing.

In my survey of the field's literature, I have come to recognize instances in which important scholarship gets Berthoff wrong, usually by considering one aspect of her point of view out of context of the whole. I have also found scholarship that gets her right, but even this scholarship—i.e. Laura Micciche's *Acknowledging Writing Partners*, Kristine Fleckenstein's *Embodied Literacies: Imageword and a Poetics of Teaching*, and Jason Palmeri's *Remixing composition: A history of multimodal writing pedagogy*, for example—offers only brief discussion of Berthoff's point of view in the context of larger claims concerning embodiment, multimodality, and materiality. Rarely does Berthoff enjoy space in a main title. It is for these reasons that I designate Berthoff's work as "marginalized" in the title of *this* dissertation.

In our interview (see Appendix A), I asked Berthoff about the idea that her work has become "marginalized":

> Me: You know it seems that a lot of people in the field consider your work on the margins or marginalized in some way…
>
> Berthoff: Well yeah, it is; *not* marginalized is rotten. I don't want to be part of the rhetoric consensus… But marginal, meaning not to the point or something that is so idiosyncratic that it can't be used by anybody…

In a sense, the four chapters that comprise this dissertation project attempt to understand what Berthoff means by "rhetoric consensus" and "rotten," in order to gain a sense of how and why the field continues to reference Berthoff's work and resist it, too, all-at-once. This resistance, I will argue, leaves the potential of her ideas largely untapped. And so, in an effort to encourage the field to revisit Berthoff, especially in light of renewed conversations about disciplinarity, I have crafted the following chapters to make three essential moves: 1) to re-introduce Berthoff's important theory of language; 2) to identify the essence of how scholars get Berthoff wrong, and the language typically implemented in that misconstruance; and 3) to offer discussion and examples of the unique, unifying praxis that gets lost when we fail to appreciate Berthoff in the context of her theory of language.

What if Ann Berthoff's work—in its demand that we account for a theory of language—proves essential for a field of writing studies vying to emerge into disciplinarity? What if continuing to get Berthoff wrong aligns with our continuing struggle to define our field? The following chapters suggest that Berthoff's ideas—considered as she intended, in the context of her theory of language—can constructively ground and unify disparate conversations in the field of composition and rhetoric so that we can transcend the cycles of debates that keep us churning with questions of identity, and begin to sharpen our resources towards ameliorating the "dehumanizing status quo" of contemporary writing instruction.

## 1.3 Chapters

In order to appreciate the untapped potential of Berthoff's point of view, it's important to comprehend the bedrock of her philosophy: triadic semiosis. In chapter two of this dissertation, "Berthoff's Triadic Semiotics & Allatonceness: A Gloss," I resource Berthoff's published works, our interview, and her archived papers to explicate the essential concepts of triadicity, meaning-

making, allatonceness (all-at-once-ness), and conscientization. Also, I introduce a new term, "dynamic reciprocity," that reflects the activity entailed in the dialogue/dialectic relationship of Berthoff's theoretical understanding. Rooted in C. S. Peirce's triadic semiotics, triadicity "gathers" the other concepts forming the bedrock of her philosophy, especially the notion of allatonceness. Unlike Berthoff, perhaps, I place special emphasis on the notion of "allatonceness"; it is this concept, in my view, that holds the most potential for addressing the "killer dichotomies" that perpetuate for the field a less than ideal "status quo". The overlooking of allatonceness, I argue—through passive acceptance or active imposition of dyadic forms on our conceptions of terms, histories, and environments—is how we tend to misconstrue Berthoff's work.

Chapter three, "Allatonceness & Mending the Social/Individual Split," situates the notion of allatonceness historically, and identifies the essence of how the field gets Berthoff wrong. Some terms commonly involved in the misconstruance, I suggest, exist in what I call "the social/individual split." This split can be traced to the dissonance between triadicity and postmodern theories of language. As evidence of the tension between triadicity and "postmodernism," I offer in this chapter a close examination of two moments in composition and rhetoric involving James Berlin, whose developing theories of rhetoric can be understood as contributing to early promotion and later dismissal of Berthoff's point of view. Essentially, chapter two argues that Berthoff's concept of allatonceness, and her operationalizing of Peircean triadicity for the freshman writing classroom, lost a battle against postmodernist theories of language during the 80s and 90s. And this loss, I find, is a root cause of Berthoff's remaining in the margins of contemporary conversations in comp/rhet, especially those developing around the issue of disciplinarity.

Chapter four, “Allatonceness and the Dialogue/Dialectic Split,” identifies other terms deployed in misconstruing Berthoff’s work. This chapter argues that misapprehending and misconstruing the “dynamic” aspect of dialogue and dialectic—the “allatonce” nature of these concepts in Berthoff’s point of view—results in the marginalizing of her work and prevents the field from fully appreciating its radical potential. Specifically, I examine the misconstruance of Berthoff’s notion of dialectic/dialogue in Bruce McComiskey’s 2016 *Dialectical Rhetoric*. I then examine an historical instance of this misconstruance in Patricia Bizzell’s early understanding of Berthoff’s work as seen in a letter to Berthoff from Bizzell, housed in the Berthoff papers at UMass Boston.

Chapter five, “Berthoff’s ‘Method’: Mending the Theory/Practice Split,” identifies a third set of terms scholarship seems to deploy in misconstruing and marginalizing the work of Ann Berthoff. This chapter considers Joseph Harris’ influential historiography, *A Teaching Subject*, a book that offers an analysis of comp/rhet’s development since the 1996 Dartmouth conference. In light of Berthoff’s notion of allatonceness, I argue that although Harris views Berthoff’s lexicon as not quite fitting with the terms he chose to shape his monograph, her work *is* commensurate with Harris’ vision for “a sense of ‘common ground’” among writers in writing classrooms (169). Not only is it commensurate, however; because Berthoff’s practice emerges from a radically different theory of language, it possesses a forming power that the approaches Harris covers in his book do not possess. For here we are, again, a “field” returning to notions of “disciplinarity” amidst complaints of less than ideal working conditions for departments, teachers, and students studying and doing the practice of writing.

Harris’s is the same “sense of common ground” broadly sought by the scholars of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* as they consider why, and how, to move the field

towards disciplinarity. Unsurprisingly, Berthoff does not appear in *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*, although Berlin does (and Derrida, and Foucault). Chapter five argues that this is a result of tacitly, or unconsciously, embracing one theory of language over another. It's a theory of language that doesn't seem to be working for us.

As a purposeful historiography Harris' book cannot account for every voice that shaped the eventful decades of the 80s and 90s. Nor can discussions of disciplinarity account for all the important voices that have helped shape the field, particularly at its inception. Harris is right, I argue in chapter five: Berthoff's point of view, does not "fit" a framework built on the notion that it's useful to consider "theory" and "practice" as separate phenomena, especially when it comes to pedagogy. It is here where the misconstruance happens, I demonstrate, in such a way as to marginalize what could be a terrifically useful point of view for Harris and other scholars who value "reassert[ing] ties to the classroom that have sometimes seemed to grow less strong as the field becomes more professionalized" (xvii). Berthoff cannot be considered in terms of "theory" free from "practice" without distorting her message, and so her "lexicon"— "meaning-making," "chaos," "degrees of generality," "dialogue/dialectic"—appears "not to fit." In some treatments, Berthoff's work seems so deeply theoretical that its practicality disappears entirely or becomes severely under-considered. In these treatments, Berthoff becomes "... marginal, meaning… something [considered] so idiosyncratic that it can't be used by anybody" (Berthoff).

In chapter five, I consider the cost of shrinking Berthoff's point of view from our historiographies and from central discussions currently shaping the field. I demonstrate the power of Berthoff's work—particularly the notion of allatonceness and its logical, pedagogical imperative, "method"—to unify disparate conversations in the field, to ground them in renewed dialogue concerning theories of language and meaning-making. The chapter returns to the issue

of disciplinarity, offering "method," as opposed to "knowledge", as a bedrock-forming concept that honors the "all-in-each" of the cultural and the personal, dialogue and dialectic, practice and theory.

Chapter six moves into a demonstration of the practical implications of getting Berthoff right, examples of her method, and methods of teachers she considers sharing her theory of language. I offer an explication of dynamic reciprocity at work in Berthoff's referencing of the specific classroom practices of Paulo Freire and Dr. Maria Montessori, two pedagogues whose lessons Berthoff details in *The Making of Meaning* (1981). Ultimately, threading the work of these three teacher-scholars—Berthoff, Montessori, and Freire—enables us to imagine the potential of triadicity to unite praxes inspired by disparate subfields within comp/rhet. For Berthoff, the notions of theory and practice become toxic the moment they are considered free from the influence of the other. This chapter demonstrates how apprehending the social/individual, dialogue/dialectic, theory/practice of our scholarship as a unified, dynamic system of meaning-making—as an allatonceness—contributes to mending destructive "splits." Mending these "splits," I argue, is key to advancing into clear conceptions of disciplinarity for the field.

This project's conclusion, "Berthoff and the 'Discipline of Composition and Rhetoric'," questions contemporary conversations surrounding the field's moving into disciplinarity through a not-so-recent conversation that also proposed a disciplinary turn. This historical example, John Schlib's "Composition and Poststructuralism: A Tale of Two Conferences," suggests a return to the question of a theory of language. Schlib's call, from way back in 1989, is for a renewed look at triadicity, Berthoff's theory of language. The field has yet to engage in that "looking, and looking again," as Berthoff would put it. It's as if poststructuralist theories of language are

settled, incontrovertible conceptions of language and meaning. They are not. Ann Berthoff's work still offers us a vital, as-yet woefully under-appreciated resource for considering what we do, who we are, who we might be as a field. If we are to enter again into discussions about disciplinarity, this dissertation concludes, then it is time to reckon with the problem of Ann Berthoff, to consider her work whole, in the allatonceness of her theory of language.

### 1.4 Methods & Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of this dissertation project, I bring into conversation four sources:

1. Secondary sources composed by Ann E. Berthoff
2. Secondary sources composed by other scholars within the field of composition and rhetoric that mention or discuss Berthoff's work
3. The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston (see extended finding aid, Appendix B)
4. An interview with Ann Berthoff (see curated transcript, Appendix A)

"Conversation," perhaps, best articulates how my process began as I discovered first the published works of Berthoff, and then her archived papers, and then Berthoff herself. But conversation isn't "method," is it? "Method" connotes design, intentionality. Method imposes form on a process in order to clarify that which we can and cannot control, to articulate results and conclusions in certain terms. Method is form, a "doing" form.

Articulating "method" and "methodology" for this project reflects the complexity and organicity of the situation of this study. Method as a form of "dynamic reciprocity." Discovery of relevant resources of various kinds enriched my process as it unfolded. What we study, in contemplating the work of Ann Berthoff, is method—not just a method for writing, or teaching

writing, but a method for meaning. So, doing Berthovian triadicity is doing meaning. Making a dissertation is making meaning; doing *this* dissertation, about triadic semiotics, is making a dissertation that makes meaning about making meaning. (Such circularity tells me I'm on the right track.)

I recognize that acknowledging the complexity and organicity of this study is a kind of feminist practice. Royster and Kirsch, in *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*, write that feminist rhetorical practices entail "listening deeply, reflexively, and multisensibly; grounding inquiries in historical evidence with regard to both texts and contexts; creating schemata for engaging critical attention; and disrupting our assumptions regularly through reflective and reflexive questions" (21). The method of this study represents the "schemata for engaging critical attention" I created in the course of pursuing an understanding of how the field of comp/rhet gets Berthoff wrong, and why that is important.

This "schemata" is best articulated, I think, by the Berthovian concept of "dynamic reciprocity." "Reflexivity" and "depth" can only be gained, I now understand, through a process of "dynamic reciprocity"—a consciousness of how the meanings we bring to information shape that information, and of how information shapes our in-formation-ing. This awareness constitutes the "dialogic" aspect of the methodology I claim for this study. The understanding I gleaned initially from the scholarship of Ann Berthoff, and from scholarship in the field enrolling her name and ideas, shaped the questions I would ask in my interview with Berthoff. This understanding also shaped what and how I apprehended the material instantiated in her archived papers. The interview, and my experiences with Berthoff's archival collection, shaped how I understand the secondary source material, etc.

And so best practices in feminist rhetorical study and dynamic reciprocity anchor the shape of this study and its presentation. The use of "I" throughout acknowledges the specific embodied experience that I bring to this study in all of its forms. The inclusion of my own part in the interview with Berthoff presents the interview as "dialogue," meanings in-process, as opposed to a resource of staid "knowledge" intended to be "passed on" like some kind of jeweled heirloom. Survival isn't the point. Recovery isn't the point, although Berthoff is a woman in what is traditionally, and perhaps still mostly a man's realm—philosophy—even within our current pocket of academia. Drawing on Berthoff's substantial corpus, I begin this dissertation project by articulating—acknowledging—my understanding of her ideas. Chapter one articulates my deeply sourced and contemplated understanding of Berthovian triadicity. As per a methodology defined by Berthovian triadicity and "dynamic reciprocity," this understanding of triadicity is more important than what it "is" objectively (because there is no meaningful, objective "is"). The subsequent chapters offer the following: 1) each brings material from Berthoff's archive, interview, and corpus to analyze closely one or two texts representing the history of comp/rhet, and one text representing contemporary scholarship that uses Berthoff's ideas in some way; 2) each identifies one way of articulating how this scholarship gets Berthoff's ideas wrong and serves to marginalize her; 3) importantly (and this is why the chapters are long, I think) each chapter also draws on Berthoff's scholarship, archive, and interview to demonstrate the consequences of getting her ideas right; 4) finally, each chapter considers the implications of getting Berthoff right for the contemporary practices we engage in as a field and for renewed discussions of disciplinarity. This organization enables me to present my research as knowledge emerging from dialogic processes.

If ultimately this project feels "loosely" gathered, I invite you to imagine it more like an expedition than a hike. Some years ago, I canoed the length of the Mississippi River. Even though the "path" was wide, clear, and the destination well-articulated (as long as I kept getting on the river, the current was going to take me downstream towards New Orleans), I never knew what a day on the river would bring. Working with Berthovian triadicity is kind of like that. The terms we think with comprise the boat we navigate through the landscape of our field's scholarship, past and present. We stay afloat as long as we remain conscious of the concepts we are "thinking with" to form our meanings. For this dissertation project, we seek to "think with" triadicity, as Berthoff intended, in order to understand if her work might help the field emerge out of mere discussion of disciplinarity and actually into it. Into becoming a feature on the map of academia that's big, clear, and recognizable, with a name as recognizable and valued perhaps as the Mississippi River. The results, I think, are promising.

# 2 BERTHOFF'S TRIADIC SEMIOTICS & ALLATONCENESS: A GLOSS

*"...the axle turns and there is in that wheeling something new—in Coleridge's terms, a reconciliation of opposites…"*

~Ann Berthoff,

quoted in a letter "From Louise Smith to Ann Berthoff, 28 September 1988"[1]

This chapter defines five key concepts foundational to the theoretical point of view of Ann Berthoff: triadicity, meaning-making, "dynamic reciprocity," allatonceness, and

[1] "From Louise Smith to Ann Berthoff, 28 September 1988." Box 1, Folder 1, Series I: "Correspondences." The Ann E. Berthoff Papers. Special Collections & Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

conscientization. To develop an understanding of the concepts gathered in these terms has been for me—as it was for Ann Berthoff—to achieve a sense of the soundness of C.S. Peirce's triadic semiosis and its constructive potential for a uniquely humane approach to writing pedagogy. Yet Berthoff's work with triadicity, though often cited, remains "unaccepted without rejection" by the field generally (Rhodes). Triadicity, and theories of language broadly, seem decentralized from contemporary conversations in comp/rhet. Or perhaps conversations concerning theories of language are happening, they're just happening "ad hoc"—a theory of language for each new volume or article or scholar, as the field branches into various subjects. Many of these subjects assume, or are anchored in, the usefulness of "postmodern" theories of language (see chapter five for more discussion about the "ad hoc" nature of our field as Berthoff perceives it).

Berthoff's work cannot be accurately accounted for outside of conversations centering a theory of language, and so her work tends to be marginalized—relegated to mentions in introductory remarks or sections of chapters in larger monographs about something or someone else. Berthoff's marginalization, and concerns away from theories of language, I argue, results in recognizable misconstruance of Berthoff's work. I call these misapprehensions "the social/individual split," "the dialogue/dialectic split," and "the theory/practice split," and all of them rise from the tension between triadicity and postmodern theories of language.

Berthoff's theory of language, triadicity, is fundamentally different from Derridean deconstruction and other postmodern theories of language, and this, it seems, has yet to be centrally wrestled with in our literature. Triadicity is the theory that award-winning novelist Walker Percy calls "the most underrated philosophical idea since Aristotle—and probably more important" ("Letter from Walker Percy, 16 August 1982")[2]. It has surprised me that a theory of

[2] "Letter from Walker Percy, 16 August 1982," Box 1, Folder 1, The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

semiosis with such strong advocacy, including Berthoff's, has not come to shape more of the practice of teaching writing. But then, the fundamental concepts require a good deal of faith and patience, as I will show in chapters three and four.

Ultimately, I aim to suggest that Berthovian triadicity possesses much potential to constructively shape the field of composition and rhetoric today. But before I can make the argument that we would do well to overcome misconstruance of Berthoff's work and give it renewed, complete consideration, first it's useful to get a handle on triadicity's core concepts. For those unfamiliar with Peircean semiosis, or for those interested in Berthoff's particular rendering of it, I offer this chapter.

* * *

Ann Berthoff recognizes "allatonceness" as central to Peircean triadicity, the theory of language anchoring her pedagogy. She tells me, "...it's in absolutely everything I ever wrote" (Appendix A). In my experience, however, the centrality and practical implication of allatonceness doesn't easily emerge while reading Berthoff's written works. Drawing on Berthoff's scholarship, her archive, and a personal interview I conducted with Berthoff in 2017 (Appendix A), this chapter offers a gloss of five major elements of Ann Berthoff's philosophy. In identifying these elements, I sketch models for how each concept might be apprehended in ways commensurate with contemporary conceptions of composition and rhetoric. My models are not intended to supplant those Berthoff herself offers, especially in her volumes of collected talks and essays, *The Making of Meaning* and *The Sense of Learning*; rather they serve as evidence of my own thinking through the elements that comprise Berthoff's theoretical orientation, and their relationships. For instance, during our conversation in 2017, I told Berthoff that I was eschewing Peirce's "curious triangle" as a means of communicating the notion that all meaning is mediated

by meaning. Peirce's model seemed visually too familiar, too close to "the rhetorical triangle" so often taught in first year writing (Appendix A). Instead, I would go with the image of a bubble. She seemed receptive to that, in part because her intention is always, I think, to inspire people to form their own models, not to merely adopt someone else's (TMM).

In offering interpretations of some of Berthoff's anchoring concepts in this chapter, I suggest how scholarship sometimes get these concepts "wrong" in our arguments and historiographies. This results in toxic "splits" in our conceptions that keep the field from fully appreciating the radically different and potentially "liberating" pedagogy that stems from triadicity. This chapter explicates the role of allatonceness in the relatedness of Berthoff's anchoring concepts and in the relatedness of the misconstruance. Specific examples of this misconstruance, however, I leave for the remaining chapters of this project. Subsequent chapters also investigate more fully the implications of Berthovian allatonceness for contemporary composition, especially in regard to contemporary efforts towards disciplinarity.

## 2.1 The Elements of Berthoff's Pedagogy: Five Terms to Think With

Berthoff's theory of language undergirds her philosophy and her method, and it stems from an intellectual heritage seeded in the works of C.S. Peirce, I.A. Richards, Susanne Langer, Sapir, Cassirer, among others. Berthoff's *The Mysterious Barricades* (1999) provides the most thorough treatment of her understanding of triadic semiotics, I think; however, all of her books build from a foundational explication of the basic concept of the sign as three-valued (in a particularly Peircean way) (*TMM, TSL, FTW*). Indeed not one of her articles, or "response to"s, can be accurately accounted for without appreciating triadic semiotics and considering its implications for literacy instruction. For this reason, to understand Berthoff, it's imperative to understand Peircean triadicity.

### *2.1.1 Triadicity*

A triadic semiotics posits that the word (the sign) has no direct, meaningful relationship with the the-thing-in-the-world-to-which-the-sign-refers. It has only an indirect, *mediated* relationship. All signs—words and other types of symbols—are *constitutive of meaning*: meaning is not merely the relationship between sign and signified; meaning is *part of the sign*, and necessary for a sensible relationship between sign and signified to happen in the first place. Importantly, this means that interpretation is entailed, always, in making meaning.

Imagine, if you will, a bubble, the kind a child might make on a warm summer afternoon. A good kind, thick and soapy, with a beautifully iridescent and swirling surface. Inside of the bubble, made of the same "stuff" as the bubble, is the word "apple." This bubble represents the meaning-gathering that is (that constitutes) the sign, "apple," enabling it to connect with the-thing-in-the-world some recognize as "apple" (see figure 2.1 below).

The membrane defining the bubble, always purling and shifting, is the gathering mechanism, the human mind in action, the human imagination. Language is one way of "doing" imagination. Berthoff writes, "Imagination can help us form the concept of forming. Forming depends on abstraction, symbolization, selection, 'purposing'… Forming is the mind in action. It is what we do when we learn; when we discover or organize; when we interpret; when we come to know. Forming is how we make meaning" (*TMM* 6). She often cites I.A. Richards' artful designation of language as "...the supreme organ of the mind's self-ordering growth" (TSL, "Is Teaching Still Possible?"). Such an epistemontological metaphor deserves a model of motion. The bubble is my own model for thinking about triadicity, the meaning-mediated relationship between sign and signifier:

The field of potential *meaning* is historically, culturally, socially determined.

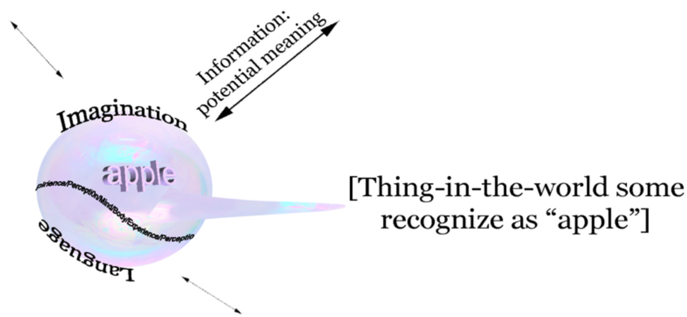


*Figure 2.1: How meaning mediates meaning*

The bubble above illustrates how the human mind gathers meaning—through sense experience, memory, association, comparison, contrast, classification, generalization, abstraction, projection...all-at-once, all of these “acts” (and others). The “stuff” comprising the skin of the bubble, in this case encasing the word “apple,” is what enables meaningful connection between the word and the-thing-in-the-world. That “stuff” doesn’t exist without human experience and mind interacting with meanings “out there” already. A sign-with-salience is always created by a mind (and re-created by the next mind); it is never merely received and communicated.

When the mind transforms information into meaning, it discriminates and associates. It is in this sense that “language is the great heuristic” (TMB 49). Words, as signs, are forms (as are phonemes, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, texts, chapters, images, templates, musical notes, genre); in the above illustration we see the mind-body creating form from the information (“in-*form*-ations”) around it, from the field of potential meanings we often call “context,” sometimes “environment.” The sign-meaning constituting the “apple” bubble in figure 2.1 can create meaningful relationships with various things-in-the-world, including physical entities, concepts, stories, images, icons, etc. “Thinking with” a sign-meaning affects how we think of, how we construct, *other* meanings, and how we construe them, how we extract meaning from them.

Thus, how we "come to an understanding" generates from a process of thinking with and about sign-meanings. (Perhaps really we should call it "how we *create* an understanding" not how we "come to it.")

It is in this sense that language is also hermeneutic: the salience generated by an individual's discernment of a term *is by its nature socially informed, historically informed, culturally informed*, always. This is one way scholarship in comp/rhet often mischaracterizes or misunderstands Berthoff's work. As chapter three of this dissertation establishes, I call this particular misunderstanding of Berthoff's work "the social/individual split." Berthoff's triadicity posits that the forms available for meaning-making are, from the very start of a human mind, present in the material-sociocultural world and available for reformation and transformation, in other words, fodder for that mind's imagination. Perhaps we could say that the individual "is expressed" in the context of their world via that "acts of mind" engaged in creating salience around the sign, the "word" in our case, and in the particular ways each of us "thinks with" it. We could think with other meanings, but if we think with "this" one, what is the consequence to our understanding? to our knowledge? to our being in the world? to the other meanings we can possibly construe and construct? This process is a matter of interpretation; many possible meanings exist in our contexts—the contexts we create, and the ones we find ourselves in (not *infinite* possibilities, however, Berthoff will remind us in TMB…). The process happens individually; the information—the meaning-material with which we make other meanings—happens socially. But the individual and the social happen "all at once."

*  *  *

| To *feel* this phenomenon, close your eyes. Think "apple." What happens in your mind? Associations, memories, projections, images, sounds, tastes, symbols? icons? (This has already |
|---|

been happening, as you encountered “apple” on the previous page, and that set in motion a flurry of mind-body activity.)

Now think “kế گ!JKh”?

Can you think it? Why or why not? What is happening in your mind—or not happening—that prevents or works towards a meaningful relationship between “kế گ!JKh” and whatever thing-in-the-world it might speak to? If we were to make “kế گ!JKh” meaningful, how would we go about it? Where would the meaning “come from”?

*Figure 2.2: Meaning mediates meaning exercise*

For semioticians perhaps, the exercise in the figure 2.2 above is rudimentary. I don’t know; my studies in semiotics are superficial and formed almost entirely via the works of Ann Berthoff. I am a writing teacher, not a semiotician. For writing teachers, however—and this is the road Berthoff builds for us—turning our attention to how the fundamental materials with which we have been charged to work *work* could yield invaluable insights into “what we’re doing in the first place” when we teach writing, especially in contemporary, digitally saturated environments (Appendix A).

In this sense, the line of questioning that manifests in light of Berthoff’s notion of triadicity speaks to the fundamentals of meaning-making, in any mode, with any material, thus bringing together conversations in multimodality and embodiment, affect and communication, digital media and pedagogy, etc. Underlying all of these “subdisciplines” within the field of writing studies is a theory of meaning-making, a theory of language. The implications for this

unification are many; any pursuit of "disciplinarity," for instance, as advocated in Malenczyk, Miller-Cochran, Wardle, and Yancey's *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*, would do well to involve decisions regarding a theory of language and semiosis. As chapter three of this project suggests, an embrace of the pluralism settled into in the 90s seems to have resulted in a tacit acceptance of popular theories of language, like Derrida's deconstruction, or a sense that a semiotic theory is not of central importance, particularly for teachers. We leave semiosis to the philosophers among us. Our subfields are so many… and after all, "practice" is different from "theory." Berthoff's work tells us that this split— "the theory/practice split"—is one of our gravest mistakes. And misunderstanding or dismissing the centrality of the allatonceness of theory and practice in Berthoff's point of view, and its implications for the working conditions of teachers, comprises one of the forces keeping Berthoff in the margins of our conversations.

Conversations like the one embodied in *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* root in a history we recognize and value, and yet, as chapters three and five of this dissertation demonstrate, Berthoff seems to be shrinking from these historiographies. I argue here that any conversation about the field's trajectory would do well to come to terms with—either accept or reject—triadicity, the anchoring concept of Berthoff's point of view.

### *2.1.2 Meaning-Making*

I have found that one of the implications of triadic semiosis for conversations about writing is a shift from valuing "communication" as a central concern, to valuing "meaning-making."

A sign-with-salience is always created by a mind (and re-created by the next mind); it is never merely "received" and "communicated." This consequence of triadic semiotics cannot be overstated, I think, and, like just about everything Berthovian, it leads to circularities; this

consequence bears consequences. Here's where patience is needed, and faith… Circularities shape triadicity. Berthoff comments on this in a letter to Susan Blystone, October 2000:

> I realize that for many students (incl Grad students!) these reflexive formulations about reflection can sound like mumbo jumbo, but if you can get a hold of the idea that meanings are MEANS, everything falls into place. We don't make meaning by decoding but by bringing meanings (developed in the course of living our lives) to experience and thus creating new meaning. [3]

"Meanings are means," "reflexive formulations about reflection" ... "mumbo jumbo"-sounding indeed. Berthoff warns us, in "Is Teaching Still Possible," that the circularities emerge, too, as "thinking about thinking… interpreting interpretations… knowing our knowledge." Her essay opens with a passage from Kenneth Burke: "... Burke explains how thinking which does not include thinking about thinking is merely problem solving, an activity carried out very well by trouts" (11). Berthoff includes an extended passage from Burke, centering the image of the non-reflecting trout, in FTW, lesson material for students to consider the phenomenon of reflective thought; without resolving circularities, Berthoff operationalizes "thinking about thinking" for the writing classroom. This work tells us that the circularities don't need to be "worked-out" in order for teachers to benefit from triadicity, in order for "meanings as means" to shape pedagogy constructively.

The circularities are also a feature of I.A. Richards' operationalizing of Peircean triadicity ("IA Richards and the Audit of Meaning"). One of Berthoff's "heroes," Richards inspires much of Berthoff's philosophy and practice. But in order to avoid feeling mired down by the circularities of Richards' praxis and bound in confusion, Berthoff adopts the remedy of her

---

[3] "Letter from Berthoff to Blystone, October 2000," Box 1, Folder 2, The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

heroes, too; Peircean "pragmaticism" (TSL). Instead of declaring the "truth" of a concept, Berthoff "thinks with" it. For instance, perhaps the circularity implicated in the bubble model of figure 2.1 is understood as problematic; if language comprises meaning already, then "the gathering mechanism" of meaning is in part meaning. (It is also action.) Berthoff might consider us merely "thinking with" the notion of "meaning-mediated meaning," bringing awareness to the circularities and accepting them. "Thinking with" creates room for how a situation might be different if we thought about it "with" different terms. This practice of "thinking with" resonates with Berthoff's models that must, in order to be useful, flatten out processes that are seemingly more complex than our systems for communicating them. Which leads to my next point about meaning-making: it is precursory to and allatonce with communication.

As I will show in chapter three, Berthoff's work is a significant departure from the theoretical orientations of her contemporaries. One of these departures can be articulated in the distinction between "communicating" and "meaning-making." Berthoff's work consistently, though mostly tacitly, makes much use of this distinction. Meaning-making *entails* "communication," but "communication" necessitates having made (gathered and composed) meaning in the first place. The precursory nature of meaning-making lies at the heart of Berthoff's pedagogical focus; to teach "effective communication" as something that happens *after* one has determined "what to write" is to send the full cart rushing down the hill while the horse forages lazily on the side of the road. What we end up with—in the form of "final products" submitted for assessment in writing classes—are often cart-wrecks of varying severity, meaning-wise. Disjointed, unfocused, meandering signs in spaces. Macrorie's "Engfish." "A very early draft." A measure of "chaos." "Johnny can't write." In this situation, as writing teachers, we have failed to address *the condition* that must be met for students to begin crafting

meaningful texts. When Berthoff identifies the "rhetoric consensus" as "rotten" (see "Introduction" and Appendix A), she identifies the perpetuation of a focus on teaching the act of writing, not *the condition* of it; this consequential distinction follows a focus on meaning-making as opposed to "communication."

According to Berthoff, before students are able to communicate effectively in writing, students must first develop a method for making meaning (FTW). In chapter five of this dissertation I detail what Berthoff means by that, and I demonstrate how triadicity leads to "method" as a pedagogical imperative. In order to develop a method for making meaning, however, students must bring conscious awareness to the fact that they already make meaning, and how they do it. Berthoff writes of teachers that "Our job is to devise sequences of assignments which encourage conscientization, the discovery of the mind in action" (TSL 25). And of writing… "The work of the active mind is seeing relationships, finding forms, making meanings: when we write, we are doing in a particular way what we are already doing when we make sense of the world" (FTW 12). We "make sense of the world" as babies, as young children. Learning to write is a kind of channeling of that thing we already do quite well after about age three, make meaning with/through language. Without an awareness (conscientization, see below) of that thing we do—make meaning—as the stuff of writing, we cannot bring under any real control (method) "the particular way" of writing itself. This is why "meaning-making" as a concept is so central to understanding Berthoff. To teach writing as a form of meaning-making, as chapter four of this dissertation demonstrates, results in a very different kind of teaching than most. An example of this unique pedagogical approach is embodied in Berthoff's textbook, *Forming, Thinking, Writing: The Composing Imagination* (FTW).

Berthoff's textbook, and her methodology, acknowledge the power and responsibility for making meaning within each student:

> A method of composing is a critical method, a way of getting thinking started and keeping it going. The more you can learn about composing, the better able you will be to argue with yourself and others; to take notes and study for exams; to read poems and textbooks; to think through problems and to formulate questions that practically answer themselves. The main justification for learning a method of composing is that it can help you think clearly. (9)

This passage promotes the notion that to "learn about composing" (as opposed to "learning *to* compose") is essential work for a writing student, a student of rhetoric and composition. I see this move as akin, perhaps, to Downs and Wardle's "writing about writing" movement "... introducing students directly to what writing researchers have learned about writing and challenging them to respond by writing and doing research of their own" (Downs and Wardle v). In both of these situations, the subject of study is simultaneously the method of study (just as is semiosis, interestingly). But a key difference between "writing about writing" and "learning about composing" is that composing happens naturally—it is an aspect of human nature (FTW 10-11). Composing is not taught; it just is/does. Learning, "seen as a disposition to form structures," is not taught (TLS 75); it just is/does. Writing, on the other hand, is not natural and can be taught (FTW, TMM). Writing is often taught… One of the three "R"s, long valued as a school subject in mainstream education (See Berlin's *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures*). So "writing about writing" involves bringing awareness not to a human body, but to a body of knowledge, an activity that is typically imposed upon us, that is not necessarily one's "own," natural being, or process. "Learning about composing" is different; it involves bringing

awareness to that which we all do naturally, expertly, already. Humans compose to make sense—meaning—of their experience in the world. This natural state of our being is called "the animal symbolicum" by Berthoff's hero, education philosopher Paulo Freire (Berthoff, "What Works? How do we know?" 14-15). I find Berthoff dedicates much of her scholarship to establishing this "place" of focus as quintessential to comp/rhet/writing studies. Ultimately, Berthoff's argument is that awareness of meaning-making, as a natural human phenomenon, must come first, before we can constructively teach writing as a way of making meaning or as communication. (I offer an in-depth look at what this kind of "must-come-first" approach to pedagogy looks like, see chapter four.)

So, learning *that* we make meaning, and thus *how* we do it, comes *before*—and is essential to—learning writing, argument, or note taking, or creative writing, or writing for STEM, or… But "learning about composing" is not the same as "learning to communicate" by recognizing and choosing among "all available means of persuasion" in a given situation, with a given audience, through a particular medium. "Learning about composing" amplifies the distinction between "communication" and "meaning making" fundamental to Berthoff's theoretical and pedagogical orientation, which is why I consider "meaning making" a "foundational" term of Berthoff's point of view.

As we continue, it's worth remembering that one of the most important implications of the distinction between "communication" and "meaning-making" is that "communication" typically places focus on meaning interactions between people. "Meaning-making," however, entails a broader understanding of meaning interaction as between meanings within and among people, and objects, and environments, simultaneously. This particular simultaneity is one often

reduced to opposites as "dialogue" and "dialectic," causing trouble. I call the simultaneity of dialogue/dialectic, "dynamic reciprocity."

### *2.1.3 "Dynamic Reciprocity"*

The next concept I'd like to offer as central to understanding Berthoff's work is one I iterate with my own term, or rather, through a term employed by one of Berthoff's celebrated students. In our interview, Berthoff is able to recall, with remarkable clarity, classroom experiences from as far back as the 1960s, specific lines to specific poems offered as media for practicing the conception of meaning-making that so early formed the foundation of her praxical journey (Appendix A). Perhaps the strength of her memories stems from her having kept in touch over decades with some of her students. One of these is cellular biologist, Mina Bissell, whose "theory of dynamic reciprocity" has advanced cancer research, and other types of cellular research, in award-winning ways ("Context is Everything"). In an address upon accepting the E.B. Wilson medal in cell biology, Bissell publicly credits her freshman English course at Bryn Mawr fifty years ago, and her teacher, Ann Berthoff ("Thinking in three dimensions"). Bissell mentions Berthoff by name in multiple publications, actually. But what's impressive about the relatedness of Bissell and Berthoff comes through in the language of Bissell's compositions and in her models; "Context is Everything…" ("Context is Everything"; Fleishman). This might as well be a Berthovian maxim. Berthoff would put it like this maybe: "Everything in/and context (i.e. "The Problem of Problem Solving" 240-41, TMB 37). In *The Making of Meaning*, Berthoff writes of I.A. Richards, that she "believe[s] that it is from him that we have most to learn…[his] 'contextual theorem of meaning' really was new… [in 1936]" (58). This "contextual theorem of meaning" is C.S. Peirce's triadicity, which Richards brought to literacy instruction in the latter half of his intellectual career. Berthoff early on identified Richards' work as a theoretical

orientation demanding a truly “new” kind of teaching (“The World, the Text, and the Reader,” TMB). I find the resonance between the “contextual theorem of meaning” as appreciated by Berthoff and Bissell’s “dynamic reciprocity” generative.

The consonance between the concepts of Mina Bissell and Ann Berthoff extend beyond context; it is no mere coincidence that the image Berthoff assigns her illustration of “the composition process” is the double helix, inspired by Crick’s DNA model (TMM 37). Analogies to biological states and processes abound in Berthoff’s work—Richards’ metaphor of imagination, for instance, as “the organ of the mind’s self-ordering growth” (Berthoff, “Is Teaching Still Possible?”). In this sense, Berthoff is often mistaken as belonging to a tradition identified as “organic,” or “growth,” or “vitalist”. She writes of Vygotsky, for instance:

> For Vygotsky meaning is a dynamic system: it is like a cell because of the way it is organized and because it is in process. Vygotsky depends on organic metaphors to represent an understanding of semiosis—the making of meaning, the linguistic process—but he does not let metaphors do his thinking for him….in lively conjunction and from a method which continually demonstrates the dynamic character of semiosis. (TMB 53)

This organic “process” is not the writing process, an important distinction for getting Berthoff right.[4] But I do think “the dynamic character of semiosis” referred to in this excerpt is well captured in the Bissell phrase “dynamic reciprocity.”

“Organic” metaphors like Vygotsky’s, and Berthoff’s, have been noted by contemporary scholars such as Byron Hawk. In *A Counterhistory of Composition*, Hawk recovers the notion of vitalism from the specter of mysticism, and rightfully places Berthoff in a camp (with Coleridge

[4] See chapters three and five for focused discussion of the difference between the writing process and the meaning-making process in exchanges between Berthoff and Berlin, and for discussion of traditions of “growth” and Berthoff in historiographies.

and Paul Kameen, among others) of resistors-against-reductionist-theories-of language. Hawk identifies Berthoff as among those who believe that "… life is fundamentally complex (and that complexity must be accounted for or addressed) and that life is fundamentally generative (force, energy, will, power, or desire is central to this complexity) ..." (5). I would like to offer Bissell's concept of "dynamic reciprocity" as a way of thinking with "the complexity" entailed in Berthoff's theoretical orientation, specifically in the way we understand the relationship between meaning, the social, and the individual. Here's why...

Bissell's notion of dynamic reciprocity concerns the behavior of cells in particular environments. In a nutshell, the concept explains how a cell characteristic of one environment in the body, when transplanted into a new environment within the body, can morph into a new kind of cell. "Two recent studies from the laboratory of Gill Smith and his colleagues show that testicular cells and neuronal cells can differentiate into functional mammary epithelial cells after being transplanted into the mammary gland [79, 80]" (Xu et al. "Tissue architecture and function…"). The morphing into a different kind of cell, these scientists discovered, was a result of the interaction between the environment and the genes within the cell; the interaction of the cell with its environment, through "signals," determined "which genes would be expressed" within the cell (Xu et al. "Tissue architecture and function…"), and thus what kind of cell it would be. The inextricable-ness of context from individuation is precisely the complexity Berthoff captures in her notion of allatonceness, discussed in the next section. Essentially though, "allatonceness" accounts for the simultaneity of sociocultural meaning informing individual meaning, which is informing the sociocultural, etc., in a complex, dynamic give-and-take, and this is happening all the time, and always context in-*forms*.

To harness this flow of forming, this "dynamic reciprocity" between the sociocultural and the individual/personal, Berthoff employs the terms of her time and experience: "dialogue" and "dialectic." The problem with these terms is that they come with notions of place. "Dialogue" is often understood as happening "outside the mind," between people, in the "social" realm (Schor, McComiskey, Berlin's "social epistemic"). "Dialectic" is understood as happening inside a mind, between "precepts and concepts," as Berthoff puts it in FTW, in the "individual" mind (Elbow, Moffett, Macrorie). Actually, often that's exactly what the terms "mean" even when Berthoff employs them; "dialogue" refers to discussion between two individual people (i.e. "Homiletic Silence and the Revival of Conversation"), and "dialectic" refers to the interplay of meanings within an individual (i.e. Berthoff's "model of the composing process" in TMM 8). However, what's more important than the location of the interaction of meanings in Berthoff's triadicity is the *nature* of the interaction; the influence of the "social" and "individual" are constantly in-forming each other, simultaneously, in both locations—reciprocally. Throughout Berthoff's work, she tells us that these two concepts, dialogue and dialectic, never occur alone, without the other ("Allatonceness," TSL). There is always motion, always interaction; the social and the individual; one entails the other. So, when we might focus on the role of dialogue, say, between teacher and student, dialectic—interpretation, in individual minds, of meanings through meanings—is always simultaneously happening. This process can be accounted for pedagogically[5].

The terms "Dialogue" and "Dialectic" have caused a good deal of misunderstanding of Berthoff's work. I call the misconstruance focusing on a distinction between these two concepts

[5] See chapters four and five for demonstrations of allatonceness in classroom practice.

"the dialogue/dialectic split," and it's important to get a handle on these terms as Berthoff understands them if we are to resource her ideas for helping us form a sense of disciplinarity.

Berthoff's scholarship, and her methodology, addresses writing on the level of meaning-making, not as mere means for communication. And yet, as I acknowledged earlier, meaning-making entails "communication." Berthoff writes, "The conventional wisdom of rhetoricians, linguists, psychologists, and cognitive psychologists is that language is a means of communication. Of course it is, but in teaching the composing process what we chiefly need is a way of thinking about the sources of and the shaping of what we communicate" (TMM 85). Here, "communication" is akin to dialogue; it is an outward happening. I found that throughout her corpus, Berthoff employs the terms "dialectic" and "dialogue" to bring meanings into "communication" for the purposes of generating more meanings to work with, to think with, to write with. So, when Berthoff talks about "the dialectic" or dialogue, what's more important than the location of interaction is a sense of "dynamic reciprocity," this constant exchange of information ("units of meaning" à la Vygotsky, TMM 85), the simultaneous influence between sociocultural and individual meaning.

This all-at-once notion of "dialogue/dialectic" roots in classical rhetorics. Berthoff writes, "I do not think it is possible to understand either Richards' theory or his practice unless we conduct a continuing audit of meaning which is how he characterized Plato's dialectic" (171). Are Plato's dialogues representative of the "internal" meaning-making action of one mind? Or are they a rendering of a social event, a dialogue, an "external" conversation? The interplay between dialectic and dialogue—the both-of-these, all-at-once, nature of Plato's dialogues—exemplifies the heart of Berthoff's concept of meaning-making. Although our lines of inquiry

might shift from a focus on one place (meaning exchanging between people) to another (meaning exchanging within an individual mind), the action in both "places" always shapes what we find.

### *2.1.4 Allatonceness*

The "more complete" conception defined above as stemming from resisting a split between "dialogue" and "dialectic," is an example of "allatonceness," a foundational concept identifying Berthoff's focus on dialogic activity. She defines "allatonceness" as a simultaneity: "...the whole shape of [an] act..." (TSL 86). It is a state of being.[6] At any given moment, all manner of different happenings occupy the mind: "naming, inferring, referring, recognizing, remembering, marking time, wondering, wandering, envisaging, matching, discarding, checking, inventing: all at once, we are carrying out these acts of mind as we are writing something down—or up—making meaning in the process" (86). This active state comprises us always, not just when we write. However, Berthoff's praxis for writing instruction uniquely takes aim at this essential, human state of being at any given moment.

I have found that current scholarship referencing Berthoff already leans on the concept of allatonceness in a way that has proven generative. For instance, Jason Palmeri, in *Remixing Composition*, builds a strong argument out of Berthoff's collapsing of "world of action and world of mind" (Chapter 1, Track 3). Although he does not use the term "allatonceness," Palmeri observes that for Berthoff the imagination composes visually, auditorily, and symbolically when constructing images and sounds in the mind; composing is an act stemming from sensory perception, as well as from the information of "multiple symbol systems" (42). Here, allatonceness refers to all the information constituting an event inside a person's mind, as its body perceives, at any given time. The person "composes," naturally, as illustrated beautifully by

[6] Chapter five offers a detailed discussion of "being" from a Peircean, triadic point of view.

Berthoff's "Border Collie" analogy in "Images of Allatonceness" (TSL 90-91). Like the dog rounding up sheep, "the mind collects and forms, constantly moving… sorting, editing, naming, remembering, relating the information of experience and thought." From a Berthovian view, composing the meaning-making event is a matter of managing information, languaging it, a matter of making meaning of and from it. Writing is a specific form of languaging, a teachable form: "...we have to learn to write," Berthoff writes, "but we're born composers" (TSL 91).

As "born composers," humans write as a way to capitalize on the "chaos" of meaning resources available, allatonce, at any given moment. Later I offer particular examples, from Berthoff and her heroes, of how teachers can help students learn to manage these resources. But it's important to note here that those meaning resources, as we have seen in the previous section, are not "out there" in the sociocultural world; they are simultaneously "out" and "in." Akin to one of her heroes, Ernst Cassirer's work at the nexus of the natural and mathematical sciences, Berthoff aims at a high place (or foundational) in each moment, one that resists dichotomies, categories, and hierarchies. And this is the case with all genre of writing, not especially artistic ones. I am thinking of Berthoff's exchange in *College English* with David Holbrook regarding the 1966 Dartmouth conference and its consideration of the poets in presence there. In her response to Holbrook, Berthoff complains that he treats the poets as, "...teachers, not as 'consultants' chosen to speak for poetry and its making" ("Response to David Holbrook," 1973). A Berthovian point of view considers the poetry itself, its writing (and reading), as heuristic, as "teacher" of students who, for much of their lives, have been learning (brilliantly) how to make meaning from the stuff of poems: sounds, words, phrases, spaces, in context. From a Berthovian point of view, the allatonce nature of the sign, of language, is where epistemology and ontology meet as dimensions of the same experience (epistemontology)—where the body and the mind are

dimensions of the same experience, where reading and writing work as dimensions of the same experience, where heuristics and hermeneutics, theory and practice, language and pedagogy, all of these exist *as dimensions*.... as a place at the nexus, the point in every human that is experience + symbolization + actor in context, in time.

An example of how Berthoff's notion of allatonceness manifests into a revolutionary kind of teaching exists in *Forming/Thinking/Writing,* as it operates from a place of nexus, aiming to cultivate in students an awareness of the resources they constantly create via the natural, human activity of their minds, and offering a method for harnessing that activity into thoughtful, meaningful, purposeful compositions. In chapter four I offer a close look at the unifying nature of this textbook. And although chapter five of this dissertation details the notion of "method" as a logical, pedagogical consequence of allatonceness, I think it's important here to discuss the particular role of allatonceness in the shaping of FTW, in order to locate, in a new way, the power and potential within Berthoff's work to bring together disparate conversations in the field.

* * *

I find it a testament to the great respect Berthoff holds for her students, in all their human potential, that FTW is primarily addressed to them, more so than to instructors. She bills the sourcebook as "a method" for writing, stressing in her notes that it is "neither handbook, nor rhetoric, nor reader…" (2). Throughout, activity focuses on invention, building on a philosophy of writing anchored in the codependence and simultaneity of experiencing, thinking, and composing, privileging the generation of word-thoughts and the analysis of relationships, and attributing a heuristic nature to the process of composing, which is always *also* a matter of interpretation. She writes that you don't come up with something to say out of nothing, a "void," "thin air;" the air is thick with "things to say;" just "write what you see" (64). By "seeing" here

she means experiencing, as sample passages offered in FTW suggest; "part i" features sample student writing, rich in observation reflecting all senses. It also includes passages by Edwin Muir (smell), E.H. Gombrich (synesthesia), Arnheim (visual knowledge), C.K. Ogden ("bodily orientation"), etc. The initial "assisted invitations" presented in the book focus on observing and documenting observations, responding to them, and then reflecting on that writing, interpreting it, attending to the mind as it works.

Evident in the passages alluded to above from FTW, the work suggested in the textbook involves thinking about "... the practices by which people make meaning of and participate in the world—[a]s intricately interwoven with concerns for justice, equity, and peace" (Fleckenstein 2). This is foundational "practice," the "common ground" underlying such subfields as visual rhetoric and embodiment (Micciche, Fleckenstein), multimodality (Alexander and Rhodes, Palmeri), and sonic rhetorics (Hocks and Comstock, Ceraso). Underlying all of our subfields is the phenomenon of human experiencing. "Experiencing" also entails environments and objects (Boyle, Rickert), cultures and rhetorics (Berlin; Cobos et al.), and, for most of us, digital media (Selfe, Eyman, Selber). While chapter six details the ways in which Berthoff's point of view brings these subjects together, I think it's useful to consider the fundamental nature of Berthoff's work; the implications of semiotic conversations conceived as part of the "common grounds" called for in *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* as what is needed to make comp/rhet "... visible and identifiable *as disciplinary activities*" (emphasis original, Malenczyk et al. location 8134).

Berthoff's characterization above—of a writer "coming up with" something to say by noticing/understanding that the material for "saying" exists all around, all the time, and is always mediated by meanings—positions the semiosis happening via language as simultaneously

hermeneutic and heuristic. It is simultaneity that I want to bring to the fore; the feature of simultaneity renders step-by-step teaching practices false—and inhumane—in important ways. This isn't to say they can't be useful. But when a teacher breaks into "steps" a particular writing task, without acknowledging it as an artifice—one of many possible forms—to students unaware that they are meaning-makers already, she promotes the idea that rhetoric *is* a step-by-step process, that writing *is* a step-by-step "process," that meaning-making is a step-by-step process. That teacher promotes the notion that writing is readily package-able, teachable, assessable, commercializable. And the only difference between Bob's pedagogy and May's is the way they label and arrange the steps and ingredients in their recipes, no matter what their particular subfield. Berthoff's point of view, by theoretically accounting for simultaneity, resists the damaging, dehumanizing effects of writing conceived as a step-by-step process. Allatonceness is key to offering a theoretically sound alternative to step-by-step-ism. This kind of conception of writing is identified by Linda Adler-Kassner as fueling the EIC, the "education industrial complex," in her argument articulating high personal, pedagogical, and social stakes for treating writing as "just writing" ("2017 Chair's Address").

The "high stakes" consequences of ignoring or forgetting or rejecting the complexity of writing as meaning-making we know to be part of what keeps comp/rhet from feeling fully "respected" as a field (Malenczyk et al. location 155). Adler-Kassner asserts what "we know," that writing is "...a strategy that can be used for learning, a way of negotiating identities within and around specific contexts, a representation of ideas, a way of participating in ideologies, a strategy for movement" (318). It is deeply tied to emotions (Saur and Palmeri), and bodies (Micciche) self-perceptions (Goldblatt), and social situations (Turnbull). Berthoff's work continues to tell us that if writing teachers fail to center in the mind writing's role in semiosis—

in its full complexity, in its allatonceness—we risk keeping students both from accessing the power of writing to shape their realities (Freire, Berlin) and from fortifying against writing conceptions that lead to punishing, violent experiences with writing, often perpetuated in schools (Adler-Kassner, Rose).

There exist other kinds of consequences when we reject or ignore the simultaneous, allatonce, nature of meaning-making and writing, such as the crafting of our historiographies into paradigms into which Berthoff—and other scholars we find "difficult to categorize"—do not seem to fit. This "crafting" tends to marginalize Berthoff's work in our scholarship and historiographies.[7] For Berthoff, as for her heroes that came before, the stuff of meaning-making exists all around and in us, in what we experience. And what we experience is never something confined in a single entity, divorced from history and the sociopolitical, or relegated to matters of mind *separate* from body, art *separate* from science, concept free from material. When meaning-making happens, acts of mind and body, in context and time happen all at once. This is allatonceness. If we stray from this idea in order to fashion useful teaching practices (such as assignment sequencing, or outlining), Berthoff's methodology requires us to return—not just our attention, but the attention of our students—to an awareness of the nature of meaning-making as an "allatonceness."

Awareness becomes, then, critical to a triadic approach to writing pedagogy. Thus, the next and final term I introduce an essential concept for understanding Berthoff: "conscientization." Conscientization is bringing student awareness to the fact that they make meaning so that they might contemplate how they do it, and thus how they might do it differently.

---

[7] See chapters three and five for detailed discussion of the idea that Berthoff's work is consistently marginalized.

### *2.1.5 Conscientization*

In Berthoff's introduction to Freire and Macedo's *Literacy: Reading the World and the Word*, she writes, "Teaching and learning are dialogic in character, and dialogic action depends on the awareness of oneself as knower, an attitude Freire calls conscientization (conscientização)" (14). This Freirean concept—conscientização—is perhaps most famously articulated in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and "...refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality," ("Translator's note" 35):

> … *Education for Critical Consciousness*, however, makes clearer Freire's deployment of literacy education in service of the overarching goal of conscientização: Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables—lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe—but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context. Thus the educator's role is fundamentally to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write...We opted...for the use of generative words, those whose syllabic elements offer, through re-combination, the creation of new words. Teaching men how to read and write a syllabic language like Portuguese means showing them how to grasp critically the way its words are formed, so that they themselves can carry out the creative play of combinations. (43)

This passage references Freire's language work excerpted in Berthoff's TMM and offered as example of how triadic semiosis resources complexity for advancing a "liberating" pedagogy. At the heart of this Freirean approach is "conscientização," what Berthoff calls

"conscientization." Perhaps noted already, conscientization resonates with the terms I've argued in this chapter are fundamental to Berthoff's point of view. Triadicity is the theory of signs, of language, that accounts for the fact that meaning is not a dyadic phenomenon—a sign that can be "memorized," that refers, by nature, directly to a "lifeless object," a particular thing-in-the-world. Rather, in light of triadicity, meaning is a "creative" phenomenon; individual minds make meaning; meaning is never a 'fixed' given. Berthovian "dynamic reciprocity" accounts for both the explicit dialogue called for in this Freirean passage, and the "creative play" with sounds, words, and meanings that entails thought. Dialogue, too, entails thought—"dialectic"—simultaneously, allatonce. But the "allatonce" nature of these phenomena often goes unaccounted for in both Freire's and Berthoff's philosophies leaving room for "the social/individual split" and the "dialogue/dialectic split" to define conceptions of interactions in ways that generate other "killer dichotomies."

Defending against the falsifying work of dichotomies rooted in dyadic conceptions of the sign is the pedagogical imperative of triadicity and the logical consequence of allatonceness. I believe that key to comprehending fully Berthoff's potential impact on contemporary writing studies, requires a deeper understanding of "conscientization" as a pedagogical imperative entailed in triadic semiotics. And so here I discuss the concept in more detail.

In the passage from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* cited above, Freire reflects on an exercise he deployed in his literacy work with Brazilian peasants in the 1960s. The exercise, the "discovery card," utilizes a strategy of "generative words." The material breaks familiar words into "syllabic elements" and encourages students to meaningfully recombine them. The material/lesson intends to inspire questioning about language and meaning, and to empower students so that they can begin to accept, reject, and determine meanings, intentionally, for

themselves. Berthoff includes Freire's exercise with "the cards of discovery" in *The Making of Meaning* (159) not-randomly organized in a section shared with passages from child educators Maria Montessori and Sylvia Ashton-Warner. What this grouping of pedagogues might teach us is detailed in chapter four, and at its heart is the concept of conscientization. For Freire and for Berthoff, the critical reflection of one's reality on the most basic level, on the level of meaning-making, comprises a fundamental aspect of humane literacy instruction. Critical reflection must happen. *And it must happen first*.

This action—critical reflection—can be facilitated. It's kind of like the Matrix, that scene with the tall-backed chairs and the giant, lifeless fireplace, when Morpheus leans over the table between them and invites Neo to take the "red pill," to discover "the truth." Kind of. Freirean exercises challenge people to "see" the language they usually take for granted as embodying formations of meanings, some of which comprise oppressive states. A person's becoming aware of how language is working to manifest and perpetuate social situations (any situation, really) must happen before they can intentionally act to change that language and thus change that situation. They must come to understand that meaning is formed, that they play a role in that forming, and that they could *re*-form any meanings (the pragmatic, "if I put it this way, what would I mean?"). Unfortunately, it's not as easy as taking a pill some great, enlightened master gives you. Such a scene might happen in a classroom shaped by "current-traditional" pedagogies.

The old "current-traditional" conceptions of education generally lend to instructional environments that assume the kind of relationship between student, subject, environment, and teacher wherein the more knowledgeable teacher stands at the front of a classroom full of younger students, "blank slates" waiting for the teacher's knowledge to be delivered and

imprinted upon them. When I think of the "current-traditional," I have in mind Sharon Crowley's amendment to Richard Young's 1971 general characterization:

> ...current-traditional rhetoric occults the mentalism that underlies its introspective theory of invention; it subscribes to the notion that "subjects"—the "matter" of discourses—are mental configurations whose existence is ontologically prior to their embodiment in discourse; it prefers the discursive movement from generalization to specification; it concentrates on expository discourse; it recommends that the inventional scheme devised for exposition be used in any discursive situation; and it translates invention out of the originating mind and onto the page. In other words, this rhetoric assumes that the process of invention can be graphically displayed in discourse.

In other words, this rhetoric assumes a dyadic nature of the sign; "mental configurations whose existence is ontologically prior to their embodiment in discourse…" They are "sentences, words, or syllables—lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe" to be "memorized" (in terms of the Freirean passage above). But human experience does not fit neatly into dichotomous notions of thing/idea, illusion/reality, imprisonment/freedom, language/action, even human/machine. Students cannot be given "enlightenment;" they must arrive at critical reflection all on their own. This is "conscientization." The best we writing teachers can do is provide environments and practices that encourage this arrival. We can help students hone their "knowledge," the stuff of their critical reflection, into texts the effectiveness of which they determine themselves. This is the pedagogical imperative logically entailed in triadicity, and Berthoff's work brings triadicity—and an uncorrupted conscientization—fully into the realm of first-year writing and comp/rhet.

According to Berthoff, before students are able to communicate effectively in writing, they must first develop a *method* for making meaning (FTW). In order to do that, students must bring conscious awareness to the fact *that* they already make meaning, and *how* they do it (TMM, TSL, FTW). Berthoff's strategy squares the focus of writing pedagogy on a deep, messy level, the place of allatonceness, bringing students' "critical consciousness" —conscientization—to what is happening in their minds with all the information of the moment, and giving them writing strategies, like "generating a chaos" for "resourcing" the fact of allatonceness, for composing mindfully, meaningfully. "We have to look at the obvious and walk all around it," says Berthoff, quoting Freire (Appendix A). The "critical" in "critical consciousness" means something quite distinct for Berthoff and Freire from how comp/rhet scholarship, through "cultural rhetorics," often promotes it. And this, as I assert in chapters three and five, reflects two ways the field gets Berthoff wrong— "the social/individual split" and "the theory/practice split." Getting her wrong is resulting in a marginalization of her work that keeps us from fully resourcing her unique point of view, especially in terms of discussions of disciplinarity.

In order to make available the resources for "critical consciousness" as Berthoff understands it, it's important to comprehend here, at the onset, "conscientization" in the context of triadic semiotics. Berthoff: "What critical consciousness means—at least for Paulo Freire and others who are not doctrinaire Marxists—is that learning to reflect on representations of recognitions is the chief way of learning to act in the world and is itself social praxis" (with Laurence Behrens in "Assigning Places…" 1994). And here are the circularities hallmark to Berthovian philosophy and triadic semiotics: "reflect on representations of recognitions." Free from practical, concrete examples, this kind of "talk" slips away, I think; these "conceptions"

need "perceptions" for the potential locked within them to resonate and take hold. Berthoff recognized triadic semiosis at work in the Freirean culture circles described in *Education for Critical Consciousness* (TMM). As I demonstrate in chapter four, these Freirean "lessons" serve as concrete examples for the implications of the triadic nature of meaning-making. Berthoff's own "lessons," offered as "assisted invitations" in her textbook, FTW, can also be tapped for concrete examples of what kind of writing instruction emerges from an embrace of triadicity. Chapter four details and explicates examples as well, but as I show in chapter three, a recent conversation on the comp/rhet wpa listserv communicates what is likely a wider occurrence. When I asked the listserv, in June of 2017, if anyone had taught FTW or knew of those who had, I received only four responses, one from Robert Danberg, professor at Binghamton University, who writes, "...I certainly have relied on it as a theoretical book" (Danberg). Programmatically, I could find only one institution that adopted FTW as its textbook after its release (Marquette, see Appendix B), and this despite James Berlin's 1982 promotion of the book as emblematic of "the New Rhetoric" ("Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories"). These days, it seems FTW is accessed rarely, but when it is, it is perhaps more often mined for "theory," not for shaping practical classroom experience.

But FTW is a writing textbook, not a book of "theory." Conscientization, as the pedagogical imperative entailed in triadicity, is key, my studies have shown, to understanding what Berthoff was trying to do throughout her career. Although she might be remembered, when she still is, as unbending, as "fixed and hegemonic"—a "zealot," as she calls herself ("Remarks on Acknowledging 1997 Exemplar Award, CCCC, Chicago, April, 1998")[8], regarding

[8] Berthoff, Ann. "Remarks on Acknowledging 1997 Exemplar Award, CCCC, Chicago, April 1998," Box 5, Folder 39, Series IV, "various writings and collected articles," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers. Special Collections & Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

triadicity—her point of view, and triadic semiosis itself, has never been pointedly taken up by comp/rhet as central to a discussion about pedagogy. A call for a renewed consideration of Berthoff's work is a call for a renewed central debate about the relationship between theories of language and semiosis, and pedagogy.

This call for renewed focus on semiotics and pedagogy makes sense in light of contemporary arguments in the field, I think, particularly those claiming a "dawn of the disciplinary turn," as Kathy Yancey argues in *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*. Berthoff's work can bring such depth to the conversation, because her praxis is about a way of doing our values that challenges "the dehumanizing status quo." It's "a way" —method—that centralizes a theory of language *and* writing as pedagogical practice, simultaneously. What's at stake if we ignore her unique and as-yet unchallenged point of view is both an accurate accounting of our history and the availability of potentially more effective rhetorical and pedagogical practice. But perhaps getting her wrong is even more consequential. In our interview, Berthoff tells me:

> I hope at some point you write about misconceptions of Montessori and how that is comparable to how people picking up pedagogies for writing get things wrong. Look at what's happened with Freire? I knew once of a professor who didn't have a pedagogical bone in her body, though she was an important feminist, so I don't want to run her down completely, but she did not understand Freire. And she actually would say to her students: Do you know that you're oppressed? [Laughs] I mean, it is just so awful! The pedagogy of the oppressed does not entail or in any way encourage the idea of telling people what you want them to discover.

In chapter four of this dissertation, I offer a demonstration of how Montessori, Freire, and Berthoff enact the values appreciated by the authors of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity.* Berthoff's "way" is different, unique. And yet "the way" employed by the "important feminist" Berthoff characterizes in the above passage is often how we act: far from appreciating conscientization, as if "telling" alone leads to "learning."

In my experience, this "telling way" pervades our rhetorical and pedagogical practices. For instance, just months ago, at the 2018 Watson Conference in Louisville, I attended a keynote speech during which Octavio Pimentel opened with a slideshow of images of victims of racial violence in America (Pimentel, "Manifesto: It's time to hear me! I mean really hear me!"). When the slides ended, Pimentel looked out onto the audience and said, "We... are... racists." The charge echoed in the following silence. Many heads nodded affirmatively. Pimentel let the silence stretch. His point, articulated in his keynote essay, published as a keynote essay in *Making Future Matters* on the Watson Conference 2018 homepage, is that we all contribute to systems that perpetuate racist violence; that we are all culpable and responsible. He pleads with us to "do something!" And the whole time I'm thinking about Freire and Berthoff and the differences between telling and teaching, between listening and learning. These are not the same things, Freire and Berthoff teach us, and yet our pedagogies, our rhetorics, like Pimentel's, perhaps still too often resort to what Berthoff calls, "the pedagogy of exhortation" ("Is Teaching Still Possible"). What if there are more effective ways of inspiring change? Berthoff and Freire suggest there are, and at the heart of their pedagogies and their rhetorics is conscientization. Conscientization is antithesis to "pedagogies of exhortation."

In chapters four and five I delineate how the potential for genuine change away from pedagogies of exhortation—deep, self-generated, dialogic, affective change—might come about

via triadicity. I'm talking about affecting changes in teaching, changes in writing, changes in meaning, changes in power dynamics, as Freire would have it, change in systems—unfolding because of a triadic understanding of meaning-making. But I think we cannot access the potential for deeply-rooted change (we can never control it) if we continue to misconstrue and marginalize the work of the very scholar who brought triadicity and Freire to the field of comp/rhet, Ann Berthofff. Berthoff can teach us, if we engage as pedagogy the "assisted invitations" in FTW, one way to powerfully resource meaning for conscientization in the teaching of writing.

* * *

I have provided a gloss in this chapter of five concepts central to the work of Ann Berthoff: triadicity, meaning-making, dynamic reciprocity, allatonceness, and conscientization. I have argued that these concepts are often misconstrued in ways that can be apprehended in these terms: "the social/individual split," the dialogue/dialectic split," and "the theory/practice split." The next three chapters examine the field's history and contemporary scholarship in order to substantiate and contemplate these three errors in the apprehension of Berthoff's philosophy. The chapters also establish that Berthoff's notion of allatonceness can help us rescue the complexity of her ideas, creating from them a useful resource for revisiting discussions about meaning, language, and pedagogy at a time when comp/rhet claims as its purview a vast array of research interests. Today, articulating to the world what it is we do is perhaps more challenging than ever. Rescuing Berthoff, I have argued, could deepen our sense of shared values, and move those values not only into "disciplinarity," but away from "pedagogies of exhortation," toward more effectual pedagogical action in our classrooms and programs.

# 3 BERTHOFF'S ALLATONCENESS: MENDING THE SOCIAL/INDIVIDUAL SPLIT

*"...the hazard is, as I see it, that the conceptions of language which underwrite the social sciences are radically inappropriate for the study of reading and writing and how to teach them: they can neither give an account* of *meanings nor can they account* for *meaning itself..."*

~Ann Berthoff,

"From Ann Berthoff to Professor Lois Hughson, 20 April 1983"[9]

In the previous chapter, I explicated five major concepts anchoring the scholarship of Ann Berthoff: triadicity, meaning-making, dynamic reciprocity, allatonceness, and conscientization:

- Triadicity is the notion that all meaning is mediated by the meanings we bring to it.
- Meaning-making is the act of making sense of experience, and writing is one way of making meaning.
- "Dynamic reciprocity" is the give-and-take between dialectics: perceptions and conceptions embodied within a person (dialectic) and perceptions/conceptions embodied in the material and sociocultural world (dialogue).
- Allatonceness is the idea that the meaning-making process does not happen in steps and hierarchies; conceptions form perceptions which form conceptions which form perceptions… and this recursive process happens multidimensionally, simultaneously, always.

[9] "From Ann Berthoff to Professor Lois Hughson, 20 April 1983," Box 1, Folder 1, Series I: "Correspondences." The Ann E. Berthoff Papers. Special Collections & Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

- Conscientization is the pedagogical imperative of triadic semiosis; meaning is made when people (and all of their acts of mind/body) exist in the world; guiding student attention to the fact *that* they make meaning—turning that fact into a resource—can enable students to comprehend *how* they make meaning, which is precursory to intentional writing performances, no matter the rhetorical situation.

In the previous chapter, I also identified three ways scholarship misunderstands or misconstrues these concepts when considering Berthoff's work. I articulated these misconstruances as "the social/individual split," "the dialogue/dialectic split," and "the theory/practice split." I made a case for attending closely to the potential role of allatonceness in addressing the misconstruances and rescuing Berthoff for contemporary writing instruction, particularly as leading scholars begin to make a renewed case for "disciplinarity" for what often seems a motley field, Composition and Rhetoric (Malenczyk, et al., location 155).

Chapter three drills down on the first misconstruance listed above, "the social/individual split." I have found that a formation of comp/rhet hostile to Berthoff's work happens when conceptions of writing dichotomize "the social" and "the individual," articulating them as distinct, opposite locations or forces. To make a case for this opposition as harmful to Berthoff's legacy, this chapter situates Berthoff, triadicity, and the notion of allatonceness historically. I find that Berthoff's concept of allatonceness and her operationalizing of Peircean triadicity for the freshman writing classroom lost a battle against postmodernist theories of language during the 80s and 90s, and to the critical theories born of them. The loss, I suggest, is a root cause of Berthoff's triadicity having become relegated mostly to introductions and chapter fragments (despite never having been substantively challenged), her *pedagogy* languishing in the field's contemporary, central conversations.

As evidence of this "battle," I offer a close examination of two moments in comp/rhet history involving James Berlin and Ann Berthoff. Berlin's powerful voice shaped comp/rhet in the 80s and 90s (Harris, Hawk, Halasek), though not without controversy (Zebroski, Roskelly and Ronald). The first section discusses Berlin's 1982 "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories," in terms of theories of language. Berlin's work at that time can be understood as contributing to early promotion and later dismissal of Berthoff's point of view generally. Not that Berlin intended this, but his "categories" caught on as a way of talking about the field, as a way of communicating "what we know" at a time before "keywords" and "threshold concepts." Those categories proved powerful, perhaps especially the categorically-related terms "social-epistemic" and "expressivist." This section looks at more recent instances of problems caused by using Berlin-inspired terms to represent or discuss Berthoff, problems that create or perpetuate dualisms more akin to "killer dichotomies" than to useful oppositions.

By returning to Berlin in his published response to Berthoff in Theresa Enos' 1990 "Professing the New Rhetorics" (what I call, "the polylog"), section two identifies one of these toxic dualisms: the misconstruance resultant of the social/individual split. I do this in order to demonstrate the focus on the social, at the expense of allatonceness, at the heart of Berlin's shift in appreciation of Berthoff between 1982 and 1990. Also, I argue in this section that the valuing of pluralism evident in the polylog seems to emerge commensurate with postmodern theories of language, and that in many ways this conception and value obviates Berthoff's work. This embrace of "pluralism" in the 80's and 90's, seems akin to the that of "the social turn." And this pathway of acceptance led to or encouraged the "social/individual," either/or thinking that begets misconstruance of the work of Ann Berthoff, ultimately marginalizing her. This chapter argues that we would do well to understand the history of the field's valuing of pluralism, and the nature

of Berthoff's resistance to it, especially in light of current work dedicated to the hope for another "turn," "the disciplinary turn," as Kathleen Blake Yancey calls it, in *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* (2018).

Finally, this chapter offers a detailed analysis of contemporary scholarship that marginalizes and misconstrues Berthoff's ideas in perhaps common ways—Dobrin and Jensen's 2017 *Abducting Writing Studies*. This section demonstrates that misrepresenting Berthoff is consequential. What happens to conversations like Dobrin and Jensen's, I ask, if we reconsider them through Berthoff's notion of allatonceness regarding the social and the individual? The answers, I argue, implicate contemporary conversations regarding disciplinarity, and root them in a different kind of comp/rhet history than what currently exists, a history that honors Berthoff's work as centrally important to contemporary concerns of comp/rhet.

### 3.1 The Social/Individual Split: Berlin, Berthoff, and "the New Rhetoric"

James Berlin's powerful 1982 *College English* article, "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories," espouses Ann Berthoff's textbook—*Forming/Thinking/Writing: The Composing Imagination*—as emblematic of "the New Rhetoric." He writes, "The clearest pedagogical expression of the New Rhetoric—or what might be called Epistemic Rhetoric—is found in Ann E. Berthoff's *Forming/Thinking/Writing: The Composing Imagination*…" (264). By 1990, however, Berlin's keenness for Berthoff's work had cooled considerably. The Conference on College Composition and Communication convened in Chicago that year, and scholars joining the panel, "Professing the New Rhetorics," moderated by Theresa Enos, included James Berlin, Ann Berthoff, Wayne Booth, Jim Corder, James Murphy, and Richard Young. In their published reflections on the panel, Berlin characterizes Berthoff's contribution as "retrograde": "...In the present discussion, however, we find her taking an unexpected retrograde

turn" (28). An important tension between Berthoff and Berlin—the theoretical philosophies and positions they represent—emerges from this reflection on Berthoff's contribution to the panel.

In this section, I would like to unpack Berlin's response and his early promotion of Berthoff's work and consider the position of these moves historically in the field. The 70s, 80s, and 90s saw such interesting divisions in theory, axiology, and pedagogical practice, but the division represented by the theoretical viewpoints of Berthoff and Berlin can help us understand, I think, why few have ever resourced *Forming/Thinking/Writing* (FTW) as a textbook, in spite of Berlin's appreciation in "Contemporary Composition."[10] One way of characterizing this division is through "the social/individual split." Note: I intend this distinction to characterize a misconception, not merely differing viewpoints. Berlin's "posthuman" deploying of a lexicon that insists on the central importance of the distinction between "social" and "individual" leaves no space for Berthoff's "allatonceness." Allatonceness, as defined in chapter one, is the notion that acts of mind engage simultaneously in the making of meaning, including those acts of mind enrolled in perception, interaction with the environment, and interaction with the people in those environments.

### ***3.1.1*** 1982: Berlin's "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories"

Though the indelible value of "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories" lies in part in its insistence that composition teachers articulate our theories of language and question our assumptions, its power perhaps lies in the delineation of terms put forth in the work, as Victor Villanueva suggests in his introduction to section two of *Cross-talk*

[10] In the course of my research, I have met several scholars who have taught FTW extensively, but this use seems to be idiosyncratic to particular teachers, not programs, and very little if any of this pedagogy seems to have gotten into contemporary scholarship. A notable exception is Rutherford and Palmeri's work (see chapter five).

*in Composition Theory* (2003): "His [Berlin's] categories...become the terms with which we discuss ideological and epistemological assumptions about discourse and writing instruction" (141). Berlin's categories have become commonplace: "current-traditional," "expressivist," "classical," "epistemic." These terms rise as Berlin names "elements" of the composing process:

> Rhetorical theories differ from each other in the way writer, reality, audience, and language are conceived—both as separate units and in the way the units relate to each other. In the case of distinct pedagogical approaches, these four elements are likewise defined and related so as to describe a different composing process, which is to say a different world with different rules about what can be known, how it can be known and how it can be communicated" (256).

It's interesting to me that "and how it can be taught or learned" isn't present in this list. Perhaps for Berlin, *pedagogy* tacitly assumes the character of communication; in the above passage, "pedagogy" refers to something that happens outside of the "elements," including "language." As chapter five will demonstrate, for Berthoff, "pedagogy" exists allatonce *with* "language," but in "Contemporary Composition," Berlin's appreciation for Berthoff seems solely on the dynamic, in-motion character of Berthoff's conception of language, not on its allatonceness. The result is fertile ground for the social/individual split.

Also, we get a sense from the above passage as to how Berlin's categories shape pedagogy. Berlin goes on to describe (and thus define, given the reasonableness and acceptance of his thinking) established approaches to composition pedagogy based on different conceptions of how the elements of the composing process "are envisioned" as "epistemic complexes" (256). The fourth, "new," approach to composition pedagogy, that established by "Epistemic Rhetoric," "envisions" the elements of composing also as "a means of arriving at truth," but the nature of

truth is not fixed; it doesn't "reside" somewhere but is a result of a process of interacting composing elements (264); it is "dynamic." And as we have seen in chapter two, a foundational concept of Berthoff's viewpoint entails movement, give-and-take, "dynamic reciprocity." So, in this sense, Berlin's early appreciation of Berthoff is warranted, though incomplete; the dynamic nature of Berthoff's theory of language isn't the whole story, as allatonceness implies. A clue to this incomplete appreciation of Berthoff lies in those Berlin includes in this "New Rhetoric". With Berthoff, Berlin includes the work of Young, Becker, and Pike; James Moffett, Linda Flower, Andrea Lunsford; and later, Bruffee, Ohmann, Winterowd and Lauer—a rather motley crew, Richard Fulkerson argues (1990), that "...share[s] an epistemology, [but] differ[s] enormously in axiology, in process theory, and in pedagogy" (423).

Still, such a diverse membership suggests a moment, happening in Berlin's essay, key to the process movement; here, it seems, is "truth" becoming relative, probabilistic, and comprised of interaction—becoming, in a sense, *process* itself. Berlin writes:

> Classical Rhetoric considers truth to be located in the rational operation of the mind, Positivist Rhetoric in the correct perception of sense impressions, and Neo-Platonic Rhetoric within the individual, attainable only through an internal apprehension. In each case knowledge is a commodity situated in a permanent location, a repository to which the individual goes to be enlightened.
>
> For the New Rhetoric, knowledge is not simply a static entity available for retrieval. Truth is dynamic and dialectical, the result of a process involving the interaction of opposing elements. (264)

Importantly, this "process" Berlin identifies is not "the writing process" per se, but the process that *is* knowledge. Perhaps it is the blurring of this distinction— "the arriving at Truth process"

vs. "the writing process" —that lends Berthoff's work credence in Berlin's early view. In "Major Rhetorical Approaches: 1960-1975," *Rhetoric and Reality* (1987), Berlin fleshes out his category "epistemic rhetoric," ending the chapter with an explication of Berthoff's work at large (not just FTW) as emblematic. Again, from my view, Berlin's identification is spot on; Berthoff's focus discerns "meaning" from "communication." Berthoff's pedagogy concerns writing as a way of making meaning and "coming to know" (TMM, FTW). So, in this sense, regardless of whether or not "Truth" is "out there" or resultant of a process, essential to a Berthovian take on the nature of knowledge is the concept of meaning as mediator. The centrality of meaning to the process qualifies Berthoff as "epistemic," and reasonably so. But the category, "epistemic rhetoric," as Berlin identifies it in "Contemporary Composition" would prove to become powerfully distorting and ironically quite fixed; Berlin's focus on "... the way writer, reality, audience, and language are conceived—both as separate units and in the way the units relate to each other" would lend itself to dyadic notions of language, oversimplifying the dynamic character of meaning-making and shrinking Berthoff to the margins.

Berlin's terms are not entirely reductive and deconstructing. In many ways these useful terms inspire scholars to work from, against, and within them. Sherrie Gradin's "social expressivism" in *Romancing Rhetorics: Social Expressivist Perspectives* (1995), for instance, combines Berlinesque terms in an attempt to gather the allatonceness of individual and social meaning-making—the "dynamic reciprocity" of these conceptual places—which is commensurate with what Berthoff was trying to do. In a letter to Berthoff, Gradin thanks her for what must have been a measure of explicit approval, although we do not have access to Berthoff's original letter in her archive. Gradin writes:

> Thanks so much for your letter of April 11. I appreciate your support and am glad that you find 'social-expressivism' a fair characterization of the perspectives I take up in *Romancing Rhetorics*. I was particularly leery of trying to place you in any of the theoretical categories we tend to throw around so blithely.
>
> "Letter from Gradin to Berthoff, 12 May 1997"[11]

The "theoretical categories we tend to throw around so blithely" evidently refer to those established by Berlin in "Contemporary Composition," among them "expressivist" and "social-epistemic" rhetorics. And this passage suggests that Gradin's attempt to bring them together, into "social-expressivism" would risk de-*form*ing Berthoff, in a sense, thus the leeriness to employ the terms of accepted categories, what Berthoff deems "the rhetoric consensus" (Appendix A). But Gradin's invented term would prove impotent, really, in moving the field toward an embrace of allatonceness, towards "queering" the concepts embodied in those terms and thus opening space for fundamentally "complex" (to use Byron Hawk's term) theoretical points of view, like Berthoff's.

Beyond Gradin, scholars such as Roskelly and Ronald in the 1990s, and Byron Hawk in the 2000s, pushed back against the power of Berlin's categories. These scholars argued for renewed, nuanced conceptions of "romanticism" and "vitalism" respectively. Other contemporary scholars enroll the terms of Berlin's categories to identify the usefulness of their spirit more so than the arguments establishing them. Eli Goldblatt's recent Braddock Award-winning article "Don't Call It Expressivism" (2016), for instance, resurrects the old terms to advance renewed discussions about the nature of writing. Although Goldblatt avoids outright defining "expressivism," the polarizing power of the term performs throughout. For example,

---

[11] "Letter from Gradin to Berthoff, 12 May 1997," Box 1, Fold 1, Series I: "Correspondences." The Ann E. Berthoff Papers. Special Collections & Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

here he references *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*: "In fact, many authors within the Adler-Kassner and Wardle collection highlight reflection, experience, identity, and feeling as crucial to writing and writers…" (442). "Expressivism" as indicated here asserts that "reflection, experience, identity, and feeling" are essential to the writing process. These phenomena happen inside of a person (if "identity" refers here to "self-identity"). Goldblatt "tacitly" constructs the old opposition of "inside of a person" (individual) against "outside of a person" (social) when he identifies his concern:

> … when we focus so much on professional and theoretical understandings of writing instruction—especially in the context of higher education budget cuts, larger class sizes, and more calls for standardized quantitative assessments—we can forget the importance of two impulses that compel writers: the desire to speak out of your most intimate experiences and to connect with communities in need. (442)

The "professional and theoretical understandings of writing instruction" happen as social phenomena, outside individual minds; "impulses" and "desires" happen inside individual mind/bodies. This distinction reinforces Berlin's inner/outer-oriented, "social-epistemic"/ "expressivist" categories.[12]

Central to our concern, Goldblatt brings Ann Berthoff into his discussion in the article. On page 440, Goldblatt identifies Berthoff as a kind of "political expressivist": "What is the unspoken legacy of expressivism from its early forms, through the more political version of Ann Berthoff, the feminist 'social expressivist perspective' of Sherrie Gradin, and the unapologetic public expressions of Wendy Bishop?" Like Gradin's "social-expressivist," "political expressivist" rightly characterizes Berthoff as concerned with the individual realm in relation to

[12] We will see this again at the end of this chapter in a discussion of Dobrin and Jensen's 2017 *Abducting Writing Studies*.

the social realm. Yet the designation perpetuates "the old boxes"; the *dynamism* between the individual and the social as central to the act of making meaning gets short shrift in Goldblatt's discussion. Berthoff becomes more closely related to "reflection" and the individual in the article: "... a compelling portrait of reflective writing in action, what Berthoff calls 'not just a medium of communication but a means of making meaning'" (458). Goldblatt's grouping of Berthoff with "reflection" here argues for Berthoff as a kind of expressivist. But the designation, as Goldblatt predicts in the article, is one Berthoff patently rejects (Appendix A).

In part, I think, this rejection is out of Berthoff's recognition of the ineffectual result of Gradin's term-twisting "social expressivism." Ultimately, Berthoff rejects that too:

> AB: It's not a lost cause, yes. But it's not going to be helped along by something called "the new expressivism" unless that means something which I doubt it really does mean, which is a new way of understanding why we're teaching in the first place… To teach *with* things, not *the* things. To teach them [students] to produce *things to think with*, not "communication" ... (Appendix A).

Berlin's categories of "social-epistemic" and "expressivist"—no matter how mashed and contorted—fail to capture that which is essential to what Berthoff was trying to do in the first place: address writing as a way of making meaning by teaching to the dynamic, allatonce nature of the meaning-making process. Goldblatt's article, by reinforcing traditional, fixed notions of "expressivist" and "social-epistemic," enacts the continued marginalization and misconstruance of Berthoff's work. She cannot be named "an expressivist" of any kind, if what happens when she's labeled this way is that Berthoff's centralizing of the dynamic nature of meaning making, and meaning as mediator, gets excised.

Neither Goldblatt, nor Berlin in “Contemporary Composition,” articulates oppositions as “social/individual” or “cultural/personal,” intentionally casting them as framing concepts for conceiving the knowledge-making or writing process. But we can see the shadows of such moves emerging in the terms they do choose. Terms such as “desires,” “intimate experiences,” “assessment” and “class sizes” for Goldblatt, and “the mind,” “individual,” “sense impressions,” and “elements of the communication process” for Berlin. Nowhere in their discussions does the heart of Berthoff’s point of view—triadicity, the fact that all meaning is mediated by meaning—find space to emerge. Meaning *as mediator* cannot be located in an individual (alone) or in the “audience, language, reality” (alone). Even Berlin, who characterizes rhetorics he rejects as incomplete—“Classical,” “Positivist,” “Neo-Platonic”—because they locate knowledge-making *only* in the individual, seems not to imagine the implications of triadicity. For instance, in passage below, the “dynamic and dialectical” nature of Truth Berlin celebrates as “the New Rhetoric” becomes divorced from the individual:

> The New Rhetoric denies that truth is discoverable in sense impression since this data must always be interpreted—structured and organized—in order to have meaning. The perceiver is of course the interpreter, but she is likewise unable by herself to provide truth since meaning cannot be made apart from the data of experience.” (258)

Berlin’s identification of interpretation as vital to the process of meaning-making is commensurate with Berthoff’s. But what he misses is key to the social/individual misconstruance: in a triadic perspective, truth is discoverable in sense impression *because* sensing entails an act of interpretation. From “Bottom’s Semiology” (TMB):

> For Gombrich, the duck-rabbit is an emblem of the principle that interpretation is a name for all acts of knowing. (41)

> …all perception is of something with respect to, in comparison with, in opposition to. That is why it makes sense to claim that recognition precedes cognition; that anticipation is essential to all construing and constructing; that any act of identification entails an act of differentiation and thus of classification. (41)

> …we 'see as' in order to see at all. (41-42)

> An aphorism of Paul Klee's gives cogent form to this idea: "Art does not render the visible; it renders visible." (42)

> … in a deeper sense, 'seeing as' is the necessary condition of seeing at all. (42)

In Berthoff's view, expressed in the above passages, Berlin's "truth," the "data of experience," cannot be "had" free from interpretation. "We" interpret always, "seeing as" even when engaged in "nondiscursive modes," perceiving; interpretation is logically entailed in being. *Meaning* happens as a result of interpreting through prior meanings. It is simultaneously Being and Truth, allatonce.

This chapter has suggested that what we see happening when Berthoff is enfolded into discussions shaped by Berlin's categories is that the essential feature of triadicity—meaning as mediator—gets lost. Any discussion of Berthoff's point of view free from that feature results in a misconstruance and keeps Berthoff from becoming central to our conversations; in spite of their intentions, Gradin's "social-expressivism," Goldblatt's "political expressivism," and Berlin's "New Rhetoric," fail to advance that which is central to Berthovian triadicity: "Taking Thirdness

seriously requires apprehending 'the revolutionary doctrine of the Interpretant'...," the fact that all meaning is mediated by meaning (TMB 61). No accurate accounting or enfolding of Berthoff's work can be achieved without reckoning with this central idea.

*  *  *

Now that we've established the presence of the "social/individual split" misconstruance in Berlin's "Contemporary Composition" and in examples of scholarship of the 80s, 90s, and 2000s, I'd like to take a closer look at the tension created by Berthoff's resistance to it, specifically as it is documented in the 1990 polylog "Professing the New Rhetorics," edited by Teresa Enos. This moment in history, I think, can help us better understand the current "disparate" nature of the field of comp/rhet and the untapped potential of Berthovian triadicity for unifying us towards disciplinarity (Malenczyk, et al., location 155). The following section returns to Berlin only eight years after "Contemporary Composition," as he comes to characterize Berthoff's "new rhetoric" as "retrograde."

### *3.1.2 1990: The Polylog*

James Berlin and Ann Berthoff appear together on a panel at the 1990 CCCCs, "Strengthening Community through Diversity," convened in Chicago. Hosted by Theresa Enos and introduced by Stuart Brown, the roundtable boasted James Berlin, Ann Berthoff, Wayne Booth, Jim Corder, James Murphy, and Richard Young. An edited transcript of the experience is published in *Rhetoric Review*[13] and includes brief "statements" delivered at the onset of the quorum, questions from the audience (including Winifred Horner and Michel Leff, among others) and responses from panelists, "philosophical statements" prepared prior to the convention, and reflections composed post-conference.

---

[13] Enos, Theresa. "Professing the New Rhetorics: Prologue." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1990, pp. 5-35.

Enos articulates the heart of the panel discussion in the introduction:

> ...Because we don't have a new rhetoric or the new rhetoric. Because contemporary rhetoric is not noncontroversial. Because perhaps a distinction needs to be made between "modern" rhetoric and "new" rhetoric—that is if we'd agree that "modern" implies something that has existed before but is now brought up to date. Because the history of rhetoric always has mirrored the evolution of society. And because of the extraordinary shift in our conception of knowledge that is going on in our time. But what does all this mean, then, for rhetoric? (5)

I find this introduction positions Berlin powerfully—especially in comparison with Berthoff—both in its use of the term "new rhetoric" as it relates to a "shift in our conception of knowledge," and in its characterization that there has been "evolution" (no mere "shift") in rhetoric and in society. Although she would receive the CCCCs Exemplar award in 1997, and although she would continue publishing rather riotously, Ann Berthoff had retired to emeritus status at the University of Boston, Massachusetts in 1987, after 35 of teaching and scholarship. From very early in her career—she will cite some of her earliest publications, in her analysis of Marvell, as consistent with her contemporary views of language[14]—her valuing of Peircean triadicity anchored her work. One might say Berthoff never "evolved," but I think the term "evolve" misleads; it speaks to a historical moment in which the field recognized "evolving" as coming to appreciate ideas of language emerging from poststructuralism and "the social view." One of the early articulations of this social view can be found in Lester Faigley's influential "Competing Theories of Process" (1987).

---

[14] Berthoff, Ann. "The Allegorical Metaphor: Marvell's Definition of Love," *The Review of English Studies*, Volume XVII, Issue 65, 1 February 1966, Pages 16–29. (Later, a book.)

In “Competing Theories of Process,” Faigley writes, “My effort to outline a social view will be on the basis of one central assumption: human language (including writing) can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual” (659). The framing of this claim as either/or sets a “killer dichotomy” as foundational to the notion of “the social view,” and serves as a good example, I think, of the “social/individual split” that shoves Berthoff’s philosophy to the margins. A triadic semiotics demands that the nature of language is both social and individual allatonce, and so meaning “can be understood from the perspective” of both orientations at any time, simultaneously. In 1990, Ann Berthoff stood firm in her insistence of the value of a theory of language founded in Peircean triadic semiotics, and all the implications this had for then-contemporary, postmodern notions of language and the conceptions of writing they begot. It appears that in the perception of some prominent scholars in 1990, however, especially James Berlin, this firmness translated as recalcitrance. The “rhetoric consensus” was forming, and Berthoff was getting formed “out”. In 1994, Enos would publish an edited collection by the panel’s name, “Professing the New Rhetorics.” Berlin and Booth appear in the volume, as does I.A. Richards. Berthoff does not.

Arguably a part of this “rhetoric consensus” is Lester Faigley.[15] Faigley’s appreciation of “the social view,” and thus the social/individual split, is shared by Berlin, and perhaps nowhere is this perception—that there is useful opposition in the notions of “social” and “individual”—more clearly conveyed than in Berlin’s reflection statement in “Professing the New Rhetorics.” He writes:

[15] Yancey appreciates the effectiveness of Faigley’s designation of “the social turn” in her argument for disciplinarity in “Mapping the Turn to Disciplinarity,” her chapter contribution to *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* (location 392).Yancey’s rather brilliant flash-historiography of the field—she covers five decades in seven paragraphs—includes Berlin, Faigley, Bizzell and noted discussion re: Marxism… Berthoff’s point of view does not appear.

> ...Ann Berthoff has justifiably gained a reputation for being an uncompromising progressive, ever open to new possibilities for rhetoric. After all, it was she who introduced us to Freire at a time when Marx was still a persona non grata in the English department, and then showed us ways to use him in the writing classroom. In the present discussion, however, we find her taking an unexpected retrograde turn. She rejects poststructuralism unreservedly, as if a central part of this diverse project were not implicated in Marxism in all its subversive variety (see, for example, Michael Ryan's *Marxism and Deconstruction*). It is equally surprising to see her then forward I. A. Richards against poststructuralism, ignoring the fact that his problematizing of language is closely related to the poststructuralist critique of positivism. (28)

My initial reading of this statement took me aback, I must admit, if not for anything but the sheer contrast between Berlin's perception of Berthoff's work in 1982, in his appreciation for FTW, and his perception of her in 1990. Here was Berlin enacting a move that perhaps the field has enacted more broadly: "moving on," beyond theories of language that, simply put, "merely" came before. Not by any virtue of a flaw in the theory, but in its being born or nurtured in the past, a past loud with the textbooks and theories of current-traditional pedagogy. In the polylog conversation, Wayne Booth calls it "novomania" and warns against it (11). Some contemporary scholarship has embraced Booth's warning; for instance, Joseph Harris' 1997 *A Teaching Subject*, in his discussion of "voice," also "argue[s] against the sort of narrative of progress that still informs many histories of composition…" (54). Yet, especially given the recent decades of flashy, fast-developing digital media, the "new" seems perpetually, enthusiastically embraced (if not in theory—Selfe, Wysocki, Nakamura—often in practice). The polylog suggests that even as far back as 1990, scholars such as Wayne Booth and Ann Berthoff warned us to cool our heels,

that the "new" isn't necessarily better or good, and that this skepticism belongs to theory, as well as to practice and materiality.

There is so much to address in Berlin's passage about Berthoff in "Professing the New Rhetorics." Take, for instance, the initial politeness: "Ann Berthoff has justifiably gained a reputation for being an uncompromising progressive, ever open to new possibilities for rhetoric." "Uncompromising progressive" resonates with Berthoff's determined campaign against positivism (more importantly against the classroom practices positivist theories of language generate) and with Berlin's 1982 assessment of her work. His added "...ever open to new possibilities for rhetoric" rings hollow, however. Berthoff found a way of teaching writing that worked to cultivate in students a conscious awareness that they are composers already, and thereby how to form a method for composing. From a Berthovian viewpoint, "critical consciousness"—conscientization (see chapter two)—is *fundamental to* any "possibilities of rhetoric," especially in terms of pedagogy. It is fundamental. Essential. Possible because of our shared humanity. Add to this the notion that a social dimension is "a logical constituent of the sign" ... These things do not change, do not "progress" or "evolve," insofar as the human evolution of composing minds happens over many generations. They need not "open to new possibilities"; they are the seeds from which "new possibilities" for rhetoric stem. Berthoff called herself a zealot and she meant it[16]. But she was, inarguably, a progressive, if by progressive we mean anti-positivist, anti-current-traditional. In 1982, Berlin seems to have conceived of "progressive," meaning "the new rhetoric," in terms primed for embracing a social/individual split: "expressivist," "epistemic," "writer, audience, message…". The split was then as it is now,

---

[16] Berthoff, Ann. "Remarks on Acknowledging 1997 Exemplar Award, CCCC, Chicago, April 1998," Box 5, Folder 39, Series IV, "various writings and collected articles," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers. Special Collections & Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

a “killer dichotomy” that “shifts”, as evidenced here in this 1990 polylog, into a different one wherein by “progressive” we mean “evolving” (as opposed to “firm” or fixed or unyielding…). In these terms we can understand the relationships put into play historically that often cast Berthoff’s work as “conservative,” outside of the box of a “progressive” “rhetoric consensus.” We can also see this “fixedness” as relevant to contemporary discussion surrounding disciplinarity. “Some in Rhetoric and Composition resist the idea of disciplinarity because such a status carries with it a sense of being fixed and hegemonic…,” so say the editors of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* (Malenczyk, et al. location 87). Perhaps because Berthoff is perceived as “fixed” on a theory of language that challenges contemporary research interests or pedagogical practices that do not take into account “the third,” triadicity, Berthoff’s praxis as a whole becomes marginalized, and it falls into misuse.

* * *

So far in this section, I have examined Berlin’s critical assessment of Berthoff’s 1990 CCCCs panel, “Professing the New Rhetorics,” in comparison with his 1982 embrace of Berthoff as emblematic of “the new rhetoric.” We’ve come to understand that what Berlin seems to value in 1990 as “progressive” leans into a valuing of “the social view,” and we can identify roots of this valuing even in his early “Contemporary Composition.” In this essay, Berlin’s conceptions of “the knowledge process” as dynamic target not the dynamism itself but the “elements of the composing process.” So, whereas in his early appreciation of scholars who embrace the dynamic nature of knowledge in their writing pedagogy Berlin celebrates Berthoff, Berlin’s focus on “elements” instead of on dynamism, “dynamic reciprocity,” can be seen as priming for a later embrace of the social/individual split. This split facilitates “camps” like the

"social-epistemic" and the "expressivist" camps. And it leaves no room for Berthoff's triadicity, which cannot be reduced to "expressivist" or "social views" without becoming neutered.

Furthermore, Berthoff—unlike Berlin and Enos and others in the field at the time of the polylog—remained unchanged and unchanging in her underlying approach to writing theory and pedagogy. Berthoff's steadfastness resulted from her confidence in triadicity; Berthoff's writing theory and pedagogy, as we have seen, stems from her theory of language, her semiotics. In 1990, Berthoff's semiotics had not been challenged in the field of comp/rhet (by all accounts I've investigated, it remains unchallenged). Still, the polylog suggests that the field's brand of "progressivism" in the 1990s required "evolving." As we will see in the following section, Berlin viewed evolution in social terms, analyzing writing in terms of social systems and crafting pedagogies that give voice to writing as a way of creating, sustaining, and challenging power dynamics both in and out of academia (*Rhetoric and Reality*; *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures; "Freirean Pedagogy in the U.S.: A Response"). In these terms*, Berthoff remains "unevolved"; her terms are not "social view" terms. Her terms arise from semiotics. This puts her at odds—in theory and in practice—with Berlin, other "socially progressive" comp/rhet scholars of the 90s, and their inheritance as seen in the sheer array of contemporary comp/rhet subfields: "cultural rhetorics," "disabilities studies," "digital media studies," "gender and queer studies," etc., the "range of research interests within Rhetoric and Composition" (Malenczyk, et. al). This variety poses a challenge to current efforts to establish disciplinarity for the field, as articulated by the editors of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* ("Editor's Conclusion"). And this is where I see so much untapped potential in the "unevolved" work of Ann Berthoff: it isn't that Berthoff' eschews "the social view" and all of its implications for challenging injustice; Berthoff's embrace of Freire speaks to underlying common values between scholarship advancing writing

pedagogy as social justice work and Berthoff's scholarship. Instead, Berthoff addresses a fundamental aspect of *everything we do* when we "do" rhetoric and pedagogy in *any* subfield. Berthoff's view is a unifying view, a foundational view with unifying potential, and thus rich with possibilities for forming a disciplinary identity.

*    *    *

Meaning mediates meaning. Triadicity isn't complicated, though its implications are complex. The trouble, I argue here, is in the *fundamental* nature of triadicity. To declare triadicity "the way of the universe," as Berthoff does (Appendix A) is to risk being deemed "unevolved," dramatic, hyperbolic, conservative, retrograde. Such a declaration goes against our "progressive" valuing of "the new and evolved." It also goes against the progressive valuing of pluralism, a value articulated in the 1990 polylog and evident in contemporary moves towards disciplinarity. This next section examines the field's embrace of pluralism and ties it to the social/individual split in a way that helps us understand Berthoff's status as appreciated, but only marginally so, in contemporary scholarship.

### 3.2 The Polylog: An Embrace of Pluralism

One of the consequences of Berthoff's point of view—that we all, naturally, make meaning and compose, and that meaning is a logical constituency of the sign—puts her at odds with the premise of the panel, which tacitly celebrates plurality at the onset. Though in his reflection in *CCC*, Berlin explicitly identifies as "a pluralist" (like Richard Young, he states), espousing "poststructuralist thought in all its diversity" (29), Stuart Brown in his brief introduction reflects perhaps a broader appreciation. Brown writes, "Our intent is not to establish a definitive definition [of 'the New Rhetoric']. Rather it is to locate and extend the varied perceptions of the term in order to begin to fully apply its richness and utility to composition

studies and related disciplines" (6). "Richness" here implies value in plurality, differences, diversity in conceptions of rhetoric, and, tacitly, in the theories of language underlying those conceptions.

Berthoff's response to this valuation of diversity—her initial presence in the discussion—contradicts Brown's: "No new rhetoric will make any difference to the way we teach, the way we design our courses, the way we define and confront illiteracy unless and until we rid ourselves of the positivist linguistics which has underwritten composition and rhetoric for at least forty years" (7). Berthoff doesn't seem to have a problem with Brown's embrace of "richness" and diversity. Her problem, rather, is what happens when pluralism and diversity manifest discussion in terms of "the social" and "the individual," or in other dichotomous terms, especially regarding pedagogy. In the move to celebrate diversity, scholars, such as Brown and Berlin in the polylog, choose to engage in the *consequences* of a theory of language Berthoff sees clearly as positivistic. These consequences shape discussion into killer dichotomies like the social/individual split—thinking in terms of "social-epistemic" and "expressivist," for instance—instead of dipping debates into the deep, into the fundamental semiotics underlying our conceptions of diversity to begin with.

Without debate on fundamental levels of semiotics, dichotomies become less "terms to think with," Berthoff's operationalizing of Richardsonian "speculative instruments" (see next section), and more like untethered buoys bobbing on the surface of a fast-moving river. The buoys provide us information but, untethered, they're not very useful for helping us navigate away from the shallows. Throughout her scholarship, I have found Berthoff arguing always that positivism forms reductive dichotomies—they are untethering. So if our underlying theories of language are positivistic, unmoored, then the discussions of writing and pedagogy that stem from

them will perpetuate "new rhetorics" impotent for making "any difference to the way we teach, the way we design our courses," no matter what we call those new rhetorics—"feminist," "digital," "material," "cultural" ... The same kind of distorting is evident in the field's treatment of Paulo Freire, and Berlin's polylog contribution demonstrates this.

An aspect of Berlin's evaluation of Berthoff in the polylog deals directly with Freire and manifests another observable tension between the two scholars. Berlin writes: "After all, it was she [Berthoff] who introduced us to Freire at a time when Marx was still a persona non grata in the English department, and then showed us ways to use him in the writing classroom." Here Berlin characterizes Freire in terms of Marxism, a social theory, not a theory of language. *Berthoff's* appreciation of Freire, however, originates *in his theory of language*, and her discussions of Freire urge that we take it into account. For instance, in her forward to Freire and Macedo's *Literacy: Reading the World and Reading the Word*, Berthoff writes: "In my opinion, nothing much can be made of Paulo's ideas unless two conditions are met: we study hard his philosophy of language and learning since it is fundamentally at odds with the views that have been promulgated and institutionalized…; and we reinvent our conference and journal formats and, of course, our classrooms" (xiii). She devotes most of the essay to delineating this theory of language, offering examples by way of Freire's "culture circles" (discussed in chapter six).

An even more thorough treatment of Freire's theory of language is offered in Berthoff's "Paulo Freire's Liberation Pedagogy," an article emerging in April 1990, just after CCCC's, in *Language Arts*. In it she addresses Freire's theory of language explicitly in the context of his Marxism.

> ...Man does not live simply by instinct: his world is built of meanings. And meanings are our way of making further meaning. Just as all learning is necessarily collaborative, so all

> knowledge is necessarily mediated by our experience of the world which for Freire is always an experience formed and represented by language. It is odd, perhaps, to recommend one Marxist to illuminate another, but Vygotsky and Freire see eye-to-eye on the nature of language, that is, language is in dialectic with thought and entails activity. (364)

Language and thought in dialectic, allatonce. Meaning as a logical constituent of the sign. Freire's theory of language, as understood by Berthoff, presents as akin to a triadic semiotics, and the focus of his teaching stems from his understanding of language as "mediated by meanings," socially derived. Although this doesn't come through in the polylog conversation, 1990 seemed to be a year Berthoff would address, in print, the shifted focus of our field into cultural studies and the postmodern theories of language underlying that shift. Berlin's appreciation of Freire's Marxism—with a focus on "the social"—can be understood as representative of that shift.

A focus on the social—call it "the political" (Goldblatt) or "the cultural" (Bizzell, see next chapter)— inexorably shapes Berlin's appreciation of Freire and, early, Berthoff. Understanding that Berthoff and Freire's theories of language are aligned, though, is useful. Such an understanding is essential, for instance, to apprehending the nature of Berlin's later critique of Freire, in *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures* (1994). In this chapter, Berlin characterizes Freire as romantic and "naïve." Berlin writes, "The tendency…—sometimes encouraged by the Enlightenment vestiges of Freire himself—is to privilege a unified, rational, and unmistakably male subject, to define discussion and action in naive and simplistic terms so as to obscure difference, and to offer a rationalistic conception of power and a politics of narrow group interests" (106). It is a rather biting critique, I think, (an "emendation," Berlin calls it), emerging

from his reading Freire "across an epistemology that takes into account the indeterminacy of signification, the fragmentation of the subject, and the interrogation of foundational truth" (105). *But Berthoff's work asserts that to read Freire with the term "indeterminacy" is wrong* (TMB). Freire's underlying theory of language is triadic and so does not "posit a unified subject," and his theory of language operationalizes "ambiguities" not "indeterminacy" as a means of "interrogating foundational truth" (which Freire does literally, via the problem-posing method of questioning). In this sense then, Berlin's reading of Freire can be understood as distorting, in just the same way as Berthoff is often distorted. Perhaps Freire's thinking rubs against Berlin's in ways that have nothing to do with romanticism or naivete, but rather in conceptions of underlying semiotics.

Here we see an instance where *pluralism*, as seemingly appreciated in the polylog and in the array of research interests represented in contemporary comp/rhet, results in distortion: both Berlin's understanding of Freire's praxis through his postmodern lens of "indeterminacy" and Berthoff's understanding of Freire's praxis through her triadic lens of "ambiguity" cannot be true to Freire. The fact that Freire admired Berthoff and her work, invited Berthoff to introduce him in person and in print (see appendices) must mean something about who was right, according to Freire. "Ambiguity" and "indeterminacy" are competing concepts Berthoff attends to at length in *The Mysterious Barricades* (1999). Thinking with Berthoff, Berlin's rejection of Freire can be seen as resultant of his misunderstanding the theory of language underlying Freire's praxis. My point is that our field's having never resolved the problem of Ann Berthoff continues to miss an opportunity to unify on foundational levels: how does meaning work? For many, Derridean deconstruction insufficiently accounts for meaning (Sanchez and Vitanza, for

instance). But in Berthoff (and Richards before her?) we have a consequential theory of semiosis that accounts for, among other things, the work of Paulo Freire, in as-yet unchallenged ways.[17]

A wonderful little note tucked into a folder in the Berthoff collection at UMass Boston (likely added commentary as she assisted Hephzibah Roskelly in the collection's establishment) offers a contemporary peek at this convergence of interests between Berlin and Berthoff as it involves Freire:

> Jim Berlin once said to me that I was the first to alert the profession to Paulo Freire. I suppose that was a compliment, but the fact is that I've no sign that anybody has really understood how PF's philosophy of language underpins the pedagogy of the oppressed…. or how the ped of the opp is the ped of knowing.* (except Dixie Goswami & Hepsie Roskelley) ("PF note").

Berthoff's frustration comes through here, rather as exhaustion, I think, in regard to the value she places on theory of language, and how at odds this orientation seems to be with those like Berlin's in his polylog contribution. Those who have "moved on" into poststructuralism and its politics.

Other work from Berthoff in the 90s reveals her consideration of poststructuralists and "the European school." Berlin's critique of Freire, as seen through the lens of Berthoff's understanding of the difference between "indeterminacy" and "ambiguity," for instance, illuminates their distinct views. Berthoff's 1990 review of John Paul Russo's autobiography of I.A. Richards claims this:

---

[17] I understand that theories thrive in the literature of our field based on "conceptions of the third," especially via Deleuze and Guitarri, Victor Vitanza, for instance. It's beyond the scope of this dissertation to wrestle with them here, but the fact that scholarship dives into such contemplation without considering Berthoff—the first in our field to do so—is suggestive.

> Ambiguity is not the same as indeterminacy. His [Russo's] attempt to present Richards as a forerunner of deconstructive practice…is absurd. Indeterminacy plays no such role for the followers of Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida as ambiguity did for Richards and Empson, for the very good reason that those terms arise from different conceptions of the meaning relationship—that is, from a radically different semiotics. (172)[18]

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to argue "for" a Berthovian triadic semiotics "against" the semiotics underlying deconstruction, though it is revealing, I think, to consider Berlin's "Poststructuralism, Cultural Studies, and the Composition Classroom: Postmodern Theory in Practice," and its substantial reference to Stuart Hall's "Encoding/Decoding" as a "demonstration" of the "indeterminacy" driving the semiotics of the social-epistemic. As the title suggests, "Encoding/Decoding" posits a dyadic understanding of the sign, or "code," and this exemplifies perhaps what riles Berthoff's charges of "positivist" against postmodernism broadly.

Just as Berthoff embraced the triadic semiotics of Peirce, and the other scholars and teachers she points to as her heroes, Berlin embraced the theory of semiotics promoted by Derrida and the philosophy of Foucault, among others. These orientations result in a strong tension—philosophical and practical—between "camps" within the field of composition and rhetoric (likely not the only camps). The tension comes through in the remainder of Berlin's reflection on Berthoff's contribution to the polylog. I will quote it again here:

> In the present discussion, however, we find her taking an unexpected retrograde turn. She rejects poststructuralism unreservedly, as if a central part of this diverse project were not implicated in Marxism in all its subversive variety (see, for example, Michael Ryan's

---

[18] See *The Mysterious Barricades: Language and its Limits (*1999); "I.A. Richards and the Audit of Meaning" is one of several essays in this essential volume that explicates Richards' notion of ambiguity and how it figures into the composing process.

> *Marxism and Deconstruction*). It is equally surprising to see her then forward I. A. Richards against poststructuralism, ignoring the fact that his problematizing of language is closely related to the poststructuralist critique of positivism.

The "diverse project" refers to poststructuralism—and perhaps the polylog itself, the probing of the concept of "new rhetorics," the appreciation of "variety" (plurality)—and resistance to subjugating hierarchies.

But in this critique, Berlin seems to conflate Berthoff's appreciation for Freire with an appreciation of Marxism, as though Berthoff's admiration of Freire rooted in cultural and sociological theory or ideology, or as though "Marxism" rests on one particular, shared, theory of language, and to appreciate Freire must be to appreciate Marxism. Berthoff stands against these appropriations of Freire's work. Berthoff identifies Richards's "problematizing of language" as a Peircean "problematizing" and cannot be "closely related" to a poststructuralism that "critiques positivism," because poststructuralism, in Berthoff's view, does not "critique positivism." Berthoff considered "contemporary European philosophers" "closet positivists or mystical positivists who are enslaved to a dyadic semiotics." She writes this in a letter to a graduate student eager to argue "a fruitful convergence between [Berthoff's] work and the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer" ("Letter to PhD student at Berkeley"). Berthoff doesn't think much of this idea, and is utterly thorough in her dismantling of it, hoping ultimately the student abandons the endeavor. In her argument as to why, she charges that the student "assumes that because I don't mention somebody that I am unfamiliar with their work. I assure you that I have read Wittgenstein, Iser, Gadamer, Derrida, at whatever length I could tolerate and if I do not mention them or call upon them it is because I consider them closet

positivists...” (“Letter to PhD student at Berkeley”[19]). (It is worthwhile to note, I think, that Berthoff never “calls upon” Berlin.)

Berthoff and Berlin—and so many of the scholars mentored by them—seem to share similar values and goals, as demonstrated in Berlin’s “Contemporary Composition.” Berthoff and Berlin value Freire’s work because of the “liberation” it attempts for the disempowered and the identification of language as key to this liberation. But whereas Berlin carries Derrida’s *differénce* into his theory of language and ideology, Berthoff carries into her theory of language and ideology Freire’s (and Cassirer’s and Vygotsky’s and Coleridge’s and Richards’s) “animal symbolicum.” And Ernst Cassirer’s notion that interpreting meaning through other meanings is an aspect of conscious being itself (TMM, FTW, “Reading the Word, Reading the World”). Berlin cites this as “retrograde,” romantic even, because it focuses on what we all have *en commun* and does not explicitly refute “The unified, coherent, autonomous, self-present subject of the Enlightenment [that] has been the centerpiece of liberal humanism” (“Poststructuralism and Cultural Studies” 18). The articulation of romantic as “retrograde and naive” is also a dyadic conception born of positivist theories of language; Roskelly and Ronald’s *Further Along*, Gradin’s *Romancing Rhetorics*, and Goldblatt’s “Don’t Call it Expressivism” can be seen as a redress to this kind of articulation of romanticism. Perhaps as a product of his time, Berlin embraces a reductionist notion of romanticism—one based on a clear social/individual divide—and this dichotomy shapes his view of Berthoff, despite her theory of language.

[19] “Letter from Berthoff to PhD student at Berkeley.” Box 4, Folder 34-35, Series IV: “Writings about her (mostly),” The Ann E. Berthoff Papers. Special Collections & Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

There exists no published record that I can find in which Berlin addresses explicitly the semiotics of Berthoff or considers Peirce in conversation with Derrida and deconstruction.[20] But his gesture towards Richards's "problematizing of language" in his critique of Berthoff as "closely related" to poststructuralism suggests he senses shared ground between his orientation and Berthoff's. Berlin does not, apparently, conceive of this common ground in terms of semiotics. Thus, Berlin, in his polylog response, perceives Berthoff as "ignoring" something. As seen in Berthoff's letter to the Berkeley PhD student, however, Berthoff's "ignorance" is not really ignorance but intentional commentary on the validity she considers due the theory of language underpinning poststructuralist thought.[21]

To Berthoff, the orientation of postmodernism and the *kind* of critical theory it nurtures, English studies as a type of "cultural studies"—often closer to a sociology divorced from semiotics (imagining these concepts as categories)—emerged as a giant shiny object that distracted scholars from the liberating pedagogical potential embodied in triadicity. In Berthoff's time, too few took up her call for exploration into the pedagogical potential of Peircean triadicity (informed by Vygotsky, Burke, Cassirer, Sapir, Richards, Langer, Freire…), especially in print. In the next section, I turn to a contemporary example of how Berthoff is typically treated in print in order to demonstrate that the ways we misconstrue her orientation perpetuates her marginalization and the languishing of her call for a return to semiotics.

---

[20] Beyond the scope of this dissertation, but perhaps useful, would be this study as it pertains to comp/rhet. Scholars pursuing investigations of the tensions between the work of Peirce and Derrida include Vincent Colapietro, David Pettigrew, and the early work of Gary Shapiro.

[21] For a direct explication see Berthoff's "Determinations and Indeterminacies," TMB.

### 3.3 Dobrin & Jensen: The social/individual split

I turn now to Sid Dobrin and Kyle Jensen's 2017 *Abducting Writing Studies*, a collection of essays that explores "the realization of potential in writing studies" (2). I will look closely at the introduction, as it frames the collection as a whole. I've chosen this particular example for three reasons: 1) although it belongs perhaps in the subfields of "writing about writing" and new materialisms, like so many collections dedicated to specific interests within the field, Dobrin and Jensen's seems to build tacitly from the positivist theories of language Berthoff rejects; 2) the killer dichotomies at work in the introduction tacitly embrace a social/individual split; and 3) perhaps most importantly, the example demonstrates Berthoff's work as marginalized and misconstrued in ways representative of Berthoff's treatment more generally in contemporary comp/rhet scholarship.

We can apprehend the forces of marginalization listed above by looking at the editors' use of Berthoff in *Abducting Writing Studies*. Unsurprisingly, Berthoff's name appears in the volume, but only briefly, in the introduction, and completely decontextualized from her theory of language. In their efforts to establish the dispersed presence of Peirce's notion of abduction historically in the field's scholarship, Dobrin and Jensen enroll Berthoff. Given Peirce is one of Berthoff's heroes, this make sense— "abduction" is, as the authors reveal, a Peircean concept. However, Dobrin and Jensen's appreciation of Berthoff appears to emerge not from her understanding of triadicity, but merely from her use of the term "abduction". I will cite the passage in its entirety here, as even such a brief enrollment of Berthoff wields much power to disenfranchise her point of view. The authors quote Berthoff:

> … Ann Berthoff… in *The Sense of Learning*, uses abduction to offer instructional methods that help students think about their thinking with greater complexity:

> Making the heuristic powers of language accessible to students is the surest way to teach them how to move from abstraction in the nondiscursive mode to abstraction in the discursive mode. The best way to get the dialectic going is to get the sentence going; the easiest way to do that is to convert assertions, statements of fact, expressions of opinion to "iffy" questions—the strategy C.S. Peirce called *abduction* and Paulo Freire calls *problematizing: If the walls are black ...* (53)

The authors continue with an explication of this passage in light of their focus on "abduction." They write:

> Berthoff's argument hinges on her distinction between the nondiscursive and discursive modes. The nondiscursive mode is an orientation that seals writing and thought from the complexity of the world. By contrast, the discursive mode seeks such complexity as a baseline standard. Berthoff characterizes the latter as a "speculative instrument" that enables both students and scholars to navigate outside of their traditional disciplinary boundaries and thereby confront "the actual process" of forming thoughts through words. This process attends to the "accident[s], confusion[s], contradiction[s], befuddlement[s]" as well as the temptation to smooth out what is fundamentally complex and to ignore the genuinely problematic. (54)

This passage misconstrues Berthoff dramatically, in ways commensurate with dyadic conceptions of the sign, including the creation of a killer dichotomy: "discursive"/ "nondiscursive".

First let me say that I have no problems with the authors' characterization of Berthoff's use of "nondiscursive" and "discursive" modes as distinct in the passage they excerpt. Concepts

can be "distinct" and opposing without rotting into killer dichotomies. "Killer dichotomies" are opposites treated as distinct, "pure," categories understood as reflecting how things really are.[22] It's the next assertion in the authors' explication that slips into "distorting" territory: "The nondiscursive mode is an orientation that seals writing and thought from the complexity of the world." This assertion promotes a positivist conception of "nondiscursive/discursive," a "killer dichotomy" toxic to Berthoff's legacy. Here, the "discursive mode" (writing and thought) is separate from/ "sealed" off from "the world" by the perception of direct experience, the "nondiscursive mode." Assumed is a relationship wherein "reality"—the "complexity of the world"—*exists and can be accessed through direct experience*. "Language and thought" are posited as always incomplete ("sealed off"). "By contrast," the authors write, "the discursive mode seeks such complexity as a baseline standard." So, the nondiscursive mode accesses "complexity," but the discursive mode can only "seek" it. Even if we go along with the personification of modes here (which is problematic, I think) what we find is a relationship wherein direct experience (the nondiscursive mode) is characterized as "higher," more complex, more complete, more valuable than the discursive, which "seeks complexity." Here, it seems to me, we have "the same old box" as the Ladder of Abstraction Berthoff argues against in "Abstraction as a Speculative Instrument," the essay from which Dobrin and Jensen excerpt this passage, only the ladder's flipped on end.

Berthoff writes, "… if we consider the Ladder of Abstraction in this light—as one of the chief models of the positivist understanding of the relationship of language and thought—it will be evident that it is incapable of representing abstraction in the nondiscursive mode" (45). I argue here that it is equally incapable of representing abduction in the discursive mode.

---

[22] Male/female is an example of a "killer dichotomy." While these terms are useful, and useful in opposition, we know well now that nature, "reality," doesn't fit neatly into such categories.

Conceiving the nondiscursive as direct access to reality, *as free from meaning and interpretation*, is the snake pit of positivism; doesn't matter if you value the discursive or the nondiscursive as "more complex". Berthoff's triadicity appreciates the muddiness of any distinction that can be made between "nondiscursive" and "discursive"; although distinct, the concepts cannot be mutually exclusive without de*form*ing; both the discursive and the nondiscursive entail interpretation and happen *with* each other, allatonce.

To fully apprehend the misconstruance perpetrated by Dobrin and Jensen, we must think with the concept of allatonceness, a logical aspect of triadic semiotics. All meaning is mediated by other meanings, simultaneously, allatonce. Earlier in "Abstraction as a Speculative Instrument" Berthoff writes this: "The two kinds of abstracting [nondiscursive and discursive] are active and interactive in the mind, a reflection of the fact that whatever happens in one hemisphere of the brain is very complexly related to what happens in the other half. But the essential point is this: generalization requires abstraction, but we can have abstraction without generalization" (45). Generalization happens as a discursive phenomenon, but it is no more or less complex than abstraction in any mode. In the context of "Abstraction as a Speculative Instrument" (TSL 42-56), allatonceness *grounds Berthoff's point*. Note: the entire essay "thinks with" the concept "abstraction"; "abstraction" is the "speculative instrument," the Rhichardsonian phrase Berthoff employs often, meaning "concept to think with" (TSL 147). Concepts as "speculative instruments" honors the constant presence of interpretation in the meaning-making *of all modes* and keeps open the possibilities that things could be thought *and perceived*—and thus mean and be—otherwise. "Abduction" is the speculative instrument of Dobrin and Jensen; it is *not* the speculative instrument of Ann Berthoff in her essay "Abstraction as a Speculative Instrument." Nor is a speculative instrument for Berthoff the "nondiscursive

mode," the noun receiving the descriptor "speculative instrument" in Dobrin and Jensen's analysis. Imprecisely deploying the concept of "speculative instrument" has the effect of conflating "abstraction" with "discursive mode" in Dobrin and Jensen's analysis. And this conflation is B.A.D. for Berthoff and triadicity; such conflation re-forms the "rhetoric consensus," and this is *precisely the point* of the Berthoff essay excerpted by Dobrin and Jensen.

Triadicity posits that the nondiscursive mode entails just as much interpretation as the discursive does. That's one of the radical features of triadicity, one that conversations in digital media, materialism, and object-oriented ontologies tend to appreciate about Berthoff's work (Palmeri, Micciche, Boyle). But once we've begun to engage in discursive modes—arguably in tandem with the development of consciousness (FTW)—the "discursive" is forever affecting the nondiscursive and vice versa, simultaneously, allatonce. Accounting for the dynamic reciprocity in this process is the work of triadicity. "Thinking with" "abduction" free from triadic semiosis, Peirce's revolutionary semiotics, seems like dangerous territory at best. Perhaps I'm wrong about Dobrin and Jensen's appropriation of Berthoff and Peirce, but without squaring the concept of abduction with Peircean triadicity, the authors cannot hope to accurately represent the concept in its full potential even as a framing one. Or worse, their deployment of the opposing terms "discursive/nondiscursive" corrodes.

As a positivist misconstruance, the "discursive/nondiscursive mode split" mirrors and invites conceptions of the social/individual split and drives conversation away from semiosis and toward the "social studies" of culture and material environments. Just as in my discussion of Goldblatt's article, I'm not arguing here that Dobrin and Jensen's notion of abduction deals explicitly in "social" vs. "individual" terms; discussions employing the lexicon of material ecologies don't tend to do this, I think. But the author's next move, which is to contemplate

Berthoff's brief analogizing of Peircean abduction with Frierean problematizing, perpetuates an understanding of Berthoff's work as *either* championing the individual via reflection—a kind of "expressivism" as we saw in the second section of this chapter—*or*, as championing the social, via Freirean dialogue (McComiskey, Sanchez).

After quoting a substantial paragraph from Freire's *Education for a Critical Consciousness* (ECC), Dobrin and Jensen write: "Reading this passage, it is clear why Berthoff would draw an analogy between abduction and problematization. First, Freire's contention that problematization is 'inseparable from concrete situations' is consistent with abduction's imperative to account for the material complexity of the present" (15). But as I established in chapter two and earlier in this chapter, without acknowledging *the centrality of interpretation in all acts of mind*, it is impossible to "clearly" understand "why Berthoff draws an analogy between abduction and problematization." In the context of her essay, abduction is a "strategy" based on/emerging from the triadic nature of semiosis that unfolds in the dynamic reciprocity between "inward" and "outward" meaning resources. Abduction is something individual students can do in order to enroll meaning resources into their writing process. I'm not sure what this has to do with "... abduction's imperative to account for the material complexity of the present…," a move that positions abduction "outward" into the socio-material realm. It's unclear that in Berthoff's view abduction can be said to *have* an "imperative". Perhaps this is another problem of personification. But the result of the way Dobrin and Jensen employ Berthoff and Freire in this brief passage in the introduction reinforces our misconstruance of Berthoff along "social/individual" lines. When she's enrolled with Freire—as we saw earlier in our consideration of Berlin's polylog response to her—Berthoff becomes useable by a camp focused outward on "material conditions"; what gets passed-over/ignored/marginalized in the

conversations about Berthoff's work is her theory of language, one that requires an acknowledgement of allatonceness—the fact that the inner/outer, material/ "intellectual," discursive/nondiscursive happen simultaneously, allatonce, each realm affecting the other in an ever-generative, dynamic reciprocity—a meaning-making process central to which is interpretation.

### 3.4 Mending the Social/Individual Split: Allatonceness

As this chapter has demonstrated, the full implications of triadic semiotics have yet to be reckoned with. What happens to conversations like Dobrin and Jensen's if we see them through Berthoff's notion of allatonceness regarding the social and the individual? What if "abduction" must be accounted for as an act of perception, interpretation an act of forming, the "nondiscursive" and the "discursive" in dynamic reciprocity generating ambiguities that can be resourced? For one, a genuine accounting for the distinction between ambiguity and indeterminacy will have to be achieved, and an appreciation had for the difference ambiguity makes *to our pedagogies*. (Vitanza's "aleatory" composition with purpose and intent instead of "chance"?) The difference, I argue, implicates contemporary conversations regarding disciplinarity, and roots them in a different kind of comp/rhet history than what currently exists, one that honors Berthoff as centrally important to contemporary concerns of comp/rhet.

Conversations like the one embodied in *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* root in a history we recognize and value, and yet Berthoff seems to be shrinking from these historiographies. When her name appears, it is mostly in introductions (Dobrin and Jensen, Sanchez, Harris), absent her radical vision for how Peircean triadicity affects writing pedagogy. Or, more alarming, in our historiographies Berthoff's name is disappearing; she appears not at all in Glenn and Mountford's 2017 *Rhetoric and Writing Studies in the New Century:*

*historiography, pedagogy, and politics*. This disappearance, I argue, portends ill for a disciplinarity free from a return to theories of language, free from resolving “a problem like Ann Berthoff.” It’s a problem simmering even beneath the surface of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*.

It’s no mere coincidence, for instance, that Yancey, in her chapter “Mapping the Turn to Disciplinarity,” taps Robert Connors’ 1996 address of the inaugural Watson Conference in Louisville. In a letter of invitation to Berthoff, Brian Huot offers the title of that conference as “Reflection, History, Narrative: The Professionalization of Composition *as a Discipline* from 1963 to 1983” (emphasis mine, “Letter from Huot to Berthoff” September 1995…). Somewhere in the process, they must have dropped the “as a Discipline” part; Yancey’s article cites the title as “History, Reflection, and Narrative: The Professionalization in Composition 1963-1983.” Yet Connor’s speech, Yancey notes, “identified the conference itself as a sign of our nascent disciplinarity” (location 437). Berthoff’s archive houses the letter she penned declining Huot’s invitation to that very conference. In the letter she writes:

> The “professionalization” of this curious field of composition and rhetoric is not a blessing: it has not helped to redefine the mission of English in the university; it has by no means meant that literature teachers have gained a deepened sense of what it means to teach writing (or reading!); professionalization has proceeded without any interest, so far as I know, in the fact of an ever-increasing illiteracy at all levels. Furthermore, this professionalization has assured the continuing colonization of composition by psychology, linguistics, and, worst of all, psycholinguistics. I see no evidence that the professionalization of this field has had any effect of pedagogy; it has provided no new perspectives on actual classroom practice.

("Letter from Berthoff to Huot")

This assessment counters Yancey's vision, and Connor's, "declar[ing] us a discipline in the making… more aligned with our origin stories of students and service" or "more aligned with literature" (location 437). In Berthoff's view, by 1995, the "common ground" conversation of "looking at the meanings of our making" (Connors) simply was not happening, *could* not happen via the "colonizing" theories that invite a pluralistic approach to theory and pedagogy, and a tendency toward teaching out of theories of language, often unarticulated, that promote the social/individual split.

Perhaps only allatonceness born of triadicity can truly empower the field of comp/rhet to affect pedagogical change broadly across disciplines and address declines in literacies. This dissertation study suggests that until we attend to this possibility, it is difficult to imagine that a "disciplinary turn" could happen in a way that positively affects the profession and the students subjected to it.

# 4 ALLATONCENESS & THE DIALOGUE/DIALECTIC SPLIT

*And dialogue is therefore the pedagogical [method]. Interpretation… the central act of mind.*

~Ann Berthoff, personal interview (Appendix A)

In the previous chapters, I have argued that in spite of the respect often afforded Ann Berthoff in contemporary comp/rhet scholarship (Palmeri, Sanchez, Hawk, Harris), Berthoff's ideas, her point of view, her pedagogy, is often marginalized—reserved for brief mentions in introductions, as exemplified by Dobrin and Jensen (chapter three), or relegated to one "track" in a chapter (as in Palmeri's *Remixing Composition*). Although some scholarship manages to enroll Berthoff's ideas into promotion of particular research foci within the field (see Micciche,

Fleckenstein, Palmeri), more often than not, the full context of Berthoff's point of view gets short-shrift, resulting in significant misconstruance of her work.

Chapter two traced this misconstruance to the 1980s, employing the work of James Berlin, and scholarship from the 90s and 2000s, to help illustrate how terms developing during that time created categories, "boxes," Berthoff's work actively resists. Contemporary scholarship acknowledges Berthoff's work is "difficult to categorize" (Goldblatt, Gradin, Hawk, Harris). But on the whole the field has yet to reckon with this difficulty. Refusal to do so speaks not only to the way we account for our history as a field, but results in missed opportunities for uniting the field's disparate research interests into a renewed discussion of "what it is we're doing in the first place," in our research and in our classrooms, particularly as the field revisits talk of a "disciplinary turn" (Yancey).

Chapter three named one "way" scholars in the field tend to get Berthoff wrong—"the social/individual split"—and drew from definitions key to Berthoff's philosophy to make a case for this misconstruance as consequential. Another way scholarship tends to get Berthoff wrong I've named the "the dialogue/dialectic split." In many ways this misconstruance is not different from the social/individual split; both arise from dyadic conceptions of the sign. Now I will lean on the concept-definitions formed in chapter two in order to illuminate the misapprehension and misconstruance of Berthoff along the lines of a dialogue/dialectic split. To recap, the five key concepts of Berthoff's philosophy as I understand them are: triadicity, meaning-making, dynamic reciprocity, allatonceness, and conscientization. I review them here:

Chief among foundationally Berthovian concepts is "triadicity," the theory of semiosis Berthoff takes from her hero, C.S. Peirce. Triadicity posits that *all meaning is mediated by meaning*. The centrality of meaning in this assertion requires a clear conceptual distinction

between "meaning-making," the second foundational term, and "communication." In this chapter, we will see this distinction becomes key in apprehending the ways in which scholars in the field misconstrue Berthoff, particularly when thinking with the terms "dialogue" and "dialectic." The third "foundational term" I offer in chapter two, "dynamic reciprocity," attempts to bring focus to this active, allatonce relationship between the "inner" and "outer" kinds of meaning-making typically associated with "dialogue" and "dialectic."

Dynamic reciprocity is a kind of "allatonceness," the fourth foundational term, and a mandate that emerges logically from triadicity; if all meaning is mediated by meaning, then to make separate "places" for where meaning happens *falsifies the process in consequential ways*. If we consider meaning as made in the mind, and with the body, *or* among the "social," in conversations between people, we are considering "separate" the places of meaning making. When this happens, we tend to create hierarchies of the kinds of knowledge happening in these places (i.e., mind over body, individual genius over social collaboration, "in the system" over "in the Subject"). Berthoff argues throughout her corpus that one of the consequences of triadicity—and central to the comp/rhet mission—is pedagogy. Another key term foundational to getting Berthoff right is "conscientization," the Freirean pedagogical imperative commensurate with triadic semiosis.

Conscientization emerges from the understanding that all humans make meaning all of the time; it's an aspect of our being. If this is true, and if all meaning is mediated by meaning, and writing is a way of making meaning, then all language (and other meaning-making modes) are allatonce hermeneutic and heuristic by nature (Berthoff, "The Problem…," "Rhetoric as Hermeneutic"). We all are expert meaning-makers—the *"animal symbolicum,"* as Cassirer puts it (Berthoff, "The Problem…"). Conscientization is the pedagogical imperative whereby teachers

design environments that turn student awareness to the fact *that* they make meaning naturally and *how* they do it, so that they might *choose* to do it that way or choose to do it differently. Peirce and Berthoff call this choosing "pragmaticism" (Berthoff, personal interview, Appendix A; TLS). Coming to apprehend what meanings could be made among available meaning resources (to an individual person in context) sets up a pedagogical situation whereby students begin to ask questions, to "problematize" their situations, as Freire puts it (*A Pedagogy of Knowing*). In writing instruction, such pragmaticism sounds like this: if I change X in my writing, what would that do to my meaning? What difference would it make?

A triadic pragmaticist, like Berthoff, apprehends Freire's conscientization in a particular way. Actually, a genuine rift within the field may exist, I think (the work of future dissertations?) between scholars whose appreciation of Paulo Freire centers on his use of literacy pedagogy to critique and change social systems, and those, like Berthoff's, whose appreciation centers on the role of Freire's theory of language in that use

Chapter four argues that thinking with the terms "dialectic" and dialogue" in dyadic ways, as anchored to particular places—inside the mind and between minds, respectively—the concepts become understood and resourced as separate and opposite. A "killer dichotomy," as Berthoff would put it ("Problem-dissolving by Triadic Means"). What this dichotomy "kills" is the pedagogical potential entailed in triadicity: if meaning mediates meaning, then all acts of meaning-making (all acts of mind/body, "discursive" and "nondiscursive," allatonce) are acts of interpretation. If this assertion is true—and our scholarship has yet to challenge it—then what and how we teach could be radically different than what is typical, even today. Berthoff's FTW is evidence of how *different* teaching from triadicity can be. Given contemporary complaints that the conditions of writing instruction in America continue to be less than ideal for students and for

teachers, or are worsening (Malenczyk, et al., Adler-Kassner), a fundamentally different approach to teaching writing seems worthwhile. Especially a tried one, brought from one of the founders of the field of comp/rhet. Such an experiment, this chapter argues, could lead to ameliorative changes in our practices and self-conceptions, which seems particularly important if we are, as Kathleen Blake Yancey suggests, at the dawn of disciplinarity.

To demonstrate the need for a more accurate accounting of Berthoff's work and the constructive consequences of such an accounting, this chapter looks closely at two instances of scholarship and thinking that misconstrues Berthoff's work along the lines of the dialogue/dialectic split. A contemporary example, in Bruce McComiskey's 2015 *Dialectical Rhetoric*, and an historical example in the form of a letter from 1987, from then junior scholar Patricia Bizzell to Ann Berthoff, housed in the archive of Berthoff's papers.[23] These examples provide evidence of historical and contemporary conceptions that misunderstand, or don't account for, the dynamic reciprocity central to Berthoff's understanding of dialectic and dialogue. Also, in my view, what gets lost about Berthoff's work emerges especially clearly in Bizzell and McComiskey's enrollment of Paulo Freire in their discussions.

In illuminating these instances of how Berthoff's ideas are misapprehended in major works, and in the thinking of influential scholars in the field, I also offer analysis suggesting that considering Berthoff whole, in the context of her theory of language, yields resources for thinking about disciplinarity.

---

[23] From Pat Bizzell to Ann Berthoff, 18 November 1986, Box 1, Folder 1, Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

### 4.1 McComiskey's Dialectical Rhetoric: The Dialectic/Dialogue Split

Bruce McComiskey, in *Dialectical Rhetoric* credits Berthoff as being "the first scholar in rhetoric and composition to use *dialectic* as a key term throughout most of her work…" (49). He asserts that "Berthoff remains the composition scholar most committed to harnessing the complementary power of dialectic and rhetoric in the writing class" (8). Here a distinction is made between "dialectic," what seems to be an "inward" thing, and "rhetoric," an "outward" thing. McComiskey's notion of "rhetoric" appears characterized as a goings-on-between-elements akin to those of Berlin's "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories." But my reading of Berthoff's notion of rhetoric confirms that, for Berthoff, rhetoric is dialectical already. From Berthoff's point of view, dialectic is the meaning-making process, which is always rhetorical; and rhetoric is always a matter of meaning. McComiskey's appreciation for Berthoff's centering of dialectic throughout her scholarship gets her right, but this characterization also misses her point. Berthoff's dialectic cannot be understood in terms that create a clear distinction between "inner" and "outer," dialectic and rhetoric, *or* dialogue. For Berthoff, meaning is never purely a matter of mind, and so "dialectic," which deals with meanings, is never purely a matter of mind, is never just an "inner" event. I am not sure what this says about the usefulness of McComiskey's proposed "dialectical rhetoric," the idea he puts forth as a "third relationship" "on the brink" of reforming composition studies. But his reduction of Richards' and Berthoff's dialectic-as-"audit of meaning" to mere "self-reflective thought, metacognition," and thus "one-dimensional," is a consequential mistake (50).

For one, McComiskey's charge that Berthoff is "one-dimensional" ignores completely Berthoff's appreciation of Paulo Freire and "dialogue" (50). And this despite McComiskey quoting Berthoff's assertion in TMM that "dialogue and dialectic are cognate."

Berthoff's intention in TMM (and we will see this in part two of this chapter) is to focus on the seed at the nexus of dialogue and dialectic, the coming-together of these concepts which happen always, allatonce. But even early in McComiskey's discussion of Berthoff, before he mentions her admiration of Freire (he never accounts for Freire's admiration of Berthoff—I'm not sure of any scholarship doing that yet), McComiskey's charge severs Berthoff's and Richards's notion of dialectic from a theory of language rooted in triadic semiotics—the notion that all meaning (no matter where it "is") is mediated by meaning. The result is a disfigured rendering of Berthoff's ideas.

An example of McComiskey's reductive characterization of Berthoff's dialectic happens on page 50. Note that McComiskey never discusses Berthoff's theory of language. For McComiskey, "dialectical dialogue" *either* happens internally (only), as self-talk, *or* happens as a "two-dimensional exchange between writer and audience," mostly externally, as "communication":

> Although there are a few times Berthoff understands this dialectical dialogue as a two-dimensional exchange between writer and audience (Berthoff 1981, 72), the dialogue is usually presented by Berthoff as internal (thus one dimensional), as the writer struggling to create and audit meaning.

Contrary to this characterization, in the context of Berthoff's triadicity, the writer never "struggles to create" meaning. Meaning-making is something we all do expertly all the time (we are, as Berthoff appreciates, Cassirer's *animal symbolicum*). To "audit meaning" is the thing that "can be taught" (TSL). But as Berthoff's constant appreciation for dialogue and Freire suggests, an "audit of meaning" is not the product of only internal processes (see TSL, Appendix A) and so is never "one dimensional." McComiskey's characterization here resonates with the

reductionist notions of romanticism Roskelly and Ronald push back against in *Further Along*, the writer in isolation, "wrestling" with their thoughts. Characterizing dialectic and dialogue as opposites, a "split," results in the kind of reductionist falsification and misconstruance of Berthoff's work that associates her with "metacognition" and not "dialogue" or vice versa.

In Berthoff's work, "Dialogue" and dialectic do not happen distinctly free from the other, especially in writing. Misconstruance that happens as a result of cleaving the concepts can be seen as McComiskey continues:

> According to Berthoff, "Some experienced writers can keep track of what they are saying in that interior dialogue and thus can audit their meanings in their heads, but students with learning and language difficulties should write it down, continually. In that way they can learn to recognize the interior dialogue and keep the dialectic going" (77). For Berthoff, one-dimensional dialectic offers the advantage of self-conscious knowledge, or metacognition.

McComiskey here seems to be focusing on the internality of "the audit," the questioning of what it is the writer means when he writes. The meanings themselves, he doesn't account for; the meanings are formed by internality *and* externality, allatonce, always. And a large part of Berthoff's textbook, FTW, which we will see later in this chapter, is dedicated to turning student awareness to the fact of this simultaneity. It isn't just that we make meaning, but that our meanings are mediated by other meanings, equally "ours." These meanings come from "somewhere"—a memory, a perception, a dream, an encounter with reading or watching or talking and listening. In fact, as Berthoff's appreciation of Freire's work demonstrates,

community dialogue is often integral to conscientization, which is clearly not the internal "metacognition" McComiskey references here.[24]

McComiskey later accounts for Berthoff's relationship with Freire, and here is where we can see a serious misconstruance of Berthoff's viewpoint. McComiskey writes:

> Even during the 1980s, after Berthoff had become more interested in social dialectics resulting in critical consciousness, drawing extensively from Paulo Freire, her work still "downplay[ed] the projects of largescale political change that always accompany Freire's practice" (Bizzell 1991, 53). While Bizzell called on composition specialists to put Freire "back into a Marxist context," Judith Goleman had already begun the process of putting Berthoff into a Marxist context…

In this passage, McComiskey introduces a term—"social dialectics"—resonant with Gradin's "social expressivism" and Goldblatt's "political expressivism" ("Don't Call it Expressivism"). As we saw in chapter three, these terms do much to reinforce the dichotomous thinking that misconstrues Berthoff's work along social/individual lines. But the move from thinking in terms of a social/individual split is not far from thinking in terms of a dialectic/dialogue split; perhaps we can characterize these "splits" as different names of the same phenomenon. The phenomenon, however, is toxic no matter what we call it. For though it's true, perhaps, that Berthoff "downplayed the projects of largescale political change that always accompany Freire's practice" (Bizzell 1991, 53)," she also understood triadic semiotics as the only theory of language with the practical force to bring about such political change (see chapter three and

---

[24] Beyond the scope of this dissertation is this idea: the notion of "metacognition" as it is typically characterized in contemporary scholarship seems somehow incommensurate with conscientization, and I think it's precisely because of this "inner"/"outer" sense of things, this "killer dichotomy." Accounting for interpretation as the central act of mind/body suggests that conscientization can account for the dynamic reciprocity between individual and culture, inner and outer, etc.

Appendix A). The next section helps shed light on Bizzell's sense that the field needed to "put Freire 'back into a Marxist context,'" as McComiskey reports here. In the light of triadic semiotics, it appears that in the 80s Bizzell had yet to appreciate the significance of "meaning as mediator" as Berthoff would have her appreciate it. But before discussing Bizzell's relationship with Berthoff's concept of dynamic reciprocity, it's important to point out how the rest of McComiskey's paragraph greatly distorts Berthoff's philosophy.

We have already established, in chapter three, that Berthoff does not belong in a "Marxist" context. Marxism is generally understood as commensurate with a Derridean (and Foucauldian) postmodernism and is incommensurate with Berthovian triadicity.[25] But McComiskey continues, "The source (or, from a more rhetorical perspective, the exigency) of dialectic shifts from Berthoff's chaotic thought in search of form to Goleman's ideological contradictions in need of historical-materialist critique" (59). But "Berthoff's chaotic thought" mischaracterizes. For Berthoff, *"chaos"* is form. It's an inscription of meanings. It is a way of bringing meanings (formed) into consciousness so that they can be "audited," resourced in the process of forming more meanings… Because all meaning is mediated *by* meaning. It is not "chaotic thought," which seems to imply that thoughts themselves are without form, without meaning. Our thoughts may well be quite formed, but unless we write them down, for most of us who are not expert writers, their meaning resources will remain unavailable or less available to us than they could be. McComiskey continues, "The object of dialectic shifts from Berthoff's metacognition and the making of meaning to Goleman's conscious awareness of social oppression and critical exposure of ideological mystifications" (59). Notice the split here: "dialectic" is internal, as is "metacognition" and "conscious awareness." Tacit is the "opposite":

---

[25] Berthoff dedicates virtually the entire volume, *The Mysterious Barricades,* to arguing the difference between deconstruction and triadicity, and its implications.

external communication, “dialogue” in the realm of “the social.” Although McComiskey seems to allow that dialectic can be considered in “multidimensional” ways— he identifies Goleman’s “conscious awareness” as “two-dimensional” because the subject of awareness entails social systems (“the progression of human history”) not language. His misunderstanding of the role of meaning as mediator condemns Berthoff, in his view, to one-dimensionality. It is a misconstruance hampered by the dichotomous thinking that often accompanies the location of communication internally and externally, individually/socially, as dialectic/dialogue.

### 4.2 Bizzell’s Letter: Nature/Culture, Dialectic/Dialogue

To get a deeper, historical understanding of the misconstruance of Berthoff’s work that seems to gather along the lines of a dialectic/dialogue split, I turn now to Patricia Bizzell, whose work McComiskey enrolls above in a way that’s inhospitable to Berthoff’s legacy. Bizzell considered Berthoff a mentor, but she never seems to have apprehended or valued the notion of meaning-as-mediator in Berthoff’s praxis, or Freire’s. This misapprehension, we will see, seems to contribute to Bizzell’s loss of faith in Freire’s pedagogy. We sensed, in McComiskey’s writing, Bizzell losing faith in Berthoff, believing she “downplayed the projects of largescale political change that always accompany Freire’s practice” (McComiskey 59). This loss of faith seems also to have accompanied Bizzell’s rise into “the social view” at the expense of allatonceness. The situation sheds light on the place of Bizzell’s powerful concept “discourse communities” in relationship to Berthovian triadicity; “discourse communities” is nearly a commonplace term in our “disciplinary” lexicon (Adler-Kassner and Wardle). But the allatonceness of triadicity, the last section of this chapter will show, could be powerfully foundational to the disparate theories and concepts, like “discourse communities,” that currently shape the subfields of comp/rhet.

Bizzell never seems to have developed an imagination for the pedagogical implications of "the third," as Berthoff calls it. Examining Bizzell's thought process as she wrestled with Berthoff's ideas can help us understand, I think, ways in which many scholars, inspired by terms of the 80s and 90s, continue to think in "killer dichotomies," and so misconstrue Berthoff's ideas. What gets lost is an apprehension of what I call "the learning imagination." This concept, "the learning imagination," has the potential to unify the field's discussions, I think, but it still waits to be realized by the field.

* * *

In my experience, one of the best resources available for apprehending Bizzell's thinking about triadicity exists in a letter written to Berthoff from then "junior scholar" Bizzell in 1986. Included in the Ann E. Berthoff papers archived at UMass Boston's Joseph Healey Library, the letter seems to be a response to an informal review by Berthoff of Bizzell's essay "Foundationalism and Anti-foundationalism in Composition Studies," published in PRE/TEXT that same year. The letter itself is wonderfully vivid, both in its typed main content and in its handwritten marginalia. Berthoff's reading flourishes the white spaces in response to Bizzell's heartfelt inquiries. I value the letter as an important artifact representing a meeting of influential minds in comp/rhet as they wrestle with deconstruction and Peircean triadicity during the "social turn."

In the letter, Bizzell writes to Berthoff: "You usually talk about imagination in terms of the individual, and you often show the power of imagination operating on either objects from the natural world or abstractions, both classes of things that do not seem to be culture-bound." Berthoff pens emphatically in the marginalia, circling "things": "But their MEANING is!" ("From Pat Bizzell to Ann Berthoff, 18 November 1986"). Bizzell clearly thinks here in

dichotomous terms: "the individual" gestures to the social/individual split we identified in the last chapter as problematic. To think in terms of "social," or "cultural" in this instance, versus "individual" is a misconstruance stemming from a postmodern semiosis. But there is more going on here. In this passage, Bizzell understands "natural world objects" and "abstractions" in dyadic terms. The "natural world objects," by Bizzell's reasoning, can be accessed directly by the senses. No "culture" necessary. "Culture," in this view, seems to be something separate, belonging to a "social" world independent of an individual one. It is constructive, I think, to consider Bizzell's inclusion of "abstraction" in terms of a dialogue/dialectic split. Here "abstraction" is an idea belonging solely to a mind. Dialectical. It is closed off, "sealed from the complexity of the world" as Dobrin and Jensen put it regarding the "nondiscursive mode" in their volume *Abducting Writing Studies*.[26] Bizzell seems to conceive of "Abstraction" as the product of dialectic, a dialectic process free from dialogue, a "thing" somehow free from externality, independent of "cultural meaning."

In the Bizzell letter artifact, the marginalia suggest that for Berthoff, the terms "context" and "cultural" do not prove interchangeable in a useful way. "Meaning," for Berthoff does not happen as a process between minds, or "in" one; "dialogue" does not happen free from "dialectic," and vice versa. The meaning resources developed in both situations inform the other, simultaneously, allatonce, in a process of dynamic reciprocity. Bizzell is right when she identifies that Berthoff locates "imagination" in an individual. "Individual" here can be understood as the particular, unique formationing of perceptions and thoughts (both nondiscursive and discursive) at any given place and time—those particular perceptions actualizing through the mediation of prior perceptions and conceptions, allatonce.

---

[26] Chapter three explicates Dobrin and Jensen's reference to Berthoff in *Abducting Writing Studies* (2017).

Earlier in the letter, Bizzell questions one of the initial "assignments" offered in Berthoff's FTW, the natural objects observation journal (13)[27]. This assignment asks students to spend 10 minutes each day for a week writing their observations of a natural object (that must be "organic," the promise of change, even minute, lending purpose to repeated observation). When Bizzell writes about "classes of things that do not seem to be culture-bound," she seems to construe the "natural object" as the text of importance in the exercise. Actually, I think this is probably a common misunderstanding of Berthoff's "dialectical notebook" as well. For Berthoff, however, what's important in the exercise is not the natural object, *but the writer's mind in action, perceiving the object—the way* the mind perceives form in the thinking-through-writing. It's an event. The language itself, the acts of mind cultivated in the perceiving of the object—the remembering, feeling, seeing, hearing, comparing, classifying, rejecting, etc.—all actions of mind engaging simultaneously in presence with the object (in context). And all of this is mediated and mediating. Some of this action manifests as/through language. Turning students' attention to the nature of language and signification as it works them—through them, by them—that's an attention to the way culture is entailed in all acts of signification.

I know from experience, teaching FTW and the "organic object" journal exercise to freshmen at Georgia State University, that when we turn attention to the writing and ask: What is your writing doing here? What is your mind doing here? Why? These questions naturally lead to discussions of what binds us (cultural norms) and what distinguishes us (our histories and personal experiences and perspectives). The dialectic inside individual minds, inscribed on the page, becomes outward dialogue, simultaneously. And if students just listen, or take notes,

---

[27] This popular activity is the one centering Rutherford and Palmeri's chapter "'The Things They Left Behind': Toward an Object-Oriented History of Composition," explicated in chapter five of this dissertation project.

pulling the language and meaning resources of their fellow students from dialogue into their own "chaos," those meaning resources become the stuff of dialectic, too.

To characterize Berthoff's work as "one-dimensional," as the stuff of "dialectic" and internality, "the personal," *or* the "objective," somehow free from "culture," is a misconstruance that keeps Berthoff's work from manifesting fully in the field of comp/rhet. For embracing "dialectic as audit-of-meaning" as rhetorical method—one that resists cleaving "dialogue" from "dialectic," "inner" from "outer," "style" from "content," "cognition" from "affect," invention" from "delivery," "individual" from "society"—opens the concept of dialectic to interactions between meanings simultaneously "internal" and "external." A triadic semiotics demands that all signs are mediated by meanings that are socially, historically, and culturally informed. So, for Berthoff, the internal act of interpretation is always "culturally bound" and key to all meaning making.

## 4.3 Dialogue/Dialectic in Dynamic Reciprocity: Allatonce for Disciplinarity

In Bruce McComiskey's work, Berthoff is deemed "one dimensional." In his view, Berthoff focuses on "dialectic," a concept McComiskey characterizes as "internal" self-consciousness. This characterization leads to an opposite: "dialogue" as "external," belonging to the realm of "large-scale political change." Indeed Bizzell, in her 1986 letter to Berthoff regarding FTW, seems to understand Berthoff's work as a-political, internal, "dialectical" in a way that is commensurate with McComiskey's characterization. In the example we read above, Bizzell perceives Berthoff's pedagogy as entailing only internal phenomena. She appears to understand that the "outer" phenomena of culture, shared human experience, "dialogue," is not accounted for in Berthoff's praxis. Also, both of these scholars appreciate the relationship between Berthoff and Freire, and yet this appreciation enacts a "killer dichotomy," dialectic/dialogue.

Commensurately, the scholars perceive Freire's mission of "large-scale political change" as a matter "between men" *only*, as a matter of dialogue. These scholars do not seem to account for Freire's theory of language, for his appreciation for the internal, dialectic, and for the dynamic reciprocity between inner and outer that is entailed in his pedagogy.[28]

It's easy to mistake Freire as merely a Marxist activist, to focus on his mission of "large-scale political change." I don't think it's too bold to say that "large-scale political change" is the kind of change we hope for as a discipline, for our students and for ourselves. Freire, however, is not just a Marxist activist; he is a literacy teacher. His work, Berthoff recognized, informs a humanizing pedagogical method for literacy instruction. Yet even Berthoff's fond quoting of Freire masks the notion of dynamic reciprocity. In our interview, she recites Freire: "Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Appendix A). Without understanding what comes before this assertion, taken from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, it's easy to think Freire's concern is communication only; "Dialogue is the encounter between men." Clearly "dialogue" in this sense refers to communication. But to Freire, as with Berthoff, "the word" *is* "the world." Earlier in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire writes, "To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it" (emphasis original, Chapter 3). If "to be human" is "to name the world," and "to name the world" is to "word" it—and the "encounters between men" are "mediated by the world"—then they are also mediated by the word. Both men—humans—and their "encounters" are "mediated by the word, [and] the world." Meaning is mediated by meaning, in both non-discursive and discursive ways. This is triadic semiosis. We

[28] The previous chapter explicated Dobrin and Jensen's enrollment of Berthoff in "materialist/ecological" terms that seem to appreciate her in "social" contexts, as though there is a context that can be said to be "not social." They, too, invite Freire into the conversation, suggesting a link between Peircean "abduction" and Freirean "problematizing." Appropriations of Berthoff, and Freire through Berthoff, seem to happen with some frequency, and with the same results. See chapter three.

can sense the commensurability in the dizziness we feel when reading Freire's language and reasoning.

If we think about Freire's "praxis" with the notion of "dynamic reciprocity," then we can come closer, I think, to appreciating the "pedagogy" part of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Certainly, Berthoff did. Berthoff's appreciation of Freire's theory of language brought her to his dinner table in Boston in the 1980s. This fundamental understanding about the power of language and meaning brought Freire to Berthoff's FTW, too (personal interview, Appendix A)[29]. These two teacher-scholars understood each other, and they appreciated the "constant dialectical relationship" not just between people through dialogue, but *also between concepts*, entangled in aspects of reality (material world, textual world). They apprehended the innate pedagogical value in the nature of language and other meaning-making modes. It's a value Berthoff names "triadic."

Although Freire does not seem to identify, specifically, the nature of language as triadic, his writings describe relationships between humans and their worlds, both textual and pre-textual, in ways commensurate with triadicity. Freire writes, "Neither objectivism nor subjectivism, nor yet psychologism is propounded here, but rather subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship" (Freire, *Pedagogy* 48). This "dialectical relationship" is allatonceness. Freire's pedagogy isn't "about" people—the oppressed and the oppressor *in dialogue*, although it's easy to get stuck on the image of a teacher teaching "with" her students. Rather, the "interdependence" upon which Freire's pedagogy builds is a conceptual one that enrolls humanity and the material world, language and experience, mind and body, individual and

[29] Box 1, Folder 5, of the Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston, is dedicated to "correspondence about Paulo Freire." See Appendix B for more detail.

social, together, allatonce. The "critical intervention in reality" Freire calls for in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* can happen because of a particular feature of human *being*: it is mediated by meanings. Mediation, to be meaningful, entails interpretation. Freire writes, in *Literacy: Reading the World, Reading the Word*, that "reading always involves critical perception, interpretation, and rewriting of what is read" (36). The centrality of literacy as key human action—writing and "rewriting"—gestures to a way, a method, for changing unjust realities. But this potential can only be activated in the interplay *between* dialogue and dialectic, in the conscientization of interpretation as the central act of the human mind/body in the meaning-making process.

So how does the role of allatonceness in the thinking of Freire and Berthoff, and in the dynamic reciprocity between dialogue/dialectic, inform how we might approach disciplinarity? Although they deploy different terms, Lisa Melonçon and Blake Scott, in their 2017 "Writing and Rhetoric Majors, Disciplinarity, and 'Techne'," suggest the necessity of such "allatonceness" to conceptions of disciplinarity for comp/rhet.

Scott and Melonçon lay out potential negatives for articulating a "consensus-driven disciplinarity." These include the danger of "having named for us" what it is we do, the "devaluing of our field-specific knowledge and expertise," and the potential for some lines of inquiry, within a discipline defined along "broader commonalities," losing prominence in light of others ("Questioning Disciplinary Consensus"). The authors note a tension between writing majors developed to address perceived "local needs" of particular institutions, and writing majors developed along "broader commonalities." And they promote the classical rhetorical concept of "techne" as a way of ameliorating that tension. Scott and Melonçon write that "techne" is a…

> "… framing mechanism for our understanding of the majors and the major-field relationship [one that] could enable us to identify shared values and approaches, build resources, articulate our expertise, and otherwise increase our agency while still honoring our field's long and diverse history of knowledge-making and maintaining a flexible and responsive stance" ("Questioning Disciplinary Consensus").

Interestingly, Scott and Melonçon "think with" the concept of "techne" in this passage, and throughout the article. This is commensurate with a Berthovian methodology, and it helps them conceive of a way to adopt a clear form—disciplinarity—flexible enough to accommodate differing contexts. Note the centrality of allatonceness in their rendering of "techne": "…techne merges theory and practice while being something different, too. The theoretical dimension of techne manifests in guiding principles, strategies, or tactics that 'cannot be taught by explicit precepts or rules'…) ("Dimensions and Examples of Techne").

The "principles, strategies, or tactics" suggested by Blake and Melonçon's notion of techne resonate with Berthoff's ideas of "form" and "method." The goal of "method," discussed in the next chapter, results in similar appreciations of "the merging of theory and practice." But there is a crucial difference. The implication of techne, as defined by Blake and Melonçon, applies to "knowledge-making" in specific "areas of knowledge." These areas are reflected in our program majors, and although the majors can change, the "area of knowledge" does not seem to include the students themselves, their own, human, "coming into being" ("Dimensions and Examples of Techne"). The authors' references to Aristotle, and commonplace gestures to "elements of rhetoric," such as "rhetors and audience," suggest a conception of rhetoric detached from dynamic reciprocity. They write, "Drawing on Aristotle, Johnson discusses this quality in seeking to shift the 'focus of epistemology away from the artifact or system' and towards the

'making' in which both rhetors and audience (or users) participate …" (Dimensions and Examples of Techne"). Here epistemology—meaning-making—becomes a thing that happens in separately, in the mind of an individual, a process of "dialectic" free from "dialogue" ("away from the artifact or system").

What happens as we "think with" the concept of "techne" about disciplinarity, I argue, is a shift from the "broader commonality" of our humanity to that of our roles in society and in specific "knowledge areas." We call them "majors" or "professions." The shift demonstrates a de-valuing of the allatonceness of dialogue—the "exchange between men to name the world"—*with* dialectic—the interpretation of new meanings (the word) through the old (the world). When we think with "techne," literacy as a human and civic act, allatonce, gets lost to literacy as a *professional* act. This comes through clearly when the authors write:

> "We could postulate a number of techne recognizable, at least on a basic level, across the curricula of specific majors and similar types of them… In the core course Rhetoric & Civic Engagement, for example, we introduce students to and ask them to engage in civic engagement techne, such as rhetorical listening…" ("Techne and Writing and Rhetoric Majors").

Inviting students into the concept of "rhetorical listening" might be valuable to all of us teaching comp/rhet. But unless students develop a *conscious awareness* of what they are doing while they are doing it, unless they recognize their *human tendency for forming* during the listening act—and the allatonceness of dialogue/dialectic in the process—it is difficult to imagine students will naturally develop a method of listening adaptable "for building new understandings through experiences across multiple contexts." What the authors seem to call for is *method* as a pedagogical objective for a comp/rhet discipline. This is utterly commensurate with Berthoff's

work and fertile ground for disciplinarity. However, the concept of "techne" seems to keep separate the *what* and the *how*. What is method? How do we form it? How do we apply it? If we look to "the majors" for the answers to these questions, we risk missing the rich resource of our humanity, which already makes meaning and forms knowledge, "expertly."

* * *

Before we are school students, we are people. Knowledge does not belong to "majors" or "disciplines" or institutions. We are all perfectly knowledge-able. We have ways of knowing already—perfectly formed "principles, strategies, or tactics." What Berthoff's work teaches us is that, without conscientization, we have no way of re-*cog*nizing the "principles, strategies, and tactics" that comprise our human knowledge-making. What Freire's work teaches us is that, without conscientization, we have no way of justly re-cognizing the "principles, strategies, and tactics" that comprise our majors or disciplines. And this is true across the university. Recognition is necessary for us to be able to harness the power of our language, our "naming the world."

Perhaps I am mistaken in my interpretation of Scott and Melonçon's characterization of "techne" as a forming concept. I find it admirable, but too light on accounting for our humanity to clearly establish ground upon which the entirety of our field might feel enthusiastically at home in the "discipline" of comp/rhet. But I am not surprised in reading their interesting article that "pedagogy" is treated as a separate thing from "techne." In fact, although the authors use "RC" as shorthand for "rhetoric and composition," no space in the article explicitly considers the notion of composing, or the nature of pedagogy and learning as acts of composing. In the next chapter, I argue that the subjugating of pedagogy and learning happens also as a result of a killer dichotomy. This one I call "the theory/practice split," and as with the others, conversations

enfolding Berthoff in its terms tend to marginalize and misconstrue her work in ways that keep her potentially revolutionary point of view from full realization in our *disciplinary* work.

# 5 BERTHOFF'S 'METHOD': MENDING THE THEORY/PRACTICE SPLIT

*A method may require specialized language for its explication, but having a lexicon doesn't insure that we have a method.*

Ann Berthoff, *The Making of Meaning*

In order to make a case that the work of Ann Berthoff needs to occupy a central place in contemporary conversations about the trajectory of the field of comp/rhet, perhaps especially conversations informing notions of disciplinarity, this dissertation project has offered evidence and analysis of ways in which contemporary scholarship misconstrues Berthoff's work.

Chapter two established five concepts that anchor the ideas of Ann Berthoff: triadicity, meaning-making, dynamic reciprocity, allatonceness, and conscientization:

- Triadicity is the notion that all meaning is mediated by the meanings we bring to it.
- Meaning-making is the act of making sense of experience, and writing is one way of making meaning.
- "Dynamic reciprocity" is the give-and-take between "inner" meanings and "outer" meanings.
- Allatonceness is the idea that the meaning-making process does not happen in steps and hierarchies, but as a recursive process that happens multidimensionally, simultaneously, always.

- Conscientization is the pedagogical imperative of triadic semiosis; guiding student attention to the fact *that* they make meaning—turning that fact into a resource—can enable students to comprehend *how* they make meaning, which is precursory to intentional writing performances, no matter the rhetorical situation.

Shaped by these foundational concepts, chapter three discussed the misconstruance of Berthoff's work that I call "the social/individual split." In this chapter, I offered evidence, both contemporary and historical, as to how thinking in these terms distorts Berthoff's point of view. Chapter four identified the dialogue/dialectic split and analyzed the particular misconstruance that happens when discussing Berthoff using these terms. This analysis established that something is at stake when we misconstrue and marginalize Berthoff's ideas; there is a conflict fundamental to our identity as a field in the "non-acceptance without rejection" (Rhodes) of Berthoff's work. This conflict keeps unavailable potentially unifying and constructive literacy praxis.

Now I turn to a third way of understanding Berthoff's misconstruance and marginalization, what I call "the theory/practice split." This phenomenon, I argue, stems from the same dualistic conceptualizing of the language-reality relationship as that which underlies the social/individual split and the dialogue/dialectic split. It's a relationship detailed in chapter three, in the discussion of the Berlin/Berthoff interactions of the 80s and 90s, and it arises in concert with the popularity of "poststructuralist" theories of language, especially Derridean deconstruction. These theories of language, chapters two through four have demonstrated, are at odds with Berthoff's Peircean triadic semiosis in fundamental ways. And the result is that Berthoff's operationalizing of Peircean triadicity for the teaching of writing remains underappreciated, particularly for its potential to bring about substantial changes in classroom

practice and to unify, in practicable ways, many of the disparate research interests that currently shape the field of comp/rhet.

In this chapter, I argue that misconstruing Berthoff as a "theorist"—treating her textbook, FTW, for instance, as a book useful for theory (only)—misconstrues and marginalizes her ideas and keeps us from fully appreciating their pragmatic potential. I will show that scholarship organized explicitly or tacitly along lines that split conceptions of theory *from* practice tend to misconstrue Berthoff's work. The first part of this chapter examines this phenomenon in Joseph Harris' influential historiography, *A Teaching Subject*. Harris mentions Berthoff, but as is typical of contemporary scholarship, she is mentioned only briefly in the introduction. Harris' brief characterization, I will show, typifies a misconstruance of Berthoff's work as mostly "theory," underappreciating the practical dimensions of Berthovian triadicity. I then offer an analysis of Kevin Rutherford and Jason Palmeri's chapter contribution to the volume, *Rhetoric through Everyday Things* (2016). One of the rare examples of contemporary scholarship that *focuses* on Berthoff, their chapter, "'The Things They Left Behind': Toward an Object-Oriented History of Composition," can be read as operating a theory/practice split that manages to promote, centrally, Berthoff's work. The essay does so in such a way that it *appears* to honor allatonceness; however new distortions happen when the authors appropriate Berthoff's practice, her pedagogy, essentially free from discussion of her theory of language. The result, I demonstrate, disempowers Berthoff's work to "revolutionize our practice" (Berthoff, personal interview, Appendix A).

In order to offer a sense of what is lost in this neutralization, the chapter concludes by explicating the concept Berthoff deploys against the "killer dichotomy" of the theory/practice split: "method." For Berthoff, "method" is entailed logically in a triadic theory of language. The

allatonceness of Berthovian triadicity yields particular pedagogical imperatives. These imperatives must be addressed in the teaching of writing (and reading) before we teach the stuff of the disparate research interests that have come to comprise the field, especially since "the social turn." Appreciating Berthovian "method" as an "allatonceness," this chapter argues, can offer us a way of imagining a nexus for the disparate subfields of comp/rhet, and for disparate conversations surrounding "theory" and "practice." At the very least, Berthoff's notion of "method" challenges the field to reconsider a fundamental aspect of its collective identity—a theory of language—especially as a field vying for "disciplinary" status.

## 5.1 Joseph Harris' *A Teaching Subject*: Theoretical Berthoff

In this section, I will demonstrate the misconstruance that happens when Berthoff is enrolled (or not) in characterizations of comp/rhet shaped by what I call "the theory/practice split." In chapter two I reported that my casual inquiries into who had ever taught *Forming/Thinking/Writing: The Composing Imagination* (FTW), Berthoff's textbook, received only a few responses. One of these was from Robert Danberg, professor at Binghamton University, who resourced FTW as "a theoretical book" (Danberg). His appreciation, though anecdotal, resonates with historical appreciations of FTW. We recognize, for instance, James Berlin's lauding of FTW as emblematic of "the New Rhetoric" in "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories" (1982).[30] Berlin's review appreciated FTW's conception of the relationship between language and reality as truly "in process." But his detailed analysis of Berthoff's textbook did not extend to lessons, to "practice."

Other reviews of FTW also highlight the textbook's "philosophical" nature at the expense of its practicality. In 1987, Steven Lynn, for instance, identified "anti-pedagogical statements"

---

[30] See chapter two for a detailed analysis of this essay.

throughout FTW (904). Art Young in a 1979 review of FTW concludes that "[FTW] is a demanding and worthwhile text for students of composition. Its level of sophistication may make it inappropriate for Mina Shaughnessey's basic-writing students…" (64). This, although Berthoff wrote the book for precisely this kind of student: "...I wrote the book for teaching basic writers, students, you know, who had failed the placement exams or whatever… (Appendix A). A vivid example exists as a spirited review in *English Journal,* 1978. In the article, one reviewer lauds the textbook as "richly provocative" but condemns it as, for some, "much too challenging" (Reising and Liner 70). The same article, though from a different reviewer, offers another take: "But a comp class that could read, understand, and assimilate what Berthoff says about writing would be a *heavy* group of people indeed" (emphasis original). The author ultimately asserts that "*Forming/Thinking/Writing* may be one of the important theoretical books on composition" (Reising and Liner 70).

Liner and Reising, Young and Lynn, Berlin, in their appreciations of Berthoff's textbook, characterize it as deeply theoretical, philosophical, "heavy." Even Young's review, which gestures to the practice entailed in FTW, leaves readers feeling as though Berthoff's work is lofty, like that great summit imagined in the introduction of this dissertation project. Inaccessible. Unteachable. But underlying this characterization is a sense that there is a fundamental, worthwhile opposition to be had in considering "composition theory" and "teaching practice" as separate concepts. This is what I call "the theory/practice split." To declare the split unnecessary, and a fallacy, implies that composing and teaching are entailed in one another. From a Berthovian view, this entanglement can be detected by, and accounted for *in*, triadicity, via its centralizing of meaning as mediator, and its constant appreciation of interpretation as the central act of mind in the composing process.

It's important to note that in defining "the theory/practice split" as I do above, "practice" refers explicitly to teaching and learning; implied is a direct relationship between literacy practice and learning practice. This is not to say that all writing yields learning—thus "conscientization" as a core Berthovian concept. Berthoff often speaks of the phenomenon she calls the "pedagogy of exhortation"—whereby teachers simply tell students what to do; "...but exhortation, whether right-wing or left-wing, is not instructive" ("Is Teaching Still Possible? 743-744; see also the Pimentel reference, chapter one). A "pedagogy of exhortation" does not account for the role of interpretation, in learning and in writing. But I intend the "theory" in the split as "writing theory" not "education theory" as it is commonly understood. The revolutionary insight of Peircean triadicity apprehended by Berthoff, and Richards before her, lies in the allatonceness of these concepts: writing and learning *theory*/writing and learning *practice*.

For Berthoff, triadicity as a theory of writing and other meaning-making modes is a theory of writing that is also, simultaneously, a theory of learning, one that yields particular pedagogical imperatives, such as a focus on "method" discussed in the final section of this chapter. I'm not arguing this is a unique understanding; the fact that writing can be learning is a view long celebrated in conversations surrounding WAC, for instance (Knoblauch & Brannon, Maimon). And the field's embrace of "reflection" and "metacognition," as "key terms" and "threshold concepts," suggests a common appreciation for the potential of writing and composition to yield learning (Heilker and Vandenberg, Adler-Kassner and Wardle). Yet when we form our discussions around the terms "theory" and "practice," without carefully articulating the nature of their entanglement, we usually end up characterizing the two as distinct; we impose one (writing theory) onto the other (teaching practice). And the result is that the pedagogical imperative suggested by the entanglement goes unappreciated. I'm arguing here that this is what

often happens to Berthoff's work when considered out of the context of her theory of language. Underappreciating the pedagogical imperatives inherent in Berthovian triadicity distorts our understanding of what Berthoff was trying to do and keeps her work from performing its full potential to "revolutionize our practice."

This phenomenon of underappreciation, particularly as embodied by Berthoff, can be seen in Joseph Harris' *A Teaching Subject*. This volume "traces how the teaching of college writing has been theorized and imagined since 1966" (xv). In his 2012 preface to the book's reprinting, Harris writes: "This is not a book about the emergence of a new field of study, but one that tries to understand why we teach writing in the ways we do" (xi). Here is a volume interested in "theory" (how writing "has been theorized") and "practice" ("why we teach writing in the ways we do"). Harris' monograph has been widely cited. And the terms he chooses to shape the book's historiography—growth, process, voice, error, community—are not controversial, I think. But although "theory" and "practice" do not occupy his titles, they are terms he "thinks with" throughout the volume. This is where the controversy comes in, at least in light of Berthovian triadicity. Harris' conception of the theory/practice relationship seems commensurate with "the theory/practice split" I qualify above. This is rather typical, I find, of the theory/practice split; it happens implicitly and/or inadvertently. And one of the effects of an underlying "theory/practice split" seems to work against an understanding of the potential of Berthoff's work.

Actually, Berthoff is largely missing from Harris' *A Teaching Subject*. He mentions her twice in the first chapter, "Growth," through which he sketches a particular legacy of the 1996 Dartmouth Conference, but that is the extent of his gesture to her. On page three, Harris writes, "... by as early as 1971, Ann Berthoff was to accuse the growth theorists of neglecting the social

uses of language in favor of an almost total (and in the end trivializing) interest in personal expression." Immediately we might notice the workings of the social/individual split on this characterization, and indeed Harris' definition of the concept of "growth" works along these lines: "An old model of teaching centered on the transmission of skills (composition) and knowledge (literature) gave way to a growth model focusing on the experiences of students and how these are shaped by their uses of language" (3). As chapter two of this dissertation demonstrates, Berthoff rightly can be said to have critiqued "growth theorists" for focusing on student experience at the expense of appreciating literature and other texts. But as chapter three also established, Berthoff can equally be said to have critiqued "social turn theorists" as neglecting the fundamentally unifying element in the composing process: meaning as mediator and interpretation as fundamental act of mind. To characterize her critique as focused on the "expressive" mischaracterizes, and it distracts from what Berthoff values, "the third," meaning as mediator. There is no sense in Harris' historiography of Berthoff's larger critique of the Dartmouth conversation. In "The Problem of Problem Solving," Berthoff asserts that "In trying to solve the problem of what 'English' is, the Dartmouth conferees failed to undertake the real job of formulating working concepts which of course requires that the purposes of education be considered: that is a political act, and it was avoided" (238). Berthoff insists on any talk of "theory" entailing discussion of "education." Harris cannot be expected to account for every voice weighing in on the seminar at that time (or since). But Berthoff's unique conception of the potential of English studies (not just the field of comp/rhet) as conceived through triadicity, seems to warrant space in the discussion, especially since her point of view seems to address many of the concerns Harris raises in his book, which we will see soon. At the very least, in this

case Berthoff's unique view can be seen as marginalized, as it is relegated to a quick reference or two.

In the event of Harris' historiography, Berthoff's marginalization can be apprehended in terms of a theory/practice split even more so than a social/individual one, I think. Harris' introduction, for instance, suggests that it might be useful to "read" Dartmouth as producing tensions "in terms of the troubled relations between research and teaching" (6). In these terms—"research" and "teaching"—it is not so difficult to see how Berthoff might not immediately come to mind as an important contributor to the conversation. "Research" here seems akin to Haswell and Anson's calls for more empirical research, which Yancey includes in her essay "Mapping Disciplinarity" (*Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*). And indeed, nowhere in Berthoff's corpus could I find an address of the needs for, or issues of, "empirical data" for promoting English or composition as a legitimate field (or discipline). Berthoff's comprehensive embrace of "meaning" seems to qualify her work as fundamentally different in this way. "Theory" for Berthoff exists first as a matter of semiosis (and the minute you call it "epistemology" new distortions happen, see Rutherford and Palmeri discussion below); semiosis entails not only individual identity *or* social participation—not only reading, literature, or writing, separately—but both, all, simultaneously, allatonce.

So, when Harris characterizes the fundamental conflict of Dartmouth as *between* "scholarship" (research and "theory") and "practice" (teaching), it's difficult to see room for Berthoff, whose conception of teaching is entailed in her theory of language. Harris writes:

> In thus offering a model of teaching that failed to contest traditional notions of literature, criticism, or culture, the growth theorists ended up reinscribing the split between teaching

> and scholarship. They did not so much argue against the scholars' view of English as to say they were not interested in it" (17).

Here is direct evidence of the theory/practice split. "Theory" here is implicit in "the scholars' view," a detached, "spectator's" relationship with text (17). "Practice," teaching, is conceived as a separate, unrelated matter, even for "the growth theorists" who introduce the idea that English can be, not just "something you learn about" but "something you do" (1). I think Harris is right here; Berthoff does not seem to fit into conversations shaped by these terms.

But in a more consequential way, I think, Harris is wrong. In a phone conversation with Dr. Harris, I asked about the omission of Berthoff from his account of Dartmouth. He explained that she didn't seem to fit any of the terms he chose to shape his chapters—growth, voice, process, error, community. I agreed with him then, because Berthoff seldom deploys these terms in her writing. But years now into the writing of this dissertation, I think Harris is mistaken. Although it's beyond the scope of this dissertation project to offer Berthoff's published words in defense of her contributions to conversations surrounding "growth," "process," "voice," "error," and "community," her work contributes uniquely to all of these concepts. Chapter three of this dissertation, for instance, offered details of the ways in which Berthoff's notion of "process" is different from, say Berlin's. And surely Berthoff's conception of "error," through the lens of Richards' "audit of meaning," is a substantial contribution to any discussion of the history of "error" in the field ("Recognition, Representation, and Revision," TSL; see also Appendix A). And yet the theoretical place from which Berthoff's view emerges challenges so fundamentally the dualisms—like social/individual and theory/practice—that tend to shape our historiographies, Berthoff appears as "not fitting" those conversations. Her work is then marginalized to mentions in introductions or sections of chapters, and when discussed in terms built even tacitly upon a

theory of language that does not account for the role of meaning as mediator—a dyadic notion of the sign—Berthoff's work is then distorted. "This is the oldest story about our so-called field," Berthoff tells me, "that people get a new term and put it right back into the same old boxes" (Appendix A). The "same old boxes" emerge from dyadic notions of the sign. And indeed, Berthoff does not fit into them.

From Berthoff's view, Harris' historiography can be understood as working within and perpetuating the situation of "the same old boxes" that constitute the field: a "theory" box and a "practice" box. Perhaps the clearest articulation of the theory/practice split as it fundamentally shapes *A Teaching Subject* happens in the forward: "...my interests in this book have less to do with how knowledge gets made and tested than with how teaching practices are formed and argued for" (xvi). But Berthoff's "teaching practice" is entailed in "how knowledge gets made," so to focus on one over the other leaves no room for Berthoff. This has consequences, and not only to Berthoff's legacy (marginalization). In "Growth: interchapter," Harris writes":

> The world of action and the world of the mind. One response to this split… has been to have students write and talk about their experiences outside school. While I don't object in principle to this, I do worry that such an approach actually reasserts the gap between experience and intellect at the very moment it tries to bridge it. These are different things, different worlds, such teachers seem implicitly to say, but we will try for the time not to keep them so very apart. (37)

Berthoff's triadic semiotics ameliorates Harris' concerns above by denying "the different worlds" in the first place, by embracing the phenomenon of interpretation as a unifying force. In FTW, for instance, Berthoff writes, "When we think, we compose: we put this with that; we line things up; we group and classify and categorize…" (11). She's not talking about something done

"outside of school" or "inside school…" Berthoff's orientation centers on human nature, not on place or purpose or audience. Since the 1970's, Berthoff's work has appreciated the value of composing as a human process entailing all places and purposes. So, when she is marginalized for not "fitting the terms" of our conversations, it's because we refuse the allatonceness of the terms she invites us to "think with." Consequently, we miss a valuable opportunity for ameliorating concerns, like Harris' above, that continue to affect the field.

Considered in light of the theory/practice split, the "different worlds" view expressed in the Harris passage above can be seen as a kind of celebration of pluralism, akin to that voiced in the 1990s polylog, *Professing the New Rhetorics* (see chapter three). And it's a view that continues to challenge notions of disciplinarity (Malenczyk, et. al., Scott and Melonçon, Phelps and Ackerman). Even for Harris, although he longs for keeping the mind and body "not so far apart for a time," the "different worlds" fallacy (the social/individual, dialogue/dialectic, theory/practice split) pervades his thinking. For instance, at the end of *A Teaching Subject*, the "Coda, 2012: From Dartmouth to New London" chapter celebrates the New London Group (NLG) and their article, "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies." We will visit this work specifically later, when discussing Berthoff's notion of "method," but in Harris' celebration of the NLG, discussions of multimodality and digital media become about *what* we teach—in terms of subjects (writing, remixing, popular culture texts) and materials (paper, word-processor, live online spaces). His appreciation for *how* we teach these things does not appear in the chapter; "practice" ... *what* we teach… is hacked from "theory" … *why* we teach a particular way (*how*). Conceiving the digital as one of many "different worlds," Berthoff tells us, cannot help us account for that which "keeps them not so far apart"—meaning, interpretation, human mind/bodies in action.

* * *

So far, I have argued that comp/rhet marginalizes and misconstrues Berthoff's work in a way that can be understood in light of what I call "the theory/practice split." Largely we do not recognize Berthoff's corpus as that of a philosopher forming and promoting a theory of composing, of writing, that cannot be divested from the realm of learning and practice. Berthoff's work demands we imagine a singular thing in doing pedagogy/theory; if we are only doing one part—or, as in the case of Harris' *A Teaching Subject*, favoring one part over the other (theory over practice or practice over theory)—we are always missing something vital about composing, about teaching, about writing. And we are missing what Berthoff might contribute to contemporary conversations in the field of comp/rhet.

Harris, in his focus on teaching and pedagogy, writes, "... I think we need to be wary of talking as though theory can solve problems in teaching, when at best it can only rephrase or clarify them" (55). Berthoff would vehemently disagree, I think. And the rest of this chapter aims to shed light on why. In doing so, however, I turn to rare scholarship that moves Berthoff from the margins into the spotlight: Kevin Rutherford and Jason Palmeri's "'The Things They Left Behind': Toward an Object-Oriented History of Composition," a chapter in Scott Barnett and Casey Boyle's *Rhetoric, through Everyday Things* (2016). Whereas Harris' enrollment of Berthoff reduces her historical contribution to a theoretical one (a critique of "growth" theorists), Rutherford and Palmeri's reduces her contribution to a practical one—an appreciation for the material things involved in her writing pedagogy. Their treatment of Berthoff is a different kind of enactment of the theory/practice split; by appreciating, free from her theory of language, Berthoff's valuing of material things in the writing and teaching process, Rutherford and Palmeri misconstrue her work and perpetuate the impression that Berthoff belongs somehow in a past

world of "problems" needing to be solved. Consequently, instead of inspiring scholars to revisit Berthoff for informing their contemporary praxis, Rutherford and Palmeri seem to appreciate Berthoff as both "before her time" and a relic. This effect continues, I think, Palmeri's appropriation of Berthoff, in his extended argument in *Remixing Composition*, as a means of arguing that the field has always been "multimodal." Ultimately such treatment of Berthoff—although more extensive than the marginalized, mention-in-an-introduction or section-of-a-chapter treatment of Berthoff's work—keeps her work from aiding the field's emerging into a cohesive sense of "self."

## 5.2 Palmeri & Rutherford: Practical Berthoff

In their chapter, Rutherford and Palmeri identify Berthoff's philosophy—as articulated mainly via her textbook, *Forming/Thinking/Writing: The Composing Imagination* (FTW)—as hybrid, both epistemological and ontological ("allatonce," though they don't use the term). In chapter one, I use "epistemontological" to describe this phenomenon, and I think they're right. Their analysis of classroom activities offered in *FTW* make a compelling case for Berthoff's pedagogy as one respecting the meaningfulness and impact of objects in the composing process.

But in hoping to enroll Berthoff in support of a claim that comp/rhet has long sought to "decenter the human perspective," à la object-oriented ontology (OOO), Rutherford and Palmeri significantly misconstrue her work. For instance, on page 98, the authors describe one of Berthoff's first suggested activities for students in FTW, the "organic object" journal. (This is the same activity Bizzell discusses with Berthoff in the archived 1986 letter discussed in chapter four). The authors write:

> Positioning composing as an ontological activity, Berthoff begins her textbook *Forming Thinking Writing* by engaging students in close observation of and dialogue

> with a natural object—a milkweed pod, a crab leg, a walnut husk—over a week's time. Specifically, Berthoff instructs students to "address yourself to the object; ask it questions; let it answer back; write down the dialogue. Record your observations and observe your observations" (*Forming* 13). For Berthoff, the natural object is not mere lifeless matter wholly constructed by the linguistic and ideological frames that students bring to it; rather, the object is an active participant in the students' composing processes. By asking students to attribute agency to the object, Berthoff challenges them to push beyond common linguistic ways of characterizing objects by attempting to understand and empathize with the object from its own point of view. (99)

Yet, in FTW Berthoff is very clear about the purpose of the "organic object" activity, and it has nothing to do with "objects" or ontology as Rutherford and Palmeri characterize them. Berthoff says, "Writing every day about what you're looking at is the best way I know to discover the interdependence of language and thought" (13). The "interdependence of language and thought..." Berthoff's point isn't about "objects." Her point is for students to develop a "*self*-conscious"-ness: "Deliberately observing your observations and interpreting your interpretations sounds like being self-conscious and, in a sense it is: you are the one who is aware of what is going on and you are also the one responsible for the going on; you are the do-er, the agent" (13). These passages from FTW introduce the "organic object" activity. For this activity, the object is not "the agent." Berthoff's point is to turn student attention to their own agency in crafting meaning resources. But before they can do that, students have to gain an awareness of meaning resources as generated by their minds and bodies. It's true that Berthoff offers instruction for students to "address yourself to the object; ask it questions, let it answer back, record the dialogue" (13). But the "object" of study in such activity is not the object of

observation; it's the "observing object," the *mind* in action. This is commensurate with conscientization as the pedagogical imperative of a triadic semiosis.

Part of the misconstruance committed by Rutherford and Palmeri happens when they choose to focus on the "address yourself to the object" sentence. If, however, Berthoff meant to encourage teachers to appreciate the agency of objects in this activity, then she wouldn't have needed to go into detail about the kind of object students should choose to "observe." Berthoff is very specific, however: "This object shouldn't be something you're familiar with… and it shouldn't be a rock or a pebble, since they are not *organic*, and one of the points of this looking/seeing is to learn something about *organization*" (13). The focus of this activity is on the human mind making meaning, organizing. Because that's what life does: it organizes, forms. Notice she characterizes the activity in this sentence as "looking/seeing," not "addressing the object." The focus of the activity is absolutely opposed to any theoretical frame that desires "repositioning humans as [just] one kind of object among many" (Rutherford and Palmeri 97). To argue otherwise is, as Berthoff would say, "casuistry." And it's toxic to Berthoff's legacy, particularly as the field largely has yet to fully appreciate the pedagogical implications of triadicity and meaning as mediator. Nowhere in Rutherford and Palmeri's chapter do they mention Berthoff's theory of language.

The "organic object" activity is one of five activities Rutherford and Palmeri detail in their chapter, making it one of the most extensive treatments of Berthoff's work in contemporary scholarship. Yet the authors attend to her pedagogy free from considering the very human-centric theory of language entailed in that pedagogy. This is the theory/practice divide misconstruing Berthoff's work, offering Berthoff's practice without explicating the theory of language fundamental to that practice. If teachers read Rutherford and Palmeri's description of the

"organic object" activity without apprehending it in context of her theory of language, teachers are likely to actually ask students to "write a dialogue between you and an object." This might produce very inventive, playful material. And certainly, it engages the imagination; however, the entire point is to "observe your observations" not merely "to play." This kind of misconstruance resonates with the misperception of the Montessori "red rods material" I will explicate in the next chapter. Someone not knowledgeable in the theory behind the activity is likely to misconstrue the very purposefully designed lesson as mere "play," invention. Berthoff is likely, as Montessori was, to be taken less seriously, her work identified as "invention" work merely, and not particularly useful for producing polished writing or engaging academic discourse. But this impression is wrong. Attending to Berthoff's practice, her pedagogy, her lessons, without accounting for triadicity, neuters the potential of her operationalizing of triadicity for the writing classroom.

Rutherford and Palmeri assert that they "seek to add complexity to our history" by calling for a recovery of ontology (1). They note that historical accounts of the field (they specify Berlin's) tend to focus on epistemology, yet, they argue, there is much to learn and understand about the field from an ontological focus (the authors employ an object-oriented ontology). But we see that in perpetuating a way of understanding our history—in dyadic terms, appreciative of a "poststructuralist" view—the authors unwittingly distort Berthoff's point of view and her work. Berthoff's pedagogy does not appreciate "ontology" or objects and materials free from a theory of language; and her theory of language cannot be accurately apprehended without considering, deeply, her appreciation for interpretation as the central act of mind in all interactions between humans and their material environments. The authors write that "Berthoff's work is notoriously complex" (99). I would like to suggest that it isn't. Actually, it's pretty simple: meaning mediates

meaning, so interpretation is the central mind/body act in all meaning-making, including writing. This idea is only "notoriously complex" when we try to think about it in dualistic terms—like epistemological/ontological.

Rutherford and Palmeri aim "to add complexity to our history," but what they end up doing, I think, is giving new names to "the same old boxes" that define how the field of comp/rhet works. Perhaps I'm better off arguing here, that I too hope "to add complexity to our history." Much can be gained, I think, by complicating Rutherford and Palmeri's focus on ontology and objects, as treated in historical accounts of the field, with an eye toward teaching and learning. Berthoff does this throughout her scholarship. And she does so relatively simply: every pedagogical move she makes (practice) stems from and informs—in dynamic reciprocity—her apprehension of Peircean triadic semiosis (theory).

* * *

The next and final section of this chapter asks what happens when we consider Berthoff whole. What if we begin to think with the nexus of theory and practice as they entail one and other in triadic semiosis? What happens, I think, is "method," and it resists historiographical accounts and pedagogical analyses that would seek to include Berthoff in toxic either/or conceptions of comp/rhet. Such conceptions get Berthoff wrong. And if they are allowed to inform conversations shaping disciplinarity, we will miss the opportunity in triadicity to "transform… revolutionize our practice" even though Berthoff, one of the founders of the field, felt so strongly that this revolution was possible (Appendix A).

### 5.3 Mending the Theory/Practice Split: Berthoff's "Method"

One of the benefits of embracing Berthoff whole—apprehending the dynamic reciprocity between her theory and her practice—is a reinvigorating of the term "method." "A method is a

way of bringing together what we think we are doing and how we are doing it: *meta* + *hodos* = about the way; the way about the way" (TMM 4). "What we think we are doing" connects practice with philosophy and theory on a "meta" level. We recognize "praxis" as a common concept in our discipline, but "the way *about* the way," suggests something different. Berthoff's message seems to suggest an *overarching* praxis that acknowledges, that "gathers" and sorts, discards and brings into harmony, the project of our whole pedagogical action, crafted and curated.

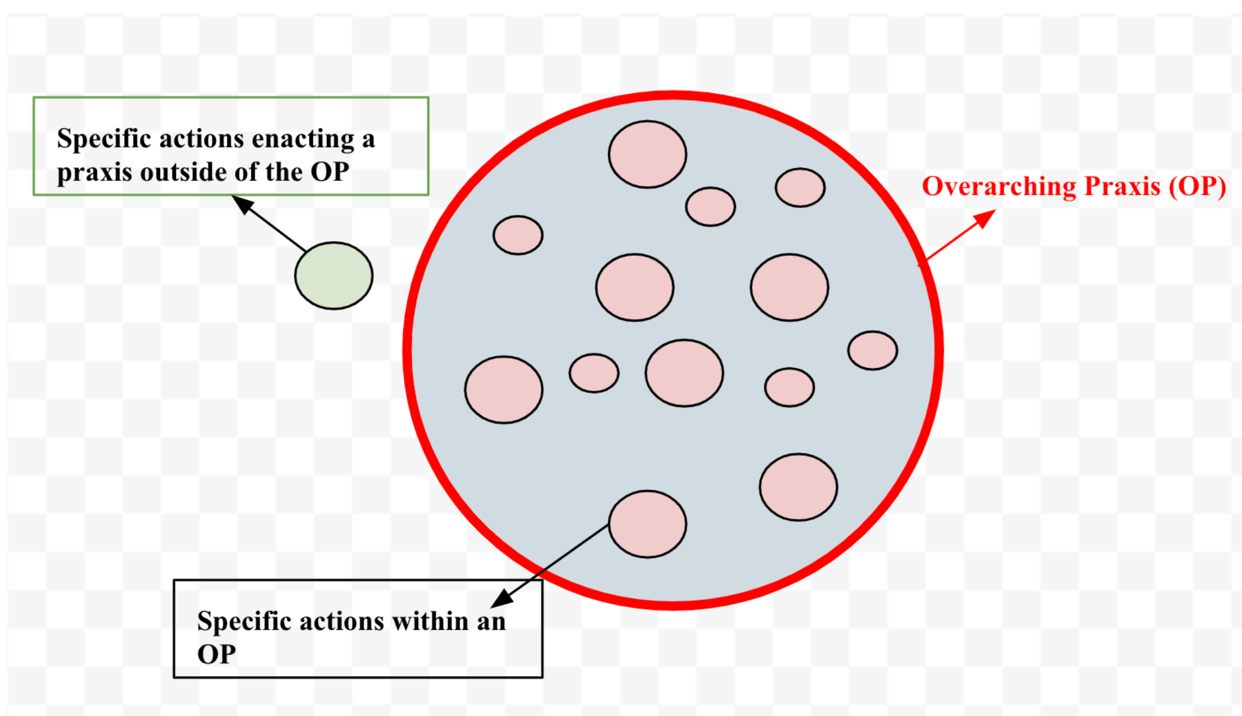


*Figure 5.1: Methods for teaching writing*
Our "methods" for teaching writing, even when informed by sound theory, often remain unbound by any particular pedagogical approach, an overarching praxis.

"Method," like praxis, is a commonplace concept in our field. It is commonplace to delineate "methods" in regard to research, for instance; we outline or detail the actions we will take in the course of gathering information or knowledge. These actions are shaped by a methodology, a theoretically informed reasoning that logically yields the specific actions we

outline in our research descriptions. Strong research design entails dialectical thinking between method and theory (Royster & Kirsch's "assaying," for instance); the *how* we seek answers to specific questions (methods) is in-formed by specific theory (or a hybrid of theories), and the theory we choose is ultimately influenced by the methods we imagine we will need to implement in the first place. As Berthoff puts it, the "how" and the "what" are inseverable, the "ineinandersein" of all we do: "I am heartily tired of that term, dialectic, and have been relying instead on a term of Schleirmarcher's: the word is Ineinandersein: the in-one-anotherness of purposes and procedures" ("What Works? How do we know?" 5). The questions needing answers (our purpose) = "the what;" the way we go about finding or crafting the answers = "the how." Like the two faces of a coin… The distinction between "tails" and "heads" is often quite useful, yet "tails" and "heads" comprise the same "thing," the coin. So, too, the distinction between "the how" and "the what" can be useful. In the process of dialectic, as Berthoff's scholarship shows, "the how" and "the what" comprise the same "thing." The "thing" might be the research project, or, on a grander "overarching" level, the research agenda. The "thing" might be our literacy pedagogy, the "how" "what" and "why" of it, allatonce. Fundamentally, all of our choosing—the what and the how—stems from a state of allatonceness. At the core, and perhaps this is especially true for early researchers, or for early writers or teachers, very little distinction between theory and method exists. Without a clear distinction, made clearer perhaps by knowledge of theory and experience with methods, the dialectic can't really get going. Yet, "the thing" is never separate; "heads" is always a part of "tails". What's needed is an active conceptualizing of the whole, the coin, the writing/reading/teaching/learning act. Berthoff's notion of method conceptualizes the whole "thing" of writing/reading/teaching/learning.

This "whole" conceptualizing seems to be what Harris calls for when he references the work of Mary Louise Pratt in the "Afterword(s)" of *A Teaching Subject*. He writes, "But I also think there are some real problems with the notion of the contact zone—and, more importantly, with views of teaching that valorize conflict but fail to offer ways of bringing differing positions not simply in contact but also in meaningful interchange with each other" (161). Berthoff teaches us that when conceived as naturally heuristic, via triadicity, language can break classrooms out of the "two-sides," or "conflicting sides" thinking that happens in "contact zone" conceptions. It might also free us from the social constructivism against which the theory of "the contact zone" emerges. Berthoff's notion of dynamic reciprocity seems exactly the kind of valuing of "interchange" Harris longs for in the above passage.

As Berthoff tells us, dynamic reciprocity is logically entailed in triadicity, just as the concept of "the tails side" of a coin, for instance, logically entails "the heads side." Also, logically entailed in triadicity is the centering of interpretation as the central act of mind. Interpretation as theory and practice, allatonce, triadicity yields the pedagogical imperative of conscientization, which is to teach language and experience—as embodied in each person, in historical-material context—as a meaning resource. All acts of the mind/body are considered full of meanings, with which we might make new meanings. In order to apprehend all people, perceptions, experiences, and histories as meaning resources, the pedagogical imperative is conscientization. In order to apprehend *how* we are already meaning resources (and so is everyone else), we must apprehend *that* we are already meaning resources (and so is everyone else). Social justice centers the mission of this kind of teaching.

Throughout his "Afterward(s)" chapter, Harris expresses frustration with the "dogmatism" that seems to unfold in the pages of the field's journals as scholars offer competing

theories of how to treat "difference" in the classroom. Harris writes, "We need… to learn not only how to articulate our differences but how to bring them into useful relation with each other" (165). What scholars "choose" from, in Harris' characterization of the field, are "competing theories" of classroom practice. This characterization tacitly considers practice as a thing not entailed in theory. Perhaps this kind of thinking—practice free from "theory of language"—contributes to the frustrating "dogmatism" that still seems to pervade the field's scholarly discussions. Perhaps, too, the split contributes to the fractioning into "disparate research interests" that challenges the field's identity as a discipline (Malenczyk, et. al, Scott and Melonçon, Phelps and Ackerman).

In Harris' characterization, theory meets practice meets theory. Harris offers evidence from scholars reflecting on classroom experiences as they develop their theories about learning through language. Notably, these are not theories *of* language (language's relationship with meaning). Nothing is said about theories of language in this sense. It's as though the time for debating the nature of the relationship between language and reality is gone, or as if it no longer belongs to our scholarship. Or "post (post) structuralism" is a given. The underlying theory of language tacitly deployed throughout Harris' conversation seems to posit a dyadic notion of meaning. This can be seen at the end of the chapter as Harris writes,

> I want instead to argue for a more expansive view of intellectual life than I now think theories of the contact zone have to offer—one that admits to the ways in which we are positioned by gender, race, and class, but that also holds out the hope of a more fluid and open culture in which we can *choose* the positions we want to speak from and for" (emphasis original, 169).

Here, “cultural” meaning is not conceived of as a resource innate in language. We “choose positions”; we do not, in this scenario, choose to create meanings among many possible meaning resources.

Put this way, writing as a way of making meaning might seem like it’s being offered as a neutral, dispassionate, apolitical process. This was Bizzell’s complaint, discussed in chapter four of this dissertation, when, as a junior scholar, she didn’t understand what Berthoff meant by asserting that the “meaning” of a seashell was different from the seashell itself, and utterly culture-bound (and historical, too). Berlin also seems to have misconceived Berthoff’s theory of language as apolitical, particularly in his “polylog” critique (chapter three). Even Rutherford and Palmeri seem to misinterpret Berthoff’s triadicity to such a degree they feel comfortable promoting her work as “post-human.” But Berthoff was careful and consistent in declaring triadicity an approach to writing that is absolutely human and (therefore) “political,” inextricably so (“The Problem with Problem Solving”). Berthoff’s affinity with Paulo Freire attests to this.[31] The politics, the social justice, the praxis entailed in triadicity demands teachers focus on method, an overarching praxis, born of a theory of language. This theory of language is fundamental, foundational.

A Berthovian “method” activates the heuristic nature of language and signification to the benefit of all of the other things we teach when we teach writing: rhetorical situations, discourse communities, genre, modes, grammars, outlines, media, etc. Because Berthoff’s methodology—and her method—stems from an explicit, sound (still unchallenged) triadic theory of language, it is fundamental. It comes first. How does language (and other meaning-making modes) work? To do what? When? Where? Why do we think so? To embrace Berthoff is to return to conversations

[31] For detailed discussion of the mutuality between the praxes of Berthoff and Freire, see chapters four and six.

about the nature of meaning-making, and writing's role in meaning-making, for all people. Because we are constantly learning.

* * *

So far, I have identified how scholarship in the field often appreciates Berthoff's work as "complex" theory only, discounting her practice. And other scholars consider Berthoff's practice free from the context of her theory of language. Bringing the two together in dynamic reciprocity, I have suggested that Berthoff's theory of language—triadicity—entails pedagogical imperatives. One of these pedagogical imperatives calls for the design of an "overarching praxis," development of educational principles grounded in a theory of language and other meaning-making modes, preferably one that accounts for the role of interpretation in the meaning-making process (or at least a reason for *not* accounting for interpretation). This "overarching practice" concept aims to unify and ground the "disparate research interests" and threshold concepts of the field.

I now turn to explicating how Berthoff's concept of "method" as theory/practice, ineinandersein, possesses this unification power. The power, I argue, is in apprehending the heuristic potential in language and other meaning-making modes, and accounting for interpretation as the central act of mind in meaning making.

* * *

Usually, when we teach (practice) our use of "method" ("how we teach") is attached to one specific aspect of composing or one particular aspect of teaching composition ("the what"). What's often missing (though certainly not always) is an overarching pedagogical action plan (an OP) anchored by complemental educational principles and a theory of language—action and theory (pedagogical) working dialectically on a "meta" level. Berthoff's scholarship provides the

call for such a praxis and suggests the principles, rooted in a triadic theory of language and signification. Triadicity, because it treats language itself as heuristic, guides our thinking about the educational principles we might employ in teaching writing. A triadic semiotics situates education and signification allatonce, like two sides of a coin, together, *ineinandersein*.

In the light of triadicity, the field of composition/rhetoric seems uniquely positioned to inform matters of learning more generally, as oral and written, internal and external language, mediates the meanings forming and reforming concepts that constitute education philosophy, theory, and practice. This idea is not new. Berthoff's heroes, Langer and Sapir, detail the philosophical nature of language and "forming" akin to a theory of triadic semiosis (see Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* 125-126). In our own field, there is of course Janet Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning" (1977). This article, however, in its "thinking with" leading linguistic conceptions and theories of learning, renders itself far from "forming" along triadic lines. Emig articulates clearly a dyadic relationship between sign and signified: "...writing is often our representation of the world made visible…" (124). In contrast, Berthoff and others, such as Louise Rosenblatt, whom Emig references in the article, spend entire careers arguing against the "unhelpful" influence on the field of dyadic conceptions of the signs via linguistics.[32] One of their complaints was that such influence shapes conversations away from the nature of signification broadly as heuristic. Emig, for instance, describes writing as "an artificial process" (124). Berthoff agrees that writing can be taught (FTW); writing is *a way* of forming, of coming to recognize, of coming to know (TMM, TLS). What's different about Berthoff's triadic understanding of the heuristic potential of writing lies in writing being "a way"—a method—of forming, not an "artificial type" of representation. Forming itself—meaning-making through

---

[32] See Appendix B for finding aid evidence of interesting correspondence between Berthoff and Rosenblatt in the Berthoff papers.

signifying modes, like the linguistic—is natural. So, the modes themselves are potentially heuristic. We learn *all* things in some modes; much of our learning, especially at the academy, happens in linguistic modes. Thus, the field of composition/rhetoric seems uniquely positioned to inform matters of learning generally. Perhaps we might even say that the "rhetoric" part of comp/rhet gathers and reflects the "relational" aspect of meaning making; not just dialogic (communication between audience, messenger, message, in context), but also dialectic (forms in the mind/body shaping forms into ideas/thoughts/meanings/perceptions), all in dynamic reciprocity, allatonce.

The heuristic nature of language and other meaning-making modes happens in experiencing all subjects. And so, we have "medical rhetoric," "the rhetoric of science and technology," "the rhetoric of effective leadership," "the rhetoric of beer," etc. We study the way rhetoric and language works in specific fields and discourse communities. But we don't teach those fields when we teach writing. (Or do we? Ineinandersein? And does this sometimes get us in trouble?) And we don't generally employ the knowledge of those fields in our own classroom practices in order to teach writing. We might teach field-specific lexicon, or genre conventions common to specific disciplines, but the knowledge of those fields rarely centrally informs how we interact with students, how we design situations for students to encounter and engage concepts, and why we do so in that way: our teaching methods and methodologies.

Writing, as a subject, has a unique relationship with education and pedagogy in that education/pedagogy happens through it (and not the other way around, if by "education/pedagogy" we mean "the branch of knowledge that informs intentional teaching practice" not "the natural, human learning process"). Emig and other comp/rhet scholars appreciate this. In some historiographies, also, this understanding helps to account for the

number of scholars in comp/rhet who come from the field of education, particularly in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Harris reminds us that before the rise of comp/rhet graduate programs, many of the field's scholars came from education (*A Teaching Subject*). Also, I'm thinking here of "field of education" scholars Kress, Cope, and Kalantzis, and other education experts who continue to shape our conversations about writing, sometimes dramatically (i.e. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies"). But Berthoff's work tells us that the connection between the fields of education and writing cannot be adequately described in terms of common interests and missions alone... An overarching pedagogical action plan anchored by complemental semiotic and educational principles—action and theory (writing/pedagogy) working dialectically on a "meta" level—can help the field of comp/rhet fully appreciate the pedagogical power of writing itself. Berthoff's triadicity demands accounting for the pedagogical power of signification as it performs in writing classrooms. Such an accounting suggests triadicity could aid the field in defining itself as a discipline, *the* discipline dedicated (at least in part?) to the study of the heuristic powers of writing and other meaning-making modes.

But what if—as we (if we) move further along in a trajectory towards disciplinarity, growing our graduate programs, promoting the history of the field as distinct from "education departments" and philosophies, essentially post-pedagogy… What if we begin to demote conversations about the "education mission" inherent in English (and writing) as a subject, just as the Dartmouth conference did, in Berthoff's characterization ("The Problem with Problem Solving")? "What is English?," Berthoff argued, is a bad question if divorced from the question, "What is learning?" Scholars in the field have already been celebrated for jettisoning the "education mission" from the focus of comp/rhet as a field (Dobrin, for instance, in *Postcomposition*). Considering Berthoff whole, however, suggests that in such a jettisoning we

deny or ignore a complete conception of the nature of meaning making, and of writing as meaning-making.

A reduced conception of writing doesn't bode well, I think, for declarations of disciplinarity for writing studies or comp/rhet. Appreciating Berthoff whole—the theory/practice, dynamic reciprocity inherent in triadic semiosis—can bring us back to acknowledging this fundamental nature of our subject of study: writing as *a way*—a method—of making meaning that accounts for the ineinandersein of pedagogy and signification.

*   *   *

I argue here that Berthoff's work seems to call for a meta-method, an "overarching praxis" that has the power to unify the disparate conversations in the field of comp/rhet. Triadicity can do so because it accounts for the heuristic nature of language and other meaning-making modes. The theory of language entails pedagogy by accounting for interpretation as the central act of mind in the making of meaning. This means that "the education mission" of comp/rhet has much to contribute to writing theory. Tracing this potential in Berthoff's scholarship, and in the work of her heroes, can help us develop an imagination for the unifying potential in triadicity.

## 5.4 "Post-pedagogy"?

If, as a triadic semiotic posits, language is inherently potentially heuristic, composition/rhetoric comprises an aspect of *education* philosophy, theory, and practice simultaneously in subject and in action via the teaching of writing. Berthoff writes that her hero I.A. Richards was not a great student of the works of C.S. Peirce, rather he understood intuitively the profound implications of Peirce's triadic semiotics for teaching and learning ("Sapir and the Two Tasks of Language"). This understanding of Richards, and the value of his scholarship,

orients Berthoff's review of a biography published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) ("IA Richards").[33] It also centers Berthoff's argument with Jonathan Culler about the value of "the later Richards," published in the TLS as well ("Letters")[34]. In that TLS exchange, Culler insists that Richards' "early work" (referring to his contributions to literary criticism) exceeds in value his "later work," referring to Richards' teaching of basic writing, mainly to non-native English speakers, and his insights into the pedagogical potential of language and writing via triadic semiotics. What Berthoff identifies in Culler's devaluing of Richards' later work is a devaluing of the "education mission" itself, a denial or rejection of the pedagogical implications inherent in Peirce's triadic semiotics. Berthoff recognized and promoted Richards' operationalizing of Peirce's theory of language, and she understood that Richards' appreciation for pedagogy informed intimately his theory of language:

> What actually goes on in the classroom, in actual written responses and the careful study of those responses, provides occasions for learning to identify and evaluate ways and means of making meaning: interpretation in teaching was for IAR a model whereby one could understand interpretation as the central act of mind. Thus, pedagogy had for IAR a profoundly philosophical interest, a point completely lost on Stanley Edgar Hyman in 1948 and, apparently, on others since.
>
> "I.A. Richards and the Philosophy of Rhetoric" (1980)

Here is Ann Berthoff appreciating that teaching and learning can inform writing theory, not just the other way around. In order to apprehend this potential, however, we must

---

[33] "IA Richards," Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 1980-89," *Ann E. Berthoff Papers*, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

[34] "Letters," Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

acknowledge the ineinandersein of practice/theory, the dynamic reciprocity involved in all meaning-making, in all modes. When we teach the rhetoric of beer we are not necessarily doing beer (or drinking it… necessarily), but we are doing language. This line of thinking leads to WAC and WID, yes, and to a "theory of multiliteracies" (New London Group), except, as Palmeri appreciates in *Remixing Composition* and, with Rutherford, in "'Toward an Object-Oriented History…'", Berthoff's work emerges decades before conversations informing these programs. If language is heuristic, then every composition course is potentially a course also about how we learn, not just about how we write, in any kind of media.

In the composition classroom, however, rhetoric need not become "the rhetoric of education" to fulfill the pedagogical imperative inherent in a triadic theory of language. Nor does every writing or composition course need to focus on this pedagogical imperative to provide valuable writing education—designed interaction between students and environments to maximize their awareness of specific skillcepts. What Berthoff's work suggests isn't that concepts such as "discourse communities," or "genre," or "service learning," or "cultural rhetorics," or "accessibility," or "digital media," or "multimodality," or [insert comp/rhet focus here] … It's not that these concepts are bad to think with or to teach, nor are they wrong or somehow not useful and necessary. What Berthoff's work suggests—demands, really—is that first, before we teach these things, first we teach to the pedagogical imperative inherent in language itself; we teach writing as *a way* of learning, a way of knowing, a way of making meaning in the first place.

Serendipitously, when writing becomes a way of education, all educators might benefit from establishing, not just a pedagogical theory, but a theory of language. Or better yet, a pedagogical theory based on a theory of language (because all pedagogy entails language).

Perhaps for some disciplines working out a theory of language isn't necessary for teaching effectively. (Mathematics, say? Though what about algebra and all of its "expressions"? I am highly suspicious of such a view.) But I wonder what such a working-out might do for most teachers, especially in the humanities, and teachers of the lower grades. More so, I wonder what such a working-out might do for composition teachers and program administrators. We would all have to become philosophers for that, which was Berthoff's point, what she was "trying to do in the first place." Give back to us a bit of our humanity as teachers and administrators. Return to us the responsibility for working out, on the most fundamental levels, the *what* and the *how* of literacy education, which is a kind of education that informs all the others, and to do this working-out in collaboration, in dialogue, with our students and colleagues, in the context of our classrooms, which are always in-formed by the lives of our students, our communities and institutions, ourselves. In this light, appreciating the ineinandersein of literacy and pedagogy seems to lend value to our field. Disciplinary value.

Composition scholars have long appreciated pedagogy. And, as Doug Hesse asserts, we should be acknowledged for it. At the very least, *we* might acknowledge, with more conviction, our discipline's value to any other discipline that claims to produce "learn-ed" students. But our scholarship seems simultaneously to celebrate "the teaching mandate" and its rejection (Dobrin, *Postcomposition*). I can imagine Hesse is right in that many writing scholars, especially program directors, have recognized the valuable pedagogical role composition plays for freshmen in particular, as literacy is fundamental practice for learning across curricula on all levels. In his blog entry of 18 April 2000, Hesse offers a talk he gave at CCCC in 2000, "Writing Programs as Squanto, Welcoming the Tall Ships of Teaching Reform." The post celebrates an appreciation for higher-ed teaching expressed by non-compositionists. Simultaneously the blog criticizes the

sense of "new" that seems to go with such appreciations. (Have we moved at all from Booth's 1990 warning against "novomania"?[35]) As if composition scholars had not for decades been focused on teaching and pedagogy… The "newly" expressed appreciation seems, to Hesse, to diminish composition, rendering it a content-less field, the knowledge of teaching amassed and created through the experience and publication of composition experts perpetually erased. In the note of introduction before the post proper, Hesse writes: "Some conditions I was addressing nearly two decades ago have changed, but the failure persists to recognize that certain areas of higher education have long taken teaching very seriously. Chief among them is composition studies." Berthoff's work offers a theoretical basis for this "seriousness." We aren't just imposing a liberal agenda in taking teaching seriously; the very "stuff" of our work—meanings—entails learning and teaching, pedagogy.

I have begun to wonder if there isn't a connection between the continued devaluing, the "persistent failure," of composition as a pedagogical expertise and our "non-acceptance without rejection," as Keith Rhodes puts it in an as-yet unpublished article, of the wisdom of Ann Berthoff. If there is, is it too bold to say that until the field comes to terms with the theoretical orientation of Ann Berthoff—either accept or reject it—composition and pedagogy will continue to be undervalued?

* * *

The authors of *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity* identify one reason the field of comp/rhet as yet to be taken seriously as a discipline to be the "disparate" nature of its research interests (location 7975). We have seen evidence of this variety in the example texts discussed in the first part of this chapter—one historiography of the field, noting an array of theories and

[35] See chapter three for discussion of the 1990 "polylog" stemming from the Chicago 4Cs.

conflicts that have defined the field through the early part of the 21st century (Harris), and an article aiming to focus on "objects" of writing and teaching (Rutherford and Palmeri). Both of these works enroll Berthoff to varying degrees, but both misconstrue her ideas: Harris, by considering her work in terms of a "theoretical" contribution; Rutherford and Palmeri, by considering it a "practical" one. In identifying the misconstruance, I have argued that considering Berthoff whole—practice in context of a theory of language—we can gain resources for unifying the field's conversations. Triadicity, Berthoff tells us, demands we account for the role of interpretation in all meaning-making acts. And this action, interpretation, makes writing, and meaning-making in other modes, potentially a way of learning. A method. For teachers, to teach this natural aspect of signification, we need a "meta-hodos," "a way about the way," an overarching praxis (OP).

I offer here that it isn't enough just to read about triadicity in Berthoff's scholarship and decide to adopt it (or not), and I think Berthoff's sense of failure that came through in our interview gestures to this (Appendix A). Triadicity must be experienced, wrestled with, consciously practiced, to fully comprehend the revolutionary, unifying, pedagogical potential in teaching from this theoretical orientation.

The first step, I think, in trying on a Berthovian methodology is to decide to form a theory of language, then to work out what that will be. The next step is to check our assumptions as to what "method" means, to challenge the often-implicit notion that the term clearly and usefully gathers meaning in our contexts, and that there is no need for detailed consideration of what we mean by "teaching method." Currently, for that kind of thinking, we have teaching "philosophies." We ask for teaching philosophies from our graduate students, for instance, and from our job applicants. In our "research agenda" statements we seek "methods." What happens,

I wonder, when we switch partner terms and think with "research philosophies" and "teaching methods," asking from our scholar-teachers, among other things, a "teaching methods statement"?

As the next chapter suggests, Berthoff, Montessori, and Freire offer answers to this question, and the answers defy collections of course materials or lists of lessons. Throughout her scholarship, Berthoff derides "recipe swapping," a practice whereby teachers exchange assignment descriptions and syllabi:

> Those who try to keep up with theory and practice as they are set forth in our journals might have another criticism: there is a great deal of pendulum-swinging. We go from sentence combining to free writing and back again to the formal outline; from vague notions of 'pre-writing' to vaguer notions of heuristics; from rigid rubrics to the idea of no writing at all. Some might celebrate this uncertainty as evidence of pluralism and a lack of dogmatism in the field, but it could also be characterized as a distracted, purposeless, despairing adhocism.
>
> ("Rhetoric as Hermeneutic" 279)

This scathing critique resonates with Berthoff's participation in the 1990's polylog, "Professing the New Rhetorics," and readily extends to today's scholarship and practices—more so, it seems, given "the multimodal turn" and the influx of digital media into our pedagogical spaces. It is customary, for instance, for monographs to include end-chapters that offer lesson plans (see Palmeri's *Remixing Composition*, for instance, or Shipka's *Toward A Composition Made Whole*). Berthoff's work wonders if we have a method for enfolding concepts developed in monographs into our pedagogies. Or do we construct many methods for many concepts, swapping them rather

randomly, in the spirit of Booth's "novomania"? What stays the same when we teach and why? Is our pedagogical schema working? When? And towards what? What is our purpose?

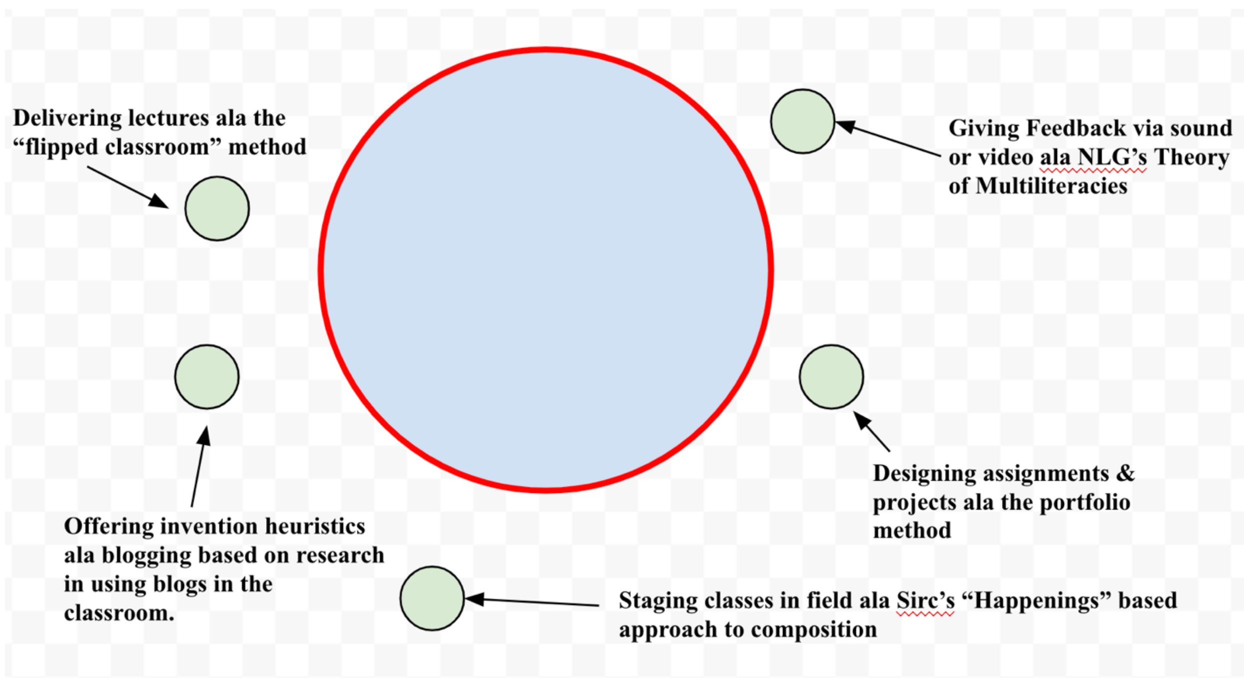


*Figure 5.2: Outside of an overarching praxis*
Examples of pedagogical actions and the various theoretical approaches that might inform them. These exist outside of the overarching praxis. The pedagogical action, divorced from a unifying theory of language and meaning-making, seems "ad hoc".

A quick internet search reveals the kind of "ad hoc" phenomenon common in our discussions of pedagogy. For instance, my search for "'English composition' and 'method'" returns an article offering "a method for marking English composition" (Britton's "Multiple Marking of English Compositions: An Account of an Experiment," 1966), an article comparing handwritten feedback and "comments on cassette tape" (Yarbro and Angevine's "A Comparison of Traditional and Cassette Tape English Composition Grading Methods," 1982), a method for… well, Geoffrey Sirc's "anti-method" in his *English Composition as a Happening* (2002). There is a "method of invention" discussed in Hugh Burns and George Culp's "Stimulating Invention in English Composition Through Computer-Assisted Instruction" (1980). If I get more specific in

my search ("'English Composition' method" "since 2014"), I find "flipped classroom" identified as "a method," and "the blogging method." Blogging identifies both a place of writing, a specific genre, a specific media; "flipped classrooms" identifies a way of "placing" instruction. I'm not arguing that these are not "methods" or completely legitimate teaching methods. Certainly, they are. But there is something piecemeal, ad hoc, about the way we promote and work with them; Berthoff's notion of "method" seeks a more comprehensive approach to writing pedagogy. *Method*, in lieu of "theory," as a kind of framework.

Not that we don't have very much, excellent scholarship that offers "frameworks" for teaching writing. One of the works my search terms summoned, *The Powers of Literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing* (Cope & Kalantzis, eds.), a collection of essays written by leading "linguists and teachers" (Kress, Cope & Kalantzis, J.R. Martin, and others), is an example of a pedagogical framework deployed around the concept of genre. The book also exemplifies our community's fondness for "collections." The volume discusses "instructional approaches" to the teaching of genre while valuing social equity and justice in the writing classroom. Seemingly unified in their ideologies, and in their appreciation for the meanings gathered by the term "genre," the volume suggests specific pedagogical actions. These actions, however, come in the form of a veritable buffet. I'm not intending to criticize the volume, for its purpose is to "document an educational experiment," not to provide *a* model for teaching writing per se (1). The book offers interesting and useful ideas in the teaching of writing. In fact, certain passages, especially the end of the introduction (pages 18-21), are so Berthovian I have to remind myself that I'm not reading her work. What the book does not offer, though, in spite of a focus on genre and appreciation for pedagogy, is an overarching praxis.

A note here about Cope and Kalantzis, the New London Group (NLG), and *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies*: The "approach" to teaching literacy outlined in this powerful and important work differs from my conception of an overall praxis based on method. For one, the NLG calls for a "metalanguage of meaning-making": "Teachers and students… need a metalanguage—a language for talking about language, images, texts, and meaning-making interaction" ("A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" 77). According to the authors, students and teachers "need" this suggested metalanguage in order to comprehend the nature of meaning-making as multimodal, socially situated, and resource-bound/flexible. The NLG comes so close to working in the realm of triadic semiotics.[36] But they never get down to a theory of language, organizing praxis around "genre" and "discourses" instead, a move that perhaps reflects the disciplines of the scholars comprising the NLG. They are esteemed literacy scholars all, but I wonder who among them would consider themselves "compositionists"? Maybe they do and I'm just not aware. But the concept of "metalanguage," I suggest, is not the same as "method." "A metalanguage, according to the NLG, needs to be "capable of supporting sophisticated critical analysis of language and other semiotic systems." This seems to cleave "metalanguage" from the nature of language and semiotic systems. The metalanguage is "imposed," despite "be[ing] quite flexible and open ended," "a tool kit for working on semiotic activities, not a formalism to be applied to them" (77). And yet, from a Berthovian point of view, "form-alism" is what it's all about. Teachers don't need "tool kits;" teachers need methods, methods for designing (forming) experiences that encourage the *emergence of students' own metalanguage* in regard to the semiotic activity they do all the time. Forming is natural. According to Berthoff in TMM, Freire, Ashton-Warner, and Montessori—three of Berthoff's "heroes"—teach us that until students form their own

---

[36] A recent personal correspondence with Mary Kalantzis notes that they "...cite C.S. Peirce in [their] new book… "Making Sense" with Cambridge University Press…" (26 July 2018).

metalanguage during an activity, it cannot be said to be "theirs." If we are dutifully requiring "reflection" from our students, aren't we seeking, *in* their reflections, the forming of this "metalanguage"? If not, what *are* we seeking and why?

What I'm looking for from teachers, and what Berthoff's work suggests, is an attention to action-based guiding philosophy, the "crafted" in a well-crafted menu. What dishes will be offered? Where? When? How? In what order? The overarching "why" of all of these. In a sense, like Berthoff herself, an overarching praxis eschews pluralism in favor of a system of guiding principles (call it formalism) that works very much like the rhetorical situation of a menu; these principles become the basis for making all pedagogical choices, for guiding pedagogical action; an OP excises the ad hoc.

* * *

Is it time to explore in earnest the consequences of a triadic semiotics in the field of composition/rhetoric? Especially now that we have more and more and more choices to consider in our pedagogical praxis? But what can I do differently to promote triadicity in English studies, what can I do better than the great and celebrated thinkers I.A. Richards and Ann E. Berthoff? Admittedly, I'm having trouble imagining it. Of course, our *times* are different, our classrooms inundated with digitech and its consequences...

The onslaught of digital media shaping our contemporary classrooms has added to the array of "things to swap" when it comes to "recipe swapping." Now we have platforms (Twitter, personal websites, content management systems), programs (word processed documents, slide presentations, blogs). We have "digitech," digital media (video production, sound production, maps), and by contrast all the "physitech," "makerspace" materials currently enjoying a praxical movement. And we still enjoy the pen and paper materials we've employed for centuries... All of

this material established as legitimately (well, mostly) within the purview of composition, though some would argue our pedagogical imperative should be limited to the role of the linguistic mode in working with these media. Joseph Harris ends *A Teaching Subject* with “Coda, 2012” and a hopefulness: “We communicate,” he writes, “through more channels and modes than ever before… Surely intellectual work is augmented by this rich set of choices” (174). We might add to this array of “choices” the choices writing teachers make in shaping their courses—feminist, new materialist, cultural rhetorical, new media, community-based, etc.; there are many theoretical approaches within the purview of comp/rhet to draw upon for crafting a course that purports to teach “writing.” So much choice. What anchors us as a field, our teaching, our theory?

Berthoff’s conception of “method” can help us re-conceive our relationship to teaching within contexts of so much choice, so much “stuff” —to teach, to teach with, to teach through. A Berthovian methodology offers us a *meta hodos*. “A way about the way.” Okay, so perhaps this is mere abstracting—adding a layer of generality and nothing much more. We might interpret Berthoff as advocating for just a different level of “recipe swapping.” For Berthoff’s conception of “method” enfolds, like Thor Heyerdahl's reed boats, the concepts of both structure and flexibility. Referring to “a method of composing,” Berthoff writes:

> A method… isn’t a set of rules, but it does provide guidelines and procedures. A method helps you find your way around, but it is not like a map since a map for one territory is not much use in another—and there’s no such thing as a general map. But if you have a method, you can make your own map according to the terrain and the nature of transport, depending on where you want to go and how far you want to travel.” (FTW 8)

"Method" is "way," action that delimits; "structure." But the principles that do the work of delimiting can change, and sometimes must change, in light of specific rhetorical situations.

When we turn the discussion from "composing method" to "teaching method," something happens. Delimited by principles emerging from observation (perhaps ineinandersein with ideology), "method" becomes a way of teaching (writing) that responds to particular students in specific circumstances and environments. "Method" can be "general," "meta," scalable, but it is inextricable from signification; implicated in "method" itself, especially for literacy pedagogues, is a theory of signs, usually language ("the how"), though often we have yet to work it out, or our theory remains vague, implicit. Like all meaningful concepts, "method" requires interpretation.

Oh, and it's no good simply to take on someone else's method. Just as in language, until you make a method your own—shifting your way of teaching in response to specific students and circumstances—it's not really a living, fully useful thing. I think you can feel this, just as surely as when you read a student essay and feel (or not) the deep realness of the meanings expressed in it (or not). Call it sincerity, or truth, that ineffable quality we seek in our students' writing has a sister in our own teaching methods. How many of us are teaching "Praxisfish," the "Engfish" of writing pedagogy?

* * *

How many of us teach writing as a way of learning? How many of us teach *reading* as a way of learning? Isn't writing deployed to that mission our responsibility to teach, as writing teachers? Who else would do it? Of course, writing is also, simultaneously, a way of creating and communicating, a way of gaining currency in certain social realms (or losing it), a way of changing worlds. Scholars in our field now consistently appreciate writing in these ways. And since the multimodal turn, scholars have enfolded non-traditional modes (aural, gestural, visual,

spatial) into matters of literacy and of writing (Palmieri, Shipka, Hocks, Micciche, Fleckenstein). Since the digital turn, scholars have enfolded media matters prominently into matters of literacy (Selfe and Hawisher, Wysocki and Arola, Alexander and Rhodes, Hart-Davidson, Eyman). And so, I push back a bit against Hesse's articulation of composition's long-standing appreciation for teaching. If Berthoff's perception of the field's adhocism also persists, while it doesn't counter the notion that our field has long appreciated and theorized pedagogy, it suggests that perhaps still we could do better. As a bonus, education might do better by considering what the compositionists know, if more of us can come around to knowing it: the nature of language is triadic. Then we might turn our attention to harnessing the heuristic nature of language and signification through writing. Like teaching itself, this attention—the "Triadic turn," Berthoff would call it—affects all other disciplines. What happens to our notion of multimodality when we embrace a triadic semiotics? What happens to "multiliteracies"? What happens to consideration of the digital in our classrooms and writing programs when we embrace a triadic semiotics? What happens to our notions of civic and cultural interaction and responsibility in our classrooms when we embrace a triadic semiotics? Guaranteed: the answers to these questions will never be, "Nothing."

# 6 TEACHING TO THE LEARNING IMAGINATION: CLASSROOM MODELS

"...You're the only person who's ever commented on the fact that I cite Montessori...The notion that Freire, Montessori, Richards, Sapir...all of my heroes are all, I won't say on the same page (chuckles), but they really do take into account interpretation in a particular way.…"

~Ann Berthoff, personal interview (Appendix A)

This dissertation project has argued that scholarship in the field of composition and rhetoric often misunderstands and misrepresents the work of Ann Berthoff. The

misrepresentation happens largely by way of discussing her ideas without accounting for her theory of language, triadicity. Berthovian triadicity is fundamentally at odds with predominant "poststructuralist" theories of language, which, as chapters three, four, and five demonstrate, produce conceptions of opposites as "killer dichotomies." We can recognize the language that enacts the misconstruance of Berthoff's work in terms such as these: social/individual, dialogue/dialectic, and pedagogy/theory.

These chapters have also suggested that one of the results of trying to enroll Berthoff into discussions shaped by postmodern theories of language is the marginalization of Berthoff's work. Her point of view doesn't seem to "fit" into discussions shaped by postmodernism and the terms it deploys, and so her work gets relegated to brief mentions in introductions or tucked into sections of chapters in collections. Sometimes our historiographies do not even account for her.

And so… what? What happens if Berthoff's work disappears into the annals of comp/rhet? And what if, in those annals, much of the scholarship that references Berthoff's work misrepresents it? What happens when we get Berthoff wrong? What's the consequence? Who loses? What do they lose? And why does it matter?

Berthoff's pedagogy stems from her theory of language. Her praxis is unquiet, revolutionary, a kind of critical pedagogy. But it isn't enough, I think, to read these claims and the reasoning behind them. Clearly it isn't. Berthoff wrote prolifically—in the field's major journals and in celebrated collections and monographs—and still so few have ever read or taught *Forming, Thinking, Writing* (FTW). Perhaps to recognize the value of the foundational concepts of Berthoff's theory of language, Peircean triadic semiosis, we must experience it in action. Berthoff and I have wondered if the monograph is capable of offering such an experience. In

whatever medium or context, the experience would have to operationalize the following concepts:

- Triadicity, the notion that all meaning is mediated by the meanings we bring to it.
- Meaning-making, the act of making sense of experience, and writing is one way of making meaning.
- "Dynamic reciprocity," the give-and-take between "inner" meanings and "outer" meanings.
- Allatonceness, the idea that the meaning-making process does not happen in steps and hierarchies, but as a recursive process that happens multidimensionally, simultaneously, always.
- Conscientization, the pedagogical imperative of triadic semiosis; guiding student attention to the fact *that* they make meaning—turning that fact into a resource—can enable students to comprehend *how* they make meaning, which is precursory to intentional writing performances, no matter the rhetorical situation.

Perhaps the monograph, and this dissertation, is inadequate to inspire conscientization in my readers. I'm here to make an argument, not "to educate" per se. These are not the same, and the following examples of classroom practices, I hope, illustrate what I mean by that. This chapter articulates examples of "lessons" that illustrate the pedagogical implications of triadic semiosis. The examples stem from two sources: Berthoff's *Forming/Thinking/Writing* and *The Making of Meaning*. In TMM, Berthoff includes excerpts from teacher-scholars Maria Montessori and Paulo Freire. I will explicate these examples in light of Berthovian triadicity, and then thread Montessori's work, Freire's work, and Berthoff's work as instantiated in her textbook, FTW. These three lessons exemplify how the centrality of interpretation, and the

notion that all meaning is mediated by meaning, can come to comprise method. If we read these examples with "disciplinarity" in mind, we might also get a sense of the unifying potential of triadicity, especially in terms of pedagogy, theory, materialisms, multimodality, and critical pedagogy.

* * *

In *The Making of Meaning*, Part III, section 4, Ann Berthoff groups together passages from Maria Montessori's *The Montessori Method* (1912), Sylvia Ashton-Warner's *Teacher* (1963), and Paulo Freire's *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974). This matters. Not just the inclusion of these three pedagogues in the case for teaching writing as a way of making meaning, but their bundling. A practical view might understand this bundling as mere extension of the earlier theoretical argument made at the beginning of Part II, in "Tolstoy, Vygotsky, and the Making of Meaning," the 1979 *CCC* article republished in TMM (85-93)—a "here are the recipes" sampling of methods employed by Berthoff's hero teachers. But we know Berthoff abhors "recipe swapping" ("Rhetoric as Hermeneutic" 279); there must be something more going on in Berthoff's constant tapping of Montessori and Freire, and other alternative educators.

In the following pages we will find that what Berthoff sees as common between Montessori and Freire, and commensurate with her own work, lies in how these three pedagogues take into account "interpretation as the central act of mind" in designing learning experiences for literacy students.

It's important to keep in mind, however, that "literacy"—reading and writing—are not the only ways to engage the allatonceness of making meaning. Humans naturally perceive and sort and conceive, allatonce, with little to no language at all, especially at first. Early in FTW, Berthoff invites students to read *The Montessori Method*: "Maria Montessori, one of the great

women of our century, realized that what children learn they teach themselves, and that they can be totally involved—body, mind, soul—in that endeavor… you might be interested in reading how she designed the equipment for her school" (30). Berthoff's appreciation for the potential *wholeness* of the learning experience as exemplified in *The Montessori Method* is consonant with the wholeness of Peircean triadicity. The body, perceiving; the mind/body, conceiving. But conceiving happens both consciously and subconsciously, if by conceiving we are referring to a process of interpretation, all those acts of mind—perceiving comparing contrasting analogizing feeling remembering wishing projecting amplifying reducing visualizing, etc.—working the known and the new in dialectic, allatonce, into the new known.

The pedagogical potential in allatonceness and triadicity can be apprehended perhaps most clearly by examining a Montessori lesson, because Montessori worked with people whose "knowledge" was in the process of forming primarily via "nondiscursive modes," as Dobrin and Jensen might put it. As we saw in chapter three, knowledge-forming in nondiscursive modes is not different from the knowledge-forming in discursive modes (TSL, "Abstraction as a Speculative Instrument"). Both "modes" entail meaning-mediated abstraction and forming. And the pedagogies of Berthoff, Montessori, and Freire enroll both modes as they center the act of interpretation in their pedagogical designs.

To apprehend how a Montessori material works in a pedagogical setting is to apprehend the potential of Berthovian triadicity. It is also to apprehend the damage misconstruance does to Berthoff's legacy and the potential for her triadic semiotics to contribute constructively to a move towards disciplinarity. How Montessori conceives of the role of the teacher, of the material, and of the role of interpretation in the following lesson exemplifies *a way* of teaching to "the third."

## 6.1 Montessori

In *From Childhood to Adolescence*, a collection of translated speeches originally published in Italian in 1949, Montessori writes that “Everything is interrelated and, beginning with a detail, one arrives at the whole by correlation” (26). Note the consonance between Montessori’s valuing of relationships here and Berthoff’s conception of “abstraction” discussed in chapter three. This same resonance with Berthoff is detectable in the following Montessori passage:

> In its entirety, the world always repeats more or less the same elements. If we study, for example, the life of plants or insects in nature, we more or less get the idea of the life of all the plants or insects in the world. There is no one person who knows all the plants; it is enough to see one pine to be able to imagine how all the other pines live. When we have become familiarized with the characteristics of the life of the insects we see in the fields, we are able to form an idea of the life of all other insects… The world is acquired psychologically by means of the imagination. Reality is studied in detail, then the whole is imagined. The detail is able to grow in the imagination, and so total knowledge is attained. The act of studying things is, in a way, meditation on detail. This is to say that the qualities of a fragment of nature are deeply impressed upon an individual. (*The Montessori Method* 18)

More clearly than any passage from Montessori’s groundbreaking book, *The Montessori Method* (1912), I think the above paragraph lays out the understanding of mediation and interpretation at the heart of her pedagogy. We learn *through* what we know, our minds taking in the new and comparing, contrasting, remembering, projecting, etc., dialectically, the new with the established. This is the imagination at work, *the learning imagination*. It is not “play” in the sense that play

usually connotes triviality, carelessness, fun. It is process—natural, non-conscious, *non-individualized* process, made individualized by the unique formationing of existing knowledge embodied in a person. Considering "abstraction" and "knowledge" like this resists dyadic notions of the sign. Let me explain…

The excerpt from *The Montessori Method* Berthoff chooses to include in *The Making of Meaning* describes the kind of imagination through mediation and interpretation, the learning imagination, centering the Montessori philosophy. In the excerpted passage, Montessori describes the struggles of 1907 Nobel Prize winner Charles Leveran, and the scientific medical community, working to understand the nature of malarial parasites (148). Her analogy might seem convenient: Montessori charges that the scientific community engaging in conversation about how malaria protozoa behave, how malaria might be cured, needed only to "limit" itself to "simple reasoning" based on existing knowledge of general categories of living things. And yet, the point Montessori makes in the passage squares on a relationship most people fail to appreciate: *imagination is* a matter *of logical thought*. "Peirce's logic is a logic of relatives, which is precisely what Thirdness is intended to represent" (Berthoff, TMB 67). Thirdness here is "meaning as mediator"—the notion that there is no direct access to "reality." Knowledge is an act of interpretation, of choosing intentionally one of several possible meanings. The learning imagination is meaning-making. It is the process of dialectical sussing-out, of generalizing and particularizing; and it happens naturally, physically, logically, in sociocultural context always. The resulting feeling of this process, and by feeling I mean "sense," might be identified as Knowledge. It's why we all have it. Montessori's pedagogy operationalizes this kind of whole-body imagination. And so do we, when we argue, as Palmeri does, that as a field "we have always been multimodal" (*Remixing*).

As an example of multimodal "meaning as mediator" in action, Berthoff offers Montessori's anecdote of a child's sewing hand (TMM 151). In working with an 11-year-old child who could not sew, Montessori noticed that if she backed away from the task itself, she could consider the kind of motions sewing required of the body. So, she invited the child to participate in an activity that involved just those specific motions. The "didactic material" as she called it, "Froebel's mat," isolated the child's attention to the "darning" motion. The presentation of the activity was also purposed to attune the child's attention in this way. When the child returned to sewing, she was able to do it:

> I saw that the necessary movements of the hand in sewing *had been prepared without having the child sew,* and that we should really find the way to *teach* the child *how*, before *making him execute* a task. I saw especially that preparatory movements could be carried on, and reduced to a mechanism, by means of repeated exercises not in the work itself but in that which prepares for it. Pupils could then come to the real work, able to perform it without ever having directly set their hands to it before. (emphasis original, TMM 151)

Thirdness is at work in this scenario. The child cannot complete the task of sewing because she doesn't have the mediating "knowledge" of the motions required of the task. Even when she sees the task demonstrated to her, her mind is not interpreting what she sees in a way that translates into her body's actions. Her mind/body is not yet creating relationships between what she sees, her own body's actions and potential actions with the materials at her disposal, or with the concept and purpose of sewing. For the child "to have the knowledge" in this scenario means for her mind/body to work out relationships with what she already knows. By reducing the task to a weaving motion, establishing through repetition the knowledge of that movement in

the child's mind/body, when the child returns to the sewing, she is able to recognize the activity, to "see it" in relationship to what she already knows. She is able to interpret the action, the movement, and thus perform the "new." This is "the learning imagination" engaging in meaning-making; by seeing sewing "in terms of" the weaving motion she now "knows," the child is able to imagine new meaning, new motions, and emerge into new knowledge.

To analyze this situation—the teacher, the child, and sewing in the classroom environment—in terms of dialectic or dialogue, "inner" or "outer," social/individual, does not work, not if we want to apprehend "the learning imagination." Clearly both inner and outer happenings come together, allatonce, in shaping the acts of the child in this Montessorian scenario. And this even though, during a Montessori early childhood lesson, speaking and dialogue is kept intentionally at a bare minimum (*The Montessori Method*). Montessori, just as Berthoff does, fully appreciates the meaning-power of "nondiscursive modes" and the role of meaning as mediator in the pedagogical process (*The Montessori Method*).

Now I would like to give an example of the role of meaning as mediator in the pedagogical process in a Montessori lesson. By detailing the lesson, I hope to highlight the allatonce nature of "dialogue/dialectic," the "dynamic reciprocity" centralizing interpretation as the hinge upon which learning happens. The particular lesson I will demonstrate is "the red rods primary material." In Appendix A of this dissertation, Berthoff tells a story involving the red rods that clearly conveys the radical misconstruance of "the learning imagination" that happens when a pedagogical method commensurate with triadicity, like Montessori's, gets filtered through "killer dichotomies" like social/individual or dialogue/dialectic.

*  *  *

The learning imagination is often dismissed by educators and others not attuned to it. In our interview (Appendix A), Berthoff recounts a critique of the Montessori method posted in the *Times Literary Supplement*:

> And one of the long ones [TLS threads] was about Montessori and I guess either the article or the first response had been how terrible it is that Montessori is so restrictive and … not fascist but… discipline turned into orders, because they had cuisenaire rods. You know what they are? [Montessori's "Red Rods" Primary material.] This little child took the rods and was making a kind of log cabin out of them and the teacher very nicely came and took them away and put them back. She redirected him to lay them out as they were intended. Again, translating from shape/size to concept of order of size–-to go from shape to size, I guess that's the point. And for this person that was so horrified at that, for her or him, the main point… let them be "creative" and if they were using the rods to do their little thing, that was the thing to nourish. And it was terrible for this intrusive pedagogue to come and take away…

What observers had misinterpreted as "restrictive" was, simply, "form." Perhaps because the observer took into account only the dialogue involved in the interaction—the teacher instructing the child to return the materials to the shelf and then directing the child to employ the material in a particular way—the interaction was deemed "fascist." But what Berthoff understands is that the point is to have the child develop forms with which they will be able to think in order to understand future encounters. To teach a way of forming, one must use form. (Here are those pesky circularities hallmark of triadicity.)

As a Montessorian who has taught the red rods material, let me describe how the lesson works. To do so will provide a sense of how the pedagogy appreciates the allatonceness of

dialectic/dialogue in the learning process, and perhaps how materials can be used pedagogically commensurate with triadic semiotics even in our own pedagogies. Note how this suggests a unifying potential in triadicity; in this example triadicity implicates pedagogy and new materialisms, multimodality, embodiment, affect, design, just to name a few of the "subfields" of interest within comp/rhet.

When you walk into a Montessori classroom, you see all sorts of attractive looking things in trays, boxes, and other designed situations, arranged along shelving around the perimeter of the room. In a Primary classroom (ages 3-6), one of these materials is a set of rods, one solid color, red. It looks like this:

*Figure 4.1: The Montessori "red rods" material*

The purpose of the rods is to offer an experience of the quality and relationality of length in isolation. Included as part of that relationality (key to it?) is the language involved in gathering the concept into meaning. Perhaps it is clear already that if a child takes these rods and builds a "log cabin" with them, their minds are not likely to draw from the experience any particular notion of relationality. (If they do, it is less by chance or particular "romantic" genius than likely prior exposure to the notion of "lengths" communicated in the building of a log cabin.) The red

rods lesson, however, is designed and implemented to the specific purpose of directing the whole child, "body, mind, soul," to the quality of length, *and simultaneously to the language associated with that quality*. This is dialectic/dialogue imagined as an allatonceness.

The "guide," the teacher, invites the child to the new lesson. The child finds a comfortable space in the room, perhaps on the floor, and rolls out a small rug. The teacher then leads the child to the red rods material. Silently, grasping each end with the first and third fingers together opposed by the thumb, the teacher demonstrates picking up the smallest of the rods. She carries the rod and places it carefully, randomly on the mat. She does this with all of the rods. Then, the teacher locates the smallest of the rods and moves it to the bottom left corner of the mat. She finds the next longest rod and places it flush against the first, carefully matching the left side "margin" (notice the anticipation here for the reading orientation of left to right… this is intentional). She continues silently until she has arranged a "stair." The teacher then touches the ends of the first rod and says, "Shortest." She continues attentively touching the ends of the rods and moving them into place, increasing in length, until she gets to the longest rod at the top. She pauses there and says, "Longest." Slowly, deliberately, exaggeratedly, the teacher touches the ends of the rods, descending in size, until she arrives at the bottom. "Shortest," she repeats. It's natural at that point to sit basking in the glory of a well-ordered stair. The *sense* of order (a specific *kind* of order) resonates. The teacher asks if the child would like a turn, and they may or may not be ready to say yes, accepting or declining and moving on as to their interest. Either way, the teacher demonstrates the same, careful grasping of the rods as she returns them to their original "stair" configuration on the shelf.

As explained in "The Didactic Materials" section of *The Montessori Method*, there are other basic principles guiding the lessons involving the sensorial materials of Montessori's early

childhood education. Indeed, there are other ways of "playing with" the rods, ways that "teach" the quality of size in terms of length, a "sense" of knowledge of these concepts. What is essential, however, is the teacher's presentation method; how she presents the material, how the child is to interact with the material, determines which, if any, concepts the child will form during the lesson.

Montessori offers many different types of materials for training specifically isolated senses. These days it's easy to find demonstrations online, though these demonstrations are valuable only in light of an understanding of what it is Montessori was trying to do in the first place: help humans form concepts for forming more concepts, a kind of teaching uniquely suited for early-developing mind/bodies, whose whole body senses are just beginning to arrange sensations and perceptions into conceptions manageable through language and writing. This isn't to say that older people are somehow unteachable. Forms can be re-formed. Formations reconfigure all the time. But what is needed for the kind of re-formation we're going for in adult education requires a particularly attuned consciousness. Triadicity takes on a different role with adults, for whom sensations and perceptions—gathered and sustained via language (often written language, read)—have long established formations and formative engines of thinking, believing, feeling, knowing.

* * *

Jason Palmeri, in *Remixing Composition*, suggests that Ann Berthoff was being "hyperbolic" when "suggesting that all candidates for the PhD in rhetoric 'be required to teach third grade for a year'" (43). But Berthoff was perfectly serious in her suggestion. Montessori, because she teaches children through the employment of material things, is easily associated with the "nondiscursive," the "internal," the "individual," the "dialectic." She could be dismissed as

“one-dimensional,” as McComiskey might put it, leading to the interpretation of Berthoff’s enrollment of Montessori as exaggeration. What if it’s not Berthoff (or Montessori or Freire) who is thinking “one-dimensionally”? What if triadicity demands and produces a way of giving method to complex, natural states of being—for both children and adults, at all developmental levels?

The above section demonstrates how a young mind/body can experience a concept tailored in the precise enactment of a designed material, and how that experience sets up that body to encounter and apprehend that concept in future situations. But interpretation is not the central act of mind just for children.

Previous chapters demonstrate that Paulo Freire, because he teaches adults through the deployment of dialogue, is often mis-associated solely with the concepts of “the social,” “community,” “externality,” “politics,” “culture.” I have offered evidence that Berthoff’s understanding of Freire requires a more comprehensive understanding of Freire as a triadicist. According to Berthoff—and my studies have yet to encounter evidence to the contrary—Freire’s theory of language tends to go unaccounted for in the field of comp/rhet (Appendix A). The next section demonstrates the pedagogical potential entailed in the conception of dialogue/dialectic as an allatonceness in the teaching of adults, and it counters misconceptions of Freire’s pedagogy as enacting dialogue cleaved from dialectic.

## 6.2 Freire

Paulo Freire shares with Berthoff and Montessori a conception of the adult mind as having long established formations mediating its understanding and learning of World. He also shares the same conception of the pedagogical implications of triadicity, though he does not use the term. In this section I explicate the theoretical mutuality underpinning Berthoff’s admiration

of Freire, and her bundling of Freire with Montessori in *The Making of Meaning*. I do this so that we may begin to consider how Berthoff's philosophy needs to be reckoned with in conversations about disciplinarity.

Before I elucidate the Berthovian appreciation of Freire as I understand it, let me confess that I do not consider myself a Freirean in the ways I think the famous Marxist is often appreciated by cultural revolutionaries and their intellectual legacies. As chapter four of this dissertation has explored, the tacit cultural critique entailed in Berthovian triadicity manifests in ways often misunderstood as a-political and so "conservative" or outdated.[37] Freire's direct critique of political systems that perpetuate abusive pedagogical environments would appear to put him at odds with Berthoff in this regard; Berthoff devotes little breath in her published works to politics and systems of oppression outside of those perpetuated by English teachers and departments. But if we consider that triadicity entails the socio-political—the "all-in-each" of community/individual—we can begin to comprehend the firm common ground shared by Freire and Berthoff. "Allatonceness"—the notion that all meaning-making is simultaneously an individual and sociocultural matter—invites teachers to change systems by designing environments that evoke the "praxis" of individuals, a point Freire makes explicit in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: "... praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (25).

> The correct method for a revolutionary leadership to employ in the task of liberation is, therefore, not "libertarian propaganda." Nor can the leadership merely "implant" in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. The correct method lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for

[37] See Berlin in Enos' "Professing the New Rhetorics," the McComiskey example above, and Bizzell in "From Pat Bizzell to Ann Berthoff."

> their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own conscientizaçao. (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed 26*)

This passage suggests that only student-generated dialogue—responding to students' responses to designed materials and environments—can encourage a mind into the reflective awareness of *that* and thus *how* they make meaning, resulting in a truly "process," liberatory education.

Freire's pedagogy is readily identified with the concepts of dialogue and "conscientization" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Literacy: Reading the Word, Reading the World*). "Conscientization" as demonstrated in the discussion of McComiskey's notion of "dialectic" might be conceived as akin to "metacognition." But to avoid accounting for the allatonceness of dialogue *with* conscientization is to lose sight of Freire's theory of language, perhaps in favor of his important addressing of the cultural politics of literacy.

I did not find much clarity in Berthoff's TMM in terms of Freire's theory of language. In the introduction to the bundling of Montessori and Freire, Berthoff writes in a parenthetical, "(I've tried to suggest the kind of insights to be gained from [Richards and Freire] in 'Towards a Pedagogy of Knowing,' Part II, pp. 48-60)" (147). But the excerpt to which she refers only gestures to Freire in the title, a reference to Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and at the end—Berthoff concludes the chapter with a paragraph from the same volume. Although Berthoff explicitly draws parallels between Richards and Freire in both sections of TMM, indeed throughout her corpus, the potency of Freire's operationalizing of dialogue between community members in classroom settings seems perpetually to overshadow the notion of dialectic in our comp/rhet appreciations of Freire.

It's as though our pedagogies must choose between cultural studies and semiotics (externality/internality, dialogue/dialectic, politics/interpretation), as though these are distinct,

parallel areas of inquiry. They never are, "purely", which is an insight Berthoff's affinity for Freire must highlight for us. "Freire's notion of the 'dialogic action' which constitutes a 'pedagogy of knowing' is consonant with everything Richards has argued about the centrality of interpretation in teaching" (148). "Dialogic action" must include, but not be reduced to, interpersonal dialogue. And it is always—already—cultural, political.

If we return to reading "Towards A Pedagogy of Knowing," we find a compelling discussion of "method" rising to this assertion: "Indeed," Berthoff writes, "I would say that is a shortcoming of most of our students: they do not easily recognize particular problems because they do not have a method, that is, a means for formulating critical questions" (TMM 56). Here is Freire's "problematizing the existential situation" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). "… All education investigates thinking…" "The task of the dialogical teacher… is to 're-present' that universe to the people from whom she or he first received it—and 're-present' it not as a lecture, but as a problem" (109). This echoes the "re-presentation" of specific mind/body motions isolated in practice in the Froebelian mats that Montessori deployed to prepare her pupil for the task of sewing. The difference is that Freire, because he is engaged in literacy education specifically, and the education of adults whose history has habituated them to specific ways of seeing and thus being in the world, centralizes language and other discursive modes in his lessons. Freire's question-as-method is directed at student equally with teacher (a matter I find personally difficult to practice, as I'm inclined, as a naturally curious person who self-identifies as a perpetual student, to be the one asking the questions). The method can be understood as the verbal equivalent to the bodily investigations of students engaged in the Montessori method. We can think of Freire's problematizing in terms of *the whole* of Peircean triadicity, and Berthoff invites us to do this by pointing out the triadic nature of Freire's theory of language. When

learners come to perceive—to feel, to *sense*—the could-be-otherwise of their world, the world "known" simultaneously through perceptions of events, and the meanings mediating these perceptions (that could be otherwise), they gain the necessary *learning imagination*, for changing that world. To talk of Freire's "dialogues," his politics or social commentary, black boxes the vital "dialectical" work of interpretation that happens simultaneously within individuals within communities. This work is what Berthoff demands we account for, and the result helps us understand why she bundles Freire with Montessori in TMM.

In Berthoff's bundling of a passage from *Education for Critical Consciousness* with Montessori's *The Montessori Method*, Freire writes that "To acquire literacy...is to dominate [reading and writing] techniques in terms of consciousness" (159). He goes on to attach to this process the unfortunate term, "communication." But Freire qualifies what he means by "communication": "… an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context" (159). Underlying "attitude" and "stance": feeling, sense. The kind of empowerment Freire's pedagogy affords its students is not one that can be "revealed" and imparted; it is the "sense of learning" that happens when people experience/perceive *that* they make meaning through language and signification, and that they could make other meanings. A teacher can tell a student they make meaning, and show him that they could make other meanings, but she can't create "the sense" of learning necessary for the change called "education" that can happen in a student. Only an emerging consciousness of the natural process of interpretation can do that; the learning imagination *is* Freire's "critical consciousness," and it cannot be accurately accounted for in dichotomous terms like the social/individual, dialogue/dialectic, or theory/practice.

*          *          *

When Freire describes, in the excerpt included by Berthoff above, the lesson of "The Discovery Card," it is no mere coincidence that we see Freire stepping back. Just as Montessori cannot teach the task of sewing because her student's mind/body does not possess the knowledge necessary to "get the dialectic going," as Berthoff would put it, Freire cannot effectively teach literacy as a liberatory practice by *giving* students words, sentences, rules, grammars, rhetorical situations, cultural identities; in this sense "dialogue" alone misses the point. And so he steps back. He begins with sounds, the sounds of their words in the context of images and material objects from their worlds (TMM 160). His technique is to design a "classroom" environment that encourages students to perceive what has before gone undetected: the interaction of sounds and graphic images ("syllables") that can be visualized and *felt* to form meaning. Freire means his designed materials and lessons to inspire, "to get the dialectic going," not to impart any knowledge per se. It's the whole of the pedagogical experience that results in the shift into freedom Freire envisions for his students.

In the Freirean lesson, after surveying the group of students, the teacher cultivates a list of "generative words" from their dialogue, words that meet criteria determined most likely to be able to be used in meaningful syllabic re-configuration or "play." The words become central to a dialogue about the "existential situations"—re-presented by the teacher in the classroom environment—that the words speak to, inspiring in students "a more critical consciousness at the same time that they begin to learn to read and write" (161). Simultaneity. The learning imagination in this scenario happens as, dialogically, students bring to consciousness—the "felt sense"—that their perceptions and knowledge happen in their words and syllables. The final phase of the activity invites students to "intervene" in those meanings. The "phonemic families" present in some form in the generative words are offered visually, practiced phonically, and

students reconfigure them to make their "own" meanings, generating a sense of ownership, of knowledge. "Using this card to reach a synthesis, men discover the mechanism of word formation through phonemic combinations… By appropriating this mechanism critically (not learning it by rote), they themselves can begin to produce a system of graphic signs" (162). "Critically" here means "questioningly." In the realm of triadicity, "critical distance" is not a far distance in terms of space and time; it's as "far" as a turn of phrase, an upturn of voice, a punctuation mark. The success of The Discovery Cards lies in the mediating role of meaning in the meaning-making process. In the process of the lesson, context—cultural, political, shared, individually-constructed and "felt" context—is ever-present, entailed in meanings students bring to the dialogue. Those meanings—gathered (formationing) in words and images and sounds—though brought by individuals, are always already cultural/social.

Developing a "critical appropriation" refers to the student coming to learn to question that which they fundamentally took for granted, the construction of their knowledge-making. During "The Discovery Card" discussions, this "critical appropriation" happens through interpretation, as students recombine the meanings captured in phonemes of their own language. This recombination evokes the realization—the sense—that the phoneme, that the word it creates, and thus the context, *could* be interpreted differently, could mean something else and thus *be* something else. As with Montessori's method, the mind as an interpretive agent is fundamental to a Freirean method, and this feature does not happen when Freire's method is understood in dyadic terms.

### 6.3 Berthoff

Berthoff's method also puts into practice "the mind as an interpretive agent." Centralizing interpretation as a foundational act of mind in the writing process, Berthoff's

literacy instruction exemplifies the kind of “alternative” pedagogy that emerges from such a focus. This section offers an example of how Berthoff’s method emerges from a triadic semiotics and the role of interpretation in meaning-making that the theory demands. Most essentially, however, I demonstrate here how Berthoff’s method cannot be accurately conceived in terms that split social from individual, dialogue from dialectic, theory from practice.

A close look at one of Berthoff’s foundational “lessons” presented in FTW, Berthoff’s composition textbook[38] lends us a sense of the role of interpretation in Berthoff’s pedagogy. Written out of teaching “basic writing” at the University of Massachusetts, Boston (Appendix A), FTW defies the look and feel of a textbook in several ways. Instead of passages of literary or expository text for students to consume, followed by exercises to complete in order to test knowledge, FTW offers passages of philosophy and “assisted invitations” to practice writing with philosophical concepts in mind. There is no right/wrong in how the students use the philosophy; there is “more to a useful point”/“farther from a useful point,” “more convincing/less convincing.” Coming to understand how the mind works as it uses language in relation with perception and memory is the aim, both in reading and in writing: “...to learn to question what it is that you do when you compose and thereby how to do it better—more easily, more quickly, more confidently” (Berthoff, *Forming* 9).

Early in FTW (“part i”), Berthoff invites students to “Draw up a Christmas list. Is there any order to it? What purpose has determined that order?” (53) FTW substantially encourages students to generate and consider “lists.” “You can think of a list as answers to a set of questions: *purposes* answer *needs*” (53). “The listmaker knows the relationships that those words [in a list] stand for, the groups and classes and sequences that the list indicates in a succinct and

[38] *Berthoff prefers the first edition of Forming/Thinking/Writing: The Composing Imagination* (1982), the one with the blue cover.

economical way" (59). "You can think of ordering [lists] as a dialectic of chaos and form" (65). "Listing" here is a very basic "form," as are, later in the book, paragraphs, sections, essays. The meaning, Berthoff argues, happens *with* the form. For a list, meaning is "gathered" by sound and syllable (forms) (see Gombrich's "Ping/Pong" exercise page 32; and Appendix A), word (a form), and order (a form). Berthoff begins with "listing" because a list, when problematized, can lead to the felt comprehension of our minds doing something very basically human, creating relationships, seeing *in terms of* a purpose or a need.

I have taught this particular "assisted invitation" to first-year writing students and it's quite revealing. Of course, these days asking students to draw up "a Christmas list" might feel culturally presumptive at best. The 1970s were a different time. But it doesn't matter what kind of list we ask our students to create. I ask my first-year writing students to "Draw up a packing list." Immediately a hand shoots up. "What are we packing for?" I write the question on the board. It's a good question. Completely natural. Logically essential. Someone says, "Where are we going?" I write that one down, too. Look what happens, I say, when we're given this task. Our minds ask questions based on *purpose* and *need*; where are we going (what will we need there), and why are we going there (what's our purpose)? This questioning is an utterly natural occurrence. In order to make a packing list that makes sense, we need to know where we are going and to do what.

It's useful to get more specific. "Make a packing list," I say next, "because we are going to explore the Okefenokee swamp." Inevitably (given my particular student population—primarily black urban youth of Atlanta and surrounding municipalities) students follow with questions: "What is it, the Okefenokee swamp? Where is it? Why would one go there? To do what?" We discuss the feelings that simultaneously emerge in the classroom with this discussion.

The term, “swamp,” evokes strong emotions (though most impressions are based in conception versus perception; few if any have actually been to a swamp). We discuss where our emotions come from, where our conceptions of “swamp” come from. Research happens naturally in this process, given so many in my classroom have computer-phones, someone inevitably looks it up: “Okefenokee swamp.” A lexicon ensues. I write a “chaos” of terms on the board as students discuss what they find, and what they think, and what they know: Alligator, canoe, fishing, water trail, mosquitos, boy scouts, camping, snakes, tent, pioneer, pick-up truck, confederate flag, ‘trailer trash’… Even if students have never been to the Okefenokee swamp, even if they’ve never canoed nor camped, they are able to generate a substantial, sensible lexicon. How do their minds do this? Upon what meaning-resources do they draw?

These questions become the engine of our class discussion. What is happening when people who have never visited nor even heard of the Okefenokee swamp are able to make sense of the place to the extent that they develop strong feelings about it, and can make a packing list for a trip to it? We can do this because we think in *terms of* what we already know. We interpret a new concept—like “the Okefenokee swamp”—through images of swamps we’ve seen in movies and television shows, in cartoons, in books. We unthinkingly attach to the term feelings generated by conceptions of “wilderness,” “primitiveness,” “camping” (which, apparently, disgusts many people, or evokes fear, at least in my student population). We compare “there” to “here”; many students declared they could never spend time in a swamp because they wouldn’t have access to the comforts of their current life. Hair straighteners, cell phones, washing machines… Students compared “home” to “swamp” naturally, without prompting, and as I turned their attention to what they were doing throughout the conversation—questioning,

thinking *in terms of*—we began to consider a method for how our minds were working and how we might harness those actions for writing "on purpose"—with agency and intention.

Throughout our conversation about the Okefenokee swamp, our class generated a "lexicon" of terms representing the meanings our minds associated with the "new" concept. The terms within the lexicon meant different things to different people, as memories and perceptions, family history and values, and conceptions cultivated by media came to bear through them. Our discussions, as Berthoff predicts, inevitably became political; not even the term 'swamp' is a-political or a-cultural ("confederate flag," "trailer trash," "white," "inbred," "isolation" ... terms in our lexicon). As the teacher, my job became to instigate the conversation with the initial task, to map on the whiteboard where the conversation went, to stop the conversation and invite the class to observe what our minds were doing. Where did "confederate flag" come from? What meaning might it bring to the concept of "Okefenokee swamp"? What feeling? For whom? Why? Did our lexicon help us come up with a "list"? If so, how?

Next, we might categorize; what kinds of things are they, the items in our list? How do we go about assigning names to our categories? What order do we put them in? Or we might switch up the purpose. If we are biologists there to study the effect of climate change on certain kinds of mosquitos, how would our list change? Why? What do we need to know to make our new, more specific, list? Is it harder or easier to do that? Why? Interestingly, students seem naturally to go to their phones, to look things up. Their minds need "prior information" to make "new knowledge" out of the given situation of "A biologist traveling to the Okefenokee to study mosquitos." What do you call someone who does that? What's their specialty? Has it been done before? Why? What kinds of instruments and materials are needed? etc. This student-generated research yields a richly specific lexicon that tends to affect the emotional relationship between

students and the conception of “swamp.” Before, it had been informed nearly exclusively through stereotypes propagated by popular media; now, even without personal experience of the swamp, students possess—through research—more nuanced, more specific meaning resources that their minds associate with “swamp.” This is the learning imagination at work; consciously bringing new meaning resources to bare on unfamiliar (or familiar) concepts and experiences.

Berthoff’s “Christmas list” exercise works only if the classroom purposes it as a means of making visible the usually invisible way the mind makes new meanings (Okefenokee swamp) by interpreting the new through “known” meanings (images of swamps in films, etc.). Just as Montessori’s sewing child was successful only when her practice had cultivated the constituent motions of sewing via working the Froebel weaving mat, my students went back, they identified the meanings their minds were using to comprehend “the new.” Once we begin to attend to the way our minds create associations, compare and analogize, differentiate and sort, order, etc., we can begin to do these things consciously, purposefully, to yield knowledge, through writing, not just to “communicate” it. Fundamentally, this yielding happens in an allatonceness; dialogue and dialectic working simultaneously, the social and the individual, theory and pedagogy. Shaped by designed materials and lessons, and interactions with people in contexts—experience, simultaneous with language other discursive modes—students capitalize on the natural aspect of their being: Interpretation. The new inter-acting with the known in dynamic reciprocity in the mind—this is the learning imagination. This is triadicity.

## 6.4 The Learning Imagination: Unifying Steps towards Disciplinarity

I have suggested that if we read the examples offered in this chapter with “disciplinarity” in mind, we might get a sense of the unifying potential of triadicity, especially in terms of

pedagogy, theory, materialisms, multimodality, embodiment, cultural rhetorics and critical pedagogy.

All three of the lessons above, for instance, demonstrate a dynamic reciprocity between pedagogy and theory. Berthoff's conscious "listing" enacts the notion that the mind/body forms, naturally. Operationalizing the theoretical centrality of interpretation, Montessori designs her "red rods" material for priming the mind/body in its encounter of situations involving qualities of length. And, based on the theoretical understanding that meaning is mediated by meaning, Freire's syllabic grid brings the quotidian words and images of students' lives, and thus their meanings, into possible transformation. The pedagogical practice evident in these examples stems from triadicity. And as is clearly evident in the excerpted passage from Montessori, practice informs these pedagogues' apprehension of triadicity. It was only after Montessori tried to teach a child to sew that she realized she needed to step back, to cultivate in the child a knowledge (the darning motion) with which she could interpret the act of sewing.

As is clear with the Montessori lesson example, too, materialisms, embodiment, and multimodality play integral parts in the praxes of these pedagogues. Montessori's "didactic material" explicitly accounts for the role of materiality in learning.[39] Berthoff even includes Freire's "culture circle images" from *Education from a Critical Consciousness* in the excerpt she offers in TMM. Freire's "Cards of Discovery"—these are materials. This interest in materiality does not happen "ad hoc"; based on ethnographic observation, Montessori theorized the way the mind/body makes meaning, especially in young children. She apprehended the interpretive value of experience as a central act in the learning process, and she operationalized it. Both Freire and Montessori worked with people just acquiring literacy, reading and writing. But these

[39] Beyond the scope of this dissertation, one of Montessori's most valuable concepts is "the prepared environment." See *The Montessori Method* (1912).

pedagogues understood, and practiced respect for, the multimodal meaning-making abilities and knowledge their student populations embodied already, naturally. Their pedagogies tap the resource of meaningfulness their student populations possess naturally for the making of new knowledge. These pedagogies apprehend "the learning imagination," the human nature to think "in terms of," and to learn from that thinking.

Berthoff's work taps human nature's tendency to form as well, though it is less obviously "material." Rutherford and Palmeri (and Bizzell in her 1987 letter) attest to the "materiality" inherent in FTW, especially in the "natural object" "assisted invitation."[40] Palmeri's earlier work, *Remixing Composition*, argues convincingly for a reading of Berthoff's pedagogy as fundamentally multimodal (Chapter 1, Track 3). Though less directly "material" or "multimodal," the "list" lesson referenced in this chapter is so fundamental as to easily lend itself to "real life," material/multimodal experiences that matter. In FTW, for instance, Berthoff offers a floorplan for a grocery store and invites students to create a list informed by the plan (50). She invites students to visit their grocery store with a list, and without one; how is the experience different? How does the list work? The material space of the store provides a context—details embodied in purposeful design—for raising consciousness about how the mind forms, under what conditions, and why. The context matters, and is also, clearly, culturally informed. How about a grocery store in Kazakhstan? Or in East Atlanta? How are they organized? Are they different? Similar? In what ways? How?

As this dissertation has demonstrated, many scholars mistake Berthoff's pedagogy as a-political. Her work does not seem to be a "critical pedagogy," despite Berthoff having "brought Freire to the field," as Berlin puts it (Enos, "Professing"). Berthoff's work is not widely

[40] See chapters four and five for a complete discussion of this lesson in FTW.

understood as a pedagogy designed to encourage the wielding of literacy for fighting social justice inequities, both in the classroom and out of it. Nor is Montessori's pedagogy understood as a matter of social justice, despite her decades of speeches and books arguing for a "liberating pedagogy." The lesson examples offered here demonstrate, however, that Freire's isn't the only "critical pedagogy" emerging from triadicity. We can recognize Montessori's and Berthoff's praxes *as critical pedagogies*. They do not "impose content" onto their students; they offer forms for students to explore, discovering in the process their own relationships between established in-*form*ations and new, potential ones. They cultivate in students a "learning imagination" in the process of teaching literacy.

Because they operate from an honoring of human nature, and of life—the organizing principles of forming—the Montessori, Freire, and Berthoff lessons are examples of how pedagogical practice, entailed in triadicity, adjoins so many of the research interests of the field of comp/rhet. I'm sure there are other interests beyond materiality, multimodality, and cultural rhetorics that can be seen as entailed in the lessons offered here. My point is that apprehending the foundational nature of triadicity is apprehending its potential to bring together the research interests of our field, and to inject them into practical—socially just—differences in our pedagogical practice. To help us define our consensus.

In our interview, Berthoff tells me that she doesn't want to be "part of the rhetoric consensus," that it's "rotten" (Appendix A). If we can understand her viewpoint not as a blanket critique of the disparate research interests that comprise the field, but as a legitimate, sound alternative to Derridean poststructuralism and other conceptions of meaning that do not account for "the Third," we might interpret Berthoff's characterization as a contemporary call to action. Even "the social view," Berthoff's work and this chapter demonstrates, is not the problem; it is

not the same thing as “the rhetoric consensus.” For Berthoff, “the rhetoric consensus” consists of the scholarship, theories, pedagogies, and historiographies often tacitly built on incomplete, reductionist conceptions of language and meaning. Writing, conceived whole, is one way of making meaning, but “meaning” is never a matter solely of an “inner” realm, or an “outer” cultural one. And pedagogy matters.

Freire, Montessori, and Berthoff remind us that, based on a triadic theory of language, telling is not teaching, that listening is not learning, that the mind/body in context must be considered whole in order to provide humane educational experiences that ultimately serve to challenge oppression. Furthermore, as this chapter has shown, they provide us models for that kind of teaching. They provide us “methods.”

* * *

From its earliest incarnations, this dissertation project has sought more than to try to correct the record on Ann Berthoff. By asking us to “think with” the concepts of her theory of language when reading Berthoff’s work, it has also suggested a way of reading generally. A “way,” a method. The *method* suggested by the theory. And it holds great potential for helping the field of comp/rhet think outside of “the same old boxes.” Contemporary scholarship in the field affirms that we continue to struggle for respect from the academy at large for “what it is we do in the first place,” as Berthoff puts it (Appendix A). The field’s gains over the last few decades include faculty budget lines and graduate programs, conferences and journals. But the inability of the field to identify itself clearly, succinctly, to articulate what binds the various research interests embraced by the field—materiality, embodiment, multimodality, pedagogy, culture, digital media, etc.—merges with the bane of employment insecurity, keeping the field

less effective perhaps than it could be (Hesse, Malenczyk, et. al, Scott and Melonçon, Phelps and Ackerman).

Thus, renewed calls for disciplinarity. I've been asking in this dissertation project if coming to terms with Berthoff's work—either accepting or rejecting it—could help us achieve the kind of clarity we seek in defining comp/rhet as a discipline: What if there is a conflict fundamental to our identity as a field in the "non-acceptance without rejection" (Rhodes) of Ann Berthoff's work, a conflict that keeps unavailable potentially unifying and constructive praxis?

By identifying a "rhetoric consensus" early in her career and leaning into it, offering a productive alternative to it, Berthoff makes her point of view relevant, if not essential, to contemporary discussions of disciplinarity. For any move to declare a discipline must involve declaring a "form," defining parameters: a "consensus," at least on some fundamental level. In "Mapping the Turn to Disciplinarity" Kathy Yancey asserts that "the context for the disciplinary turn includes tensions, especially tensions… These tensions are not insignificant; many of them are historical and closely bound to our historical identity" (639). This chapter, as the one before it, has demonstrated that killer dichotomies perpetuate in the language we use to talk about writing and meaning, and that this language affects—in the case of Berthoff, disfigures and misconstrues—our "historical identity" and our current one. What if this is no mere "tension," but an irreconcilable contradiction? What if both cannot be true—a dyadic relationship between sign and signifier in the making of meaning, and a triadic one?

I have argued here that misconstruing Berthoff risks losing her important message and her unique pedagogy, a genuinely Freirean pedagogy imagined for college writing instruction and beyond. If this is true, then as an ongoing "tension" in the field, Berthoff's work, whole, must

make its way into the center of the field's discussions regarding disciplinarity. We must reckon, in a clear and focused way, with Berthoff and triadicity.

# 7 CONCLUSIONS: BERTHOFF & THE "DISCIPLINE OF COMPOSITION & RHETORIC"

*"There is an active resistance to apprehending the real character of the composing process because doing so would change everything we do: to teach composing as the kind of process it really is would upset us: it would transform, it would revolutionize our practice."*

*~Ann E. Berthoff*

*The Sense of Learning*

What if Berthoff is right about postmodern theories of language being reductionist, positivist theories of language… as she argues so thoroughly in *The Mysterious Barricades* (1999)? The field has yet to challenge her substantially in print on this. Is it any wonder then, that despite our "progressive" embrace of pluralism, and our conception of literacy as a matter of social justice, that our teaching and labor conditions continue to be less than ideal? That our teaching and labor *results* tend to be less than ideal? Is it any wonder that outward conceptions of writing continue to cultivate what Linda Adler-Kassner calls the Educational Industrial Complex (EIC), in all of its harmful effects on developing writers and thinkers ("The Problem…" 339)? Is it any wonder that the path to disciplinarity for comp/rhet/writing studies is "thorny and complicated" (Malenczyk, et al)? Berthoff's work argues for a return to semiotics, for a consideration of writing and pedagogy in terms of theories of language, not in terms of "the social" or "the individual" or the "political" or the "personal" or the "cultural", or in any conceptions derived from postmodern, a.k.a. dyadic, notions of the sign. Berthoff declares semiotics foundationally our purview, but even though current scholarship mentions Berthoff often (Sanchez, Hawk, Goldblatt, Boyle, Palmeri, Fleckenstein, Micciche...), her call for a return

to semiotics has yet to make substantial differences in the way the field largely conceives of writing studies and pedagogy. Perhaps the ineffectiveness of this call lies in our marginalization and misconstruance of her ideas.

In 1989, John Schlib writes, “Stephen North's *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* and Louise Wetherbee Phelps's *Composition as a Human Science* indicate by their very titles, we in composition increasingly seek to determine the resources, practices, and ideas that would establish us as a discipline” (422). Central to the conversations of the “field” of comp/rhet at that time was a working-out of its relationship with English departments and English as a subject. In the context of Schilb’s characterization, notions of comp/rhet “disciplinarity” resonate with the discussions about theories of language impacting English departments in the late 80s, early 90s, namely, poststructuralism:

> Our new quest for professional legitimacy entails, though, our confronting developments in other fields, even if we ultimately define ours by backing away. One trend many of us find ourselves examining is the spread of poststructuralism in literary studies, and not only because what happens in the major part of the English curriculum can directly affect its writing component. Just as important, poststructuralists have raised significant issues concerning the nature of discourse. Moreover, they have often done so through references to "rhetoric." (422)

That first sentence seems to have been taken up by the field of comp/rhet. Certainly our scholars have “confronted developments in other fields”; psychology, linguistics, education, medicine, philosophy, computer science and media studies, we track these influences through our “disparate research interests,” those informing the “subfields” of embodiment, affect, materialism, digital media, “big data,” cultural studies, ethnography, film and media, archival

research… or “basic writing,” “technical writing,” “second language writing,” “business writing,” “academic discourse”... In retrospect, though, it seems there has not been much “backing away” in order to define “the resources, practices, and ideas that would establish us as a discipline.” Even contemporary efforts read a bit like smorgasbords, like *Naming What We Know: threshold concepts of writing studies*, which offers 37 “concepts… outlining how they can be helpful in various writing-focused and writing related contexts” (location 258). There is a lot of “variety” still in efforts to codify the field into disciplinarity.

Yet thirty years after Schilb, Rita Malenczyk, Susan Miller-Cochran, Elizabeth Wardle, and Kathleen Blake Yancey suggest that “Rhetoric and Composition is on the cusp of disciplinarity,” ready to “come to terms,” so to speak, with its history, its relationship with English and its identity as providing a “service” (location 74). In a sense, my dissertation has argued that the rest of Schilb’s characterization above, seen in relation with this contemporary conversation about disciplinarity, hints at a hole in the way we are engaging this new consideration. The influence of poststructuralism, as Schilb identifies it, “raised significant issues concerning the nature of discourse.” As I demonstrated in this dissertation, from Berthoff’s view, these “issues” have not been resolved, even if to decide that Berthoff is wrong about the dyadic thinking that results from poststructuralism, and so to fully embrace it.

Schilb mentions Berthoff’s critique of poststructuralism several times in his article, identifying her as one who “faulted poststructuralism for a dyadic conception of the sign” (423). He identifies other leading scholars in our field’s history as joining Berthoff’s skepticism (Swearingen, Hariston). Schlib’s overall assertion posits that the original embrace of poststructuralism was perhaps more a move to engender legitimacy among peers in English departments—to lend composition and rhetoric scholars a “literary” or intellectual currency

among their lit peers—than it was a move to establish theoretical ground for effectively accounting for how writing works. And from Berthoff's viewpoint, this movement haunts contemporary considerations of disciplinarity. Schilb's article is very important, I think, in considering the legacy and effect of poststructuralism on our contemporary scholarship and the trajectory of the field. And not to be overlooked is the fact that Schilb ends his article with a call for a consideration of triadicity, the theoretical work of Charles Sanders Peirce.

In writing of the 1963 Johns Hopkins University symposium, "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man"—a key event concerning poststructuralism's influence in English and comp/rhet—Schilb writes, "Although Peirce was restricted to a cameo appearance in the proceedings, he has subsequently emerged as an exemplar for various schools of thought, and thus could play a central role in a curriculum that strives to pinpoint the relations among them" (439). Here is Schilb, as far back as 1989, identifying the "unifying," the "grounding" potential in Peircean triadicity.

Schilb's view isn't entirely commensurate with Berthoff's, I think. For instance, he characterizes triadicity, in its focus on interpretation, as likely to "sharpen our sensibility for... intrinsic and violent instability" (440). One of the gifts of Berthoff's work, though, I hope I've hinted at in this dissertation, is an imagination for just the opposite: triadicity as a "stabilizer," a way of embracing method as key to "knowing" and "learning," simultaneously. Ultimately Berthoff's work teaches us that if triadicity is true, or even if it's just "useful," the implications for teaching are profound. In chapter three I explicated examples from FTW—along with examples from Berthoff's TMM of the pedagogies of Maria Montessori and Paulo Freire—that demonstrate the kind of teaching that emerges from triadicity. As this work demonstrates, the praxis that happens in the kind of writing classroom shaped by triadicity is the "revolutionized

practice" Berthoff alludes to above. Triadicity entails a method for teaching writing as a way of learning, as a way of coming to know.

How many of us teach writing as a way of learning? How many of us teach reading as a way of learning? Isn't writing deployed to that mission our responsibility to teach, as writing teachers? Who else would do it? We know that writing is *also*, simultaneously, a way of creating and communicating, a way of gaining currency in certain social realms (or losing it), a way of changing worlds. So before teaching students "composition" through the frame of "new materialisms" or "feminisms" or "multimodalities" or "digital media" or…. all of which involve meaning-making and language, we must cultivate in students an awareness that they make meaning and how they do so, so that they might choose to do so differently.

This dissertation has provided evidence of Berthoff's understanding of the fundamental difference Peircean triadicity makes in literacy pedagogy. Although powerful, and attending to the very concerns John Schilb raises in his 1989 call for a consideration of Peirce, Berthoff's message never seems to have gotten through over the decades. Yet triadicity—meaning as mediator—when taken into account pedagogically, and this was Berthoff's point, counters the "clear and present political danger" of a conception of writing pedagogy based on dyadic theories of language ("The Problem…" 239). The field of comp/rhet, and the educational environment it tacitly condones or enables, continues valuing pedagogies offered by "the technicians" instead of "the compositionists," evidenced in part by the "commercial-grade competency-based education" promoted by the "Education Intelligence Complex," as Linda Adler-Kassner so powerfully articulates in her CCCC's chair address of 2017.

Adler-Kassner writes that "… we can see how the rhetoric used by the Educational Intelligence Complex repeats the impulse to disaggregate, to make granular, to create lines that

are as straight as possible from students' characteristics and prior performances, through education, into career (323). As opposed to recursiveness and multidimensionality, discovery and questioning—concepts entailed in triadicity—the "straight lines… through education into career" reflect a system that values "... policy initiatives and data systems that can take this messy mass of humans, ideas, processes, and goals and instill a rational sense of order around them… (322). "The impulse to disaggregate": our systems want to deny allatonceness. Problem-*posers* are "messy" and cannot be reduced, flattened, dehumanized; they're "trouble"-makers. Even for us. Perhaps this is why the "problem-solvers" seem to have won the debate, at least in practice. Adler-Kassner's compelling depiction of what persists—the perception that "my students can't write" and the popular conception that the answer is "more technology," more "problems to solve"—attests to this victory.

Not surprising, Adler-Kassner's thorough and troubling depiction of the EIC and its influence on literacy education does not identify semiotics in its condemnation; perhaps it seems a leap to implicate a theory of language as fundamental to the toxic influence of the EIC. But Berthoff's corpus brings semiotics to bear on the looming specter of the EIC even forty years ago. She implores us to understand that a dyadic notion of the sign—explicit or covert, embraced or simply ignored—poisons us, as it undergirds "the philosophy of education that is most in keeping with [the EICs] institutional biases" ("The Problem…" 339). Adler-Kassner begins her speech comparing "my students can't write" statements from 1962 and 2016. In her 1972 address to Janice Lauer, Berthoff winds us all the way back to 1907:

> The problems of American education which Jane Addams defined in *Democracy and Social Ethics* have not been alleviated in any fundamental respect; indeed, it might be claimed that matters are worse since "educators" and "university professors" nowadays

> agree with the business community, insofar as they support a cheapened philosophy of education with their notion that problem-solving is central to the learning process. (239)

Peircean triadicity posits that language is itself heuristic, and, as we have seen, Berthoff is a triadicist to the core. What she labels here a "cheapened philosophy of education" is commensurate with a dyadic notion of the sign; Berthoff implicates our theories of language—explicit, tacit—in the perpetuation of the toxic reductionism commercial interests impose upon American education and writing instruction.

Berthoff offers us models for how to teach writing in a way that embraces allatonceness and resists the dehumanizing effects of the EIC. She offers us a foundational theory—Peircean triadicity—able to ground the "disparate research interests" of our contemporary situation in ways poststructuralism hasn't. Triadicity is a theory that has been celebrated for such grounding potential by other leading scholars in the field, like John Schlib. And yet in the field's contemporary literature, triadicity remains seldom discussed and rarely celebrated. What I hope this dissertation has demonstrated is that there is an experiential cost for marginalizing Berthoff's work, for getting it wrong, and that bringing Peircean triadicity to the field *is* Berthoff's work. Without honoring the full context of her concepts and ideas, without "getting her right," continued reference to Berthoff's work is likely to result in damaging her legacy and missing an opportunity to investigate the grounding potential in a return to considering Peircean triadicity, especially in the context of renewed efforts to move the field towards disciplinarity.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Adler-Kassner, Linda. "2017 CCCC Chair's Address: Because Writing Is Never Just Writing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 69, no. 2, 2017, pp. 59–65.

Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Elizabeth A. Wardle. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015.

Alexander, Jonathan and Jacqueline Rhodes. *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*. Conference on College Composition and Communication/National Council of Teachers of English, 2014.

Arola, Kristin L. "The Design of Web 2.0: The Rise of the Template, The Fall of Design." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 4-14.

Berlin, James A. "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories." *College English*, vol. 44, no. 8, 1982, pp. 765-777.

Berlin, James A. *Rhetorics, poetics, and cultures: Refiguring college English studies*. Parlor Press, 2003.

Berlin, James A. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900 - 1985.* Southern Illinois University Press, 1987. *Retrieved from Project MUSE*: https://muse.jhu.edu/book/38851

Berthoff, Ann E. "Coleridge, I.A. Richards, and the Imagination." *The Educational Legacy of Romanticism*, edited by John Willinsky, Wilifrid Lauriar UP, 1991, pp. 55-72.

Berthoff, Ann E. *Forming, Thinking, Writing: The Composing Imagination.* Boyton/Cook, 1978.

Berthoff, Ann. "From dialogue to dialectic to dialogue." *Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change*, edited by Dixie Goswami and Peter Stillman, Heinnemann, 1986, pp. 75-86.

Berthoff, Ann E. "From Problem-solving to a Theory of Imagination." *College English*, vol. 33,

no. 6, 1972, pp. 636-649.

Berthoff, Ann E. “Is Teaching Still Possible? Writing, Meaning, and Higher Order Reasoning.” *College English*, vol. 46, no. 8, 1984, p. 743. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2307/377206.

Berthoff, Ann E. *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers.* Boynton/Cook, 1981.

Berthoff, Ann E. “Paulo Freire's Liberation Pedagogy.” *Language Arts*, vol. 67, no. 4, 1990, pp. 362–369. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41961745.

Berthoff, Ann E. "Problem-dissolving by triadic means." *College English*, vol. 58, no.1, 1996, pp. 9-21.

Berthoff, Ann E. "Reading the world... reading the word: Paulo Freire’s pedagogy of knowing." *The Sense of Learning*, 1990.

Berthoff, Ann E. *Reclaiming the Imagination: Philosophical Perspectives for Writers and Teachers of Writing*. Boynton/Cook, 1984.

Berthoff, Ann E. “Remembering Paulo Freire.” *JAC*, vol. 3, 1997.

Berthoff, Ann E. “Response to David Holbrook.” *College English*, vol. 34, no. 5, 1973.

Berthoff, Ann E. "Rhetoric as hermeneutic." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1991, pp. 279-287.

Berthoff, Ann E. *The Sense of Learning.* Boynton/Cook, 1990.

Berthoff, Ann E. “Sapir and the Two Tasks of Language.” *Semiotica*, vol. 71, no. 1-2, Sept. 1988, pp. 1–47.

Berthoff, Ann E. “Tolstoy, Vygotsky, and the Making of Meaning.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 249-255.

Berthoff, Ann E., and Laurence Behrens. "Two Comments on ‘Assigning Places: The Function

of Introductory Composition as a Cultural Discourse'." *College English*, vol. 56, no. 7, 1994, pp. 841-844.

Berthoff, Ann E. "What Works? How Do We Know?" *Journal of Basic Writing,* 1993, pp. 3-17.

Bissell, Mina J. "Thinking in Three Dimensions: Discovering Reciprocal Signaling between the Extracellular Matrix and Nucleus and the Wisdom of Microenvironment and Tissue Architecture." *Molecular Biology of The Cell*, vol. 27, no. 21, Nov. 2016, pp. 3205–3209.

Boyle, Casey. "An Attempt at a 'Practitioner's Manifesto.'" *Thinking with Bruno Latour in Rhetoric and Composition*, edited by Paul Lynch and Nathaniel Rivers, Southern Illinois UP, 2015, pp. 202–218.

Britton, James. *Multiple Marking of English Compositions: An Account of an Experiment*. Schools Council, London, 1966. ERIC: ED059194.

Burns, Hugh L., and George H. Culp. "Stimulating Invention in English Composition Through Computer-Assisted Instruction." *Educational Technology*, vol. 20, no. 8, 1980, pp. 5–10. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/44421524.

Ceraso, Steph. "(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, and the Composition of Sonic Experiences." *College English*, 77(2), p. 102.

Cobos, Casie, et al. "Interfacing Cultural Rhetorics: A History and a Call." *Rhetoric Review,* vol. 37, no. 2, 2018, pp. 139–154.

"Context Is Everything: The Role of the Microenvironment in Regulation of Gene Expression." *Bissell Lab/Bissell Laboratory Research Focus*. Mina Bissell, 2008, https://www2.lbl.gov/LBL-Programs/lifesciences/BissellLab/research.html. Accessed 01 March 2019.

Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. *The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.

Crowley, Sharon. "Linguistics and composition instruction: 1950-1980." *Written Communication,* vol. 6, no.4, 1989, pp. 480-505.

Danberg, Robert. "Re: Berthoff's Forming/Thinking/Writing." Received by Paige Arrington, 13 June 2017.

Dobrin, Sidney I., and Kyle Jensen. *Abducting Writing Studies*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2017.

Dobrin, Sidney I. *Constructing knowledges: The politics of theory-building and pedagogy in* composition. SUNY Press, 1997.

Dobrin, Sidney I. *Postcomposition.* Southern Illinois University Press, 2011.

Downs, Douglas, and Elizabeth Wardle. *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*. Second edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2014.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers.* Second edition, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Emig, Janet. "Writing as a Mode of Learning." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1977, p. 122. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2307/356095.

Enos, Theresa, ed. *Encyclopedia of rhetoric and composition: Communication from ancient times to the information age*. Routledge, 2011.

Eyman, Douglas. *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice.* University of Michigan Press, 2015.

Faigley, Lester. "Competing theories of process: A critique and a proposal." *College English,* vol. 48, no.6, 1986, pp. 527-542.

Fleckenstein, Kristie S. *Embodied Literacies: Imageword and a Poetics of Teaching.*

Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.

Fleishman, John. “Context Is Everything: Mina Bissell to Receive E.B. Wilson Medal.” *The ASCB member news*, American Society for Cell Biology, 26 May 2016, https://www.ascb.org/member-news/context-everything-mina-bissell-receive-e-b-wilson-medal/. Accessed 01 March. 2019.

Freire, Paulo. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

Freire, Paulo, and Donaldo Macedo. *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. Routledge, 2005.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Fulkerson, Richard. "Composition theory in the eighties: Axiological consensus and paradigmatic diversity." *College Composition and Communication,* vol. 41, no. 4, 1990, pp. 409-429.

Glaser, Jennifer, and Laura R. Micciche. "Digitizing English." *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*, 2015.

Goldblatt, Eli. "Don't Call It Expressivism: Legacies of a ‘Tacit Tradition’." *College Composition and Communication,* vol. 68, no. 3, 2017, pp. 438.

Halasek, Kay. *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1999.

Harris, Joseph D. *A Teaching Subject: Composition since 1966*. Utah State University Press, 2012.

Hart-Davidson, Bill. "Learning many-to-many: The best case for writing in digital environments.” *Invasion of the MOOCs: The promises and perils of massive open online courses*, edited by Charles Lowe and Steven Krause, Parlor Press, 2014, pp. 212-222.

Hawisher, Gail E., and Cynthia L. Selfe. *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web*. New York:

Routledge, 2000.

Hawk, Byron. *A Counter-history of Composition: Toward Methodologies of Complexity*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007.

Heilker, Paul, and Peter Vandenberg, eds. *Keywords in Composition Studies*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1996.

Hesse, Doug. “Writing Programs as Squanto, Welcoming the Tall Ships of Teaching Reform.” *Douglas Hesse: Life in organizations, classrooms, concert halls, and mountains*, 08 April 2018, http://douglashesse.com/18-years-ago-writing-programs-as-squanto/. Accessed 23 February 2019.

Hocks, Mary E., and Michelle Comstock. "Composing for Sound: Sonic Rhetoric as Resonance." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 43, 2017, pp. 135-146.

Hocks, Mary E., and Michelle R. Kendrick. *Eloquent images: Word and image in the age of new media*. The MIT Press, 2005.

Kameen, Paul. “Coming of Age in College Composition.” *The Teaching of Writing: Eighty-Fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Ed. Anthony Petrosky and David Bartholomae. Part 2. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1986. 170-87.

Kameen, Paul. "Composition: Inscribing the Field." *Boundary 2*, 1985, pp. 213-231.

Keith, Philip M. “Ann Berthoff and the Problem of Method in Writing: A Review Essay.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1980, pp. 98–103. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3885677.

Knoblauch, Cy H., and Lil Brannon. "Writing as learning through the curriculum." *College English,* vol. 45, no. 5, 1983, pp. 465-474.

Kress, Gunther. *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge, 2003.

Langer, Susanne K. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Lynn, Steven. "Reading the Writing Process: Toward a Theory of Current Pedagogies." *College English*, vol. 49, no. 8, 1987, pp. 902–910.

Macrorie, Ken. "A Letter to One More Newly-Elected Committee Set up to Plan and Administer a Course in Freshman Composition." *College English*, vol. 27, no. 8, 1966, p. 629. doi:10.2307/374703.

Macrorie, Ken. *Telling Writing*. Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Co., 1980.

Maimon, Elaine P. *Writing, Learning, and Thinking at Beaver College*. ERIC, 1979.

Malenczyk, Rita, et al. *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*. Kindle edition. Utah State University Press, 2018.

McComiskey, Bruce. *Dialectical Rhetoric*. Utah State University Press, 2015.

Micciche, Laura R. *Acknowledging Writing Partners*. The WAC Clearinghouse, University Press of Colorado, 2017.

Miller, Susan. *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1991.

Moffett, James. "Writing, Inner Speech, and Meditation." *College English*, vol. 44, no. 3, Mar. 1982, pp. 231–46.

Montessori, Maria. *From Childhood to Adolescence: Including Erdkinder and the Function of the University*. New York, Schocken Books, 1973.

Montessori, Maria. *The Montessori Method*. Anne Everett George, Trans. New York, NY: Fredrick A. Stokes Company, 1914. Retrieved from:

http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/montessori/method/method.html. Accessed 01 March 2019.

Nakamura, Lisa. *Digitizing Race:Visual Cultures of the Internet.* University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Palmeri, Jason. *Remixing composition: A history of multimodal writing pedagogy*. SIU Press, 2012.

Phelps, Louise Wetherbee, and John M. Ackerman. "Making the Case for Disciplinarity in Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies: The Visibility Project." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 62, no. 1, Sept. 2010, pp. 180–215.

Pimentel, Octavio. "Manifesto: It's Time to Hear Me! I Mean Really Hear Me!" *Making Future Matters*. Computers and Composition Digital Press, 2018, https://ccdigitalpress.org/book/makingfuturematters/index.html. Accessed 01 March 2019.

Reising, Robert W., and Tom Liner. "Two Views." *The English Journal*, vol. 67, no. 9, 1978, p. 69. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.2307/815136.

Reynolds, Nedra. "Berthoff, Ann E., Beth Daniell, JoAnn Campbell, C. Jan Swearingen, and James Moffett. 'Interchanges: Spiritual Sites of Composing.'" *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 45, no. 2, 1994, pp. 237-263.

Rhodes, Keith. "Ann Berthoff." Received by Paige Arrington, 10 Jul. 2018.

Rickert, Thomas J. *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.

Ronald, Kate, and Hephzibah Roskelly, eds. *Farther along: Transforming dichotomies in rhetoric and composition*. Boynton/Cook, 1990.

Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared*. New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1989.

Roskelly, Hephzibah, and Kate Ronald. *Reason to believe: Romanticism, pragmatism, and the teaching of writing*. SUNY Press, 1998.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, and Gesa E. Kirsch. *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*. SIU Press, 2012.

Rutherford, Kevin, and Jason Palmeri. "Toward an Object-Oriented History of Composition." *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things* (2016): 96.

Sanchez, Raul. *Function of Theory in Composition Studies, The*. SUNY Press, 2012.

Saur, Elizabeth, and Jason Palmeri. "Letter to a New TA: Affect Addendum." *WPA Writing Program Administration: Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2017, pp. 146–153.

Schilb, John. "Composition and Poststructuralism: A Tale of Two Conferences." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1989, 422-443.

Scott, J. Blake, and Lisa Meloncon. "Writing and Rhetoric Majors, Disciplinarity, and 'Techne.'" *Composition Forum*, vol. 35, 2017.

Selfe, Cynthia L., and Richard J. Selfe. "The Politics of the Interface: Power and Its Exercise in Electronic Contact Zones." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 45, no. 4, 1994, pp. 480-504.

Shipka, Jody. *Toward a composition made whole*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

Shor, Ira, and Paulo Freire. "What is the 'Dialogic Method' of Teaching?" *The Journal of Education*, vol. 169, no. 3, 1987, pp. 11–31

Sirc, Geoffrey. *English Composition as a Happen*ing. Utah State University Press,

2002.

Turnbull, Nick. “Political Rhetoric and Its Relationship to Context: A New Theory of the Rhetorical Situation, the Rhetorical and the Political.” *Critical Discourse Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2017, pp. 115–131.

Villanueva, Victor. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader. Revised and Updated*. National Council of Teachers of English, 2003.

Vitanza, Victor. "From Heuristic to Aleatory Procedures: or, Toward 'Writing the Accident.'" *Inventing a Discipline: Rhetoric Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Young*. Goggin, Maureen, ed. National Council of Teachers of English, 2000.

Wysocki, Anne Frances. "awaywithwords: On the possibilities in unavailable designs." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2005, pp. 55-62.

Wysocki, Anne Frances. "Introduction: Into between—on composition in mediation." *Composing Media Composing Embodiment*. Arola and Wysocki, eds. Utah State University Press, 2012, pp. 1-22.

Xu, Ren, et al. “Tissue Architecture and Function: Dynamic Reciprocity via Extra- and Intracellular Matrices.” *Cancer and Metastasis Reviews*, vol. 28, no. 1–2, 2009, pp. 167–176. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1007/s10555-008-9178-z. Accessed 3 Mar. 2019.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. “Reflection.” *Keywords in Composition Studies*. Paul Heilker and Peter Vandenberg, eds. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1996. Kindle ebook file.

Yarbro, Richard, and Betty Angevine. “A Comparison of Traditional and Cassette Tape English Composition Grading Methods.” *Research in the Teaching of English*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1982, p. 394.

Young, Art. “Forming, Thinking, Writing: The Composing Imagination Ann E. Berthoff.”

*College Composition and Communication,* vol. 30, no. 1, 1979, p. 63. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2307/356753.

Young, Richard Emerson, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth Lee Pike. *Rhetoric: Discovery and change*. Harcourt College Pub, 1970.

Zebroski, James T. "'After Dartmouth: Growth and Conflict.'" *College English*, vol. 54, Oct. 1992, pp. 694–701. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2307/377775.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Interview with Ann E. Berthoff

*And yet it is something that is so at odds with positivism: This stands for that (period). … I mean the subjective/objective thing is… a killer. I cannot tell you how wonderful it is to hear you say that you've been reading [this] stuff and thinking about it.*

(Ann Berthoff, personal interview)

The following is a curated transcript of my interview with Ann Berthoff. The interview took place at her home in Concord, Massachusetts, over two visits (September 2017, June 2018), and it comprised over five hours of conversation recorded with permission and IRB consent by me, Paige Davis Arrington (PA). Upon approval of this dissertation, I will destroy the digital recordings, as per our agreement, but also because there were often moments during our conversation—and it felt much more a conversation than an "interview"—when Berthoff would voice anecdotes or opinions she deemed "just between us." I've also exercised judgement in leaving out passages beyond the scope of the intentions of this dissertation, focusing on issues of writing theory and pedagogy, and on the intellectual heritage informing her thinking and scholarship about teaching writing.

I realized the first moment Berthoff opened the door for me that our conversations would roam. She began speaking, and an hour in she laughed and said, "Well, I've hardly let you ask your questions." She had already answered many of them, of course. And the questions didn't matter so much as the topics, I think, which are what brought us together in the first place. I was once a Montessori teacher and teacher trainer. My experience as a Montessorian shaped in me a particular appreciation for Berthoff's operationalizing of Peirce's triadic semiotics for the

teaching of writing. Berthoff references Montessori throughout her scholarship, often in the same breath as Paulo Freire (see *The Making of Meaning* 147). She's the only scholar in our field I have found to consider the potential of these pedagogues together for informing writing instruction.

And so, I have chosen the following concepts to shape the transcript, in Berthovian fashion, seeking relationships that resonate between bits of conversation during our time together: "Method," "Intellectual Heritage," "The Digital & Analogy," "Montessori," "Paulo Freire," and "Expressivism & The Paradigms." Some of these categories resonate closely with the chapters of this dissertation. Berthoff's notion of "method" features centrally in chapter four. "Intellectual Heritage" informs chapters one, two, and four especially, I think. "Montessori" and "Freire" speak to the chapter three demonstration of "allatonceness" in action. "Expressivism & The Paradigms" clearly speak to chapter two and its pointed address of the "terms," such as "expressivism" and "social epistemic," that tend to shape Berthoff out of our discussions or distort her ideas. The only area of interest explored here in the interview that does not speak directly to the discussions central to these chapters is "The Digital & Analogy." Although the focus of my dissertation is on the misconstruance and marginalization of Berthoff in comp/rhet scholarship, and so a bit broader than a particular focus on digital media, I believe the conversation documented in this section will be of interest to anyone working with digital media or considering digital media studies broadly as a "subfield."

With these groupings in mind, I hope to make the transcript easy to access for those seeking specific kinds of information that might be illuminated by Berthoff's reflections.

***Appendix A.1 Method***

AB: Naming, opposing—and this is the trickiest thing of all—that I tried to use the word "opposing" to mean "juxtaposition" ... "antithesis" ...anything in which you bring one thing into conjunction with another. But of course, it's too close to "opposites." And I think probably 90% of the people who ever looked at *Forming/Thinking/Writing* and seen the double helix all think opposing means "Now, what's the opposite…" But that's not what I meant. And then defining is the whole process of learning to classify and differentiate. Lots and lots of times I would say in a workshop or teacher training… I would have them read… or had them read some of what I call "National Honor Society prose" in which somebody would read a pretentious topic sentence or thesis statement, and then the next paragraph begins, "However…" [Laughs]. And in trying to learn the uses of chaos and get back different sources, I would ask teachers, and give them some poor piece of writing that had no sense of conceptualization in it at all, and I would say… What would you say about this? How would you begin teaching from this? And 90 times out of 100 they would say, "I think I'd ask for more detail. Show me more detail. The "show-don't-tell. Be more specific." [Laughs]

And there was a wonderful man at Bryn Mawr. A crazy Englishman and an Art Historian, he says—[laughs] he had false teeth that kept flying out, he'd get so excited—and he'd say… "What is this business. BE specific. BE specific…. I am not interested in the specific. I want the par-ti-cular." So I don't think anyone had a clue the difference between being specific and being particular.

Anyway, naming, opposing, defining yields the method, it yields glossing, it yields lexicons, it yields practicing classifications.

PA: *Forming/Thinking/Writing*, I recently asked if anyone has taught it and several people responded enthusiastically. One guy says he resources it 'for theory...'

AB: Yes I never understood that, given I wrote the book for basic writers, students, you know, who had failed the placement exams or whatever…

PA: Method. So thinking about Montessori… The Montessori Method distinguishes two planes of development. The first plane is 0-3 years old. The second, 3-6. In the first plane the child absorbs through body and mind, but what's less present, what's less necessary, is language. Of course, this isn't right. Language is present and necessary, but less central to the learning process and so less a pedagogical medium. The child is absorbing language. And in the second plane, the child...the way some Montessori scholars describe it is that the child becomes 'more abstract,' but I think what they mean is the child begins to articulate in language the concepts they have embodied and continue to embody.

AB: Oh excellent. Yes.

PA: So what's happening is, when children begin to grow the capacity to articulate their experiences and their awareness of their experiences, then the teacher has access to understanding 'where that child is' in their knowledge

AB: And dialogue is therefore the pedagogical [method]. Interpretation as the central act of mind.

PA: Which brings me to my next question…about assessment.

AB: “Assessment? Oh lord…”

PA: There is a note in *Forming/Thinking/Writing*, it is the only moment in the book dedicated to assessment—a footnote—that suggests dialogue with students in conferences. What is it that we look for in students’ reflections on their work?

AB: Assessment already gets into valuation and I never had any interest in that at all. But assessing in the sense of what’s going on...You know I tried...the essential thing to me was Vygotsky. I mean I did read Montessori, I read *The Montessori Method*, and I had those things in mind a century ago, but I don’t think they were operative as a vocabulary when I was writing. But Vygotsky was because what I treasured… When she says “plane” I do not know whether that is an Italian word with special connotations or if it’s some behavioristic translator trying to put things in terms of a sequence, a hierarchy… And dear Vygotsky says, when he’s discussing concept formation, that we go up and down all the time. And I have a joke about Buster Keaton being the only one that could manage that ladder because it’s like a clown going up and then down and then up and then down, and the point of that dynamic is that as you return to particulars, you return *from* a category that you have formed, and that allows you to broaden the particular...I used to use ‘vegetable store’ all the time. You can buy pears and that would be called “fruit,” and the fruits would be in “Fresh Vegetables & Fruits.” As you go more and more ‘abstract’ you can accommodate more in the particulars, and it helps you see, for instance, that in another context, with another purpose, a pear is a ‘vegetable,’ not a ‘fruit’...These terms ‘Fruit’ and ‘Vegetable’ are appropriate to certain settings. And thinking about how they are related as particulars involves assessment, and I would use *that* assessment, without the sense of evaluation, instead of “metacognition.” Because ‘meta’ is already, like metaphysics, very

abstract. I would think most people would think that metacognition would mean how do you go about defining, how do you categorize, more rhetorical in a way…

PA: But you had to give grades… How did you grade your students?

AB: I tried to use grades so that they were grading against themselves. And if somebody was really coming along very well, I might say ‘B’ meaning you’ve gotten more aware of what’s going on in your meaning making, and therefore I will appreciate that with the letter ‘B.’ But some people that were out great points… One girl who was not brilliant at all but she had a certain degree of imagination, and I gave her that kind of ‘B’ because she was coming along very nicely, [well] she wanted an ‘A’. And I remember she saw me on Brattle Street, and she was furious with me. She said, ‘You failed to validate me!’ [chuckles in amazement] And validation for her meant, ‘I want an ‘A.’ So grading had so many “social aspects” that I tried to say to the kids. ‘I cannot ask you to do something that you’ve never done before. I can’t expect you to experiment and then grade you and say ‘Ha ha! You fell down, didn’t you?’ If I’m asking you to try out things that are new. That’s just absurd. and yet I do have to give you grades. And I tried to explain that notion of grading against themselves.

I invented something that I thought was *very* successful. And that is a contract. I said, if you can’t come to class and you have a legitimate reason, you don’t have to tell me what the reason is, but you do have to say, I wasn’t able to come Tuesday, or I won’t be able to come Tuesday. You have to tell me that. And you can do that, let’s say, three times a semester, otherwise there are no cuts. You are supposed to be in class every single time the course meets. And I came to that idea very early on at life at UMass Boston, and this is way before I had articulated this contract. And there was this girl came up to me, and she said I wasn’t able to come. And she

said, ‘I wasn’t able to come last Friday.’ And I said, ‘Well I’m sorry because that was a good class and sorry you missed it,’ sort of gruff. And she said, ‘I had to go and pick up my brother who was getting out of jail.’ And I thought, ‘Oh my God this is a world that is not like Bryn Mawr College. This is a different world.’ And that’s what led me to thinking that their life is going to interfere. And those are the life situations which I cannot punish them for.

PA: Contract grading is something I’m going to implement in the fall as I teach *Forming/Thinking/Writing*.

AB: I just treasure the notion of you doing the exercises.

PA: Breaks my heart that more people don’t do them. Because I feel like if they did them, they’d understand the uniqueness of your pedagogy.

AB: I think you’re absolutely right. If you look at one of those exercises… let me think of one…

PA: The Ping/Pong

AB: Oh Ping/Pong was the best one in the book and people found it totally fascinating. I had a neighbor down in Westport, he ran a machine that made screws and bolts and things, he was a mechanic. And he loved that ping/pong. And they had a cat, and he said one day, he said, ‘that Samantha [the cat] was a real Pong.’ [laughs] He instantly loved the idea of being able to give a name to a set of behaviors.

PA: I presented this activity with my friend, Jessica. We did Ping/Pong together. I had her generate some vocabulary. What’s so interesting to me is that when I do this exercise, so many people’s minds pull out nouns and only nouns. Jessica, I could see her, I could hear her recognize

she was doing that, and she felt like she had to throw in some variety, so she threw in some adjectives. Didn't think about articles or any of the other syntactical resources, and that's what they are...You start to recognize them as *resources* when you do these exercises.

AB: Oh excellent. Yes.

PA: And then we looked at how we had arranged the words differently and it was very clear...The way she explained how she did it, she's a very visual thinker, and the concepts represented in the words, she attached a visual meaning to the words [she related the meanings visually]. And I totally don't. For me it's all the way things sound. For me the ping/pong is very much an auditory experience…

AB: So does Gombrich…

PA: Right. So we had a great discussion about how we organize things differently and what that said about our minds. And if I'm right, if I understand correctly, these are the kinds of discussions we have with our students. And then we talk about the implications of the way our individual minds gather meaning for the kind of writing that we do.

AB: Yeah. Right. Very good. Little footnote. I had a, what I call a non-conference, with women from different fields. Not all teachers, and certainly not all English teachers. One lawyer, an art historian, a gym teacher, a whole bunch of different … One of them was an Israeli, who has written/is writing a memoir, her great-grandfather was one of the earliest Zionists, but her family, when they went to the shore, her mother would always somehow manage to get them to look this way rather than that way because that way they would see a destroyed village...ghastly. Well anyway Linda said, about this ping/pong, well this is very confusing because in Hebrew the

word for mouse is… and it was something your mouth had to be this big to say [gestures wide, laughs]... So that led me to realize that ping/pong is linguistically determined and you would have to have a different pair...certain combinations of letters are going to be pronounced thus and so, and you're going to have to find the cluster which is like 'pong,' in what it does to the oral cavity… not that every word for mouse in every language is going to be pong. That was an important insight. But let me tell you that the Vygotsky notion of concept formation is that you start out and you get to a point of abstraction, of generalization, and you see that something is left out and you have to go back down to pick up another particular. And you are constantly going up and down.

AB: The first time I ever heard of Vygotsky was when my friend, Carolyn Blackmer, from whom I learned so much, a Swedenborgian [laughs], but she didn't think Swedenborg was a mystic, I mean she thought Swedenborg and Peirce were on the same wavelength… Anyway Carolyn said that she would like to give me the Vygotsky concept formation test. And it was a whole bunch of little wooden shapes, and the challenge was to make two categories, to fit them all into two categories. So that if you had, say, little wooden shapes that were round or circular and the others had sharp angles, but then you look over and there's another little wooden shape that doesn't fit into either of those categories, then you have to correct and go back and say, no, it can't be sharp angles, you have to revisit that. So you are enacting what Vygotsky says all concept formation involves, entails...this constant [up and down between generalities and particulars]… Well I was terrible at it because I had so little, I'm trying not to say 'affective,' but...sensory...that function of my mind was not at play in this game. I kept way up here. And I remember one of the categories I had was 'rollability' and Carolyn just loved that because it was totally unexpected and it did not include far more than half of the things, but it was brilliant in

reference to two or three. Anyway, the point was, it turns out the categories were in terms of the height of the shapes, that there were some that were taller than others. I would never have gotten that.

PA: So there was a specific outcome in mind?

AB: The outcome was expected in the sense that there was, I think, only one way in which you could categorize everything, not one of the shapes left over, they all had to fit into one or the other category.

PA: That's a well-designed lesson. That is very Montessorian. We guide students into an awareness that they make formations and how they do that so that they can use that as a resource for writing. Writing is always rhetorical, if by rhetorical we mean drawing from resources of meaning. What else could it be? And Montessori accomplishes teaching literacy by using physical materials because she is teaching children. Freire accomplishes this in the design of lessons, but they really function in the same way, and that is to help students develop an awareness of this process that happens in their meaning making.

AB: Right. And one way to talk about that process, is that we are continually differentiating. We may not know on what grounds, but we are. Which is why [laughs] I think of my darling little girl when she was three, because Fredric was brand new. I had baby food jars [gestures small size] and then apple sauce [jars] this size [gestures larger] … many of three or four different sizes...and I didn't do this on purpose but *she* had a purpose, which was to differentiate according to size. How big are they?

AB: When I first discussed pedagogy with a guy turned out to be a very good friend, he was a linguist, a very positivist linguist. I liked to, he says that I moved him in another direction, towards Pierce. But I remember his saying—maybe it was when I was talking about Montessori—he thought it was a shame and that it was not going to work, that I was modeling college-age pedagogy on Montessori, or very young learning of language. And he said, virtually what you were saying… that after the age of three and a half, the "sensitive period." Well, she may be right up to a point, but aren't there other forms of responding to the environment that are pedagogically useful?

***Appendix A.2 Intellectual Heritage***

AB: The woman who influenced me most [Carolyn Blackmer] and introduced me to Pierce, although my husband also did, was a Swedenborgian, but not in a usual sense. She saw into Swedenborg a way of thinking...When she read Peirce, it reminded her of Swedenborg. I took that idea long after she had died and did a paper at the Peirce society, and redid it and called it, "Why Peirce is hard to read." It was all about how certain metaphors, they were too worn out, and he said at one point he couldn't use "subjective" and "objective" as terms because they weren't "barbaric" enough. They were too familiar. When he wanted to talk about his triadic semiotic, he didn't turn to geist-ish metaphors, but to quakers, or maybe Swedenborg did too, I don't know, with firstness, secondness, thirdness. You know the Quakers do "First day" because they didn't want anything mythic and pagan. And so firstness, secondness, thirdness, that's just so invaluable, as you begin to think with those terms.

And another one that I love—as he's explaining firstness, secondness, thirdness: There's the barrel of explosives, and that's firstness, then there's the match, and that secondness (that's the

event) ... This is the potentiality, this is the event, and then, the explosion...is the meaning. [Laughs]. Thirdness. I think that is just stunning.

And another one he quotes Shakespeare, just two or three lines… I can't remember if it's the Merchant of Venice or Othello, in which there is a description of the boat leaving the pier, and then it comes back and the sails are in rags and the sailors are all dying. So this is firstness, going out, and then whatever happens is the event, is secondness, and coming back is the way things turn out. I don't know if that makes sense to you, if we're talking about method. To get past the handheld device intrusion into pedagogy by way of Peirce's semiotic I think is the answer.

AB: You're the only person who's ever commented on the fact that I cite Montessori...The notion that Freire, Montessori, Richards, Sapir...all of my heroes are all, I won't say on the same page (chuckles), but they really do take into account interpretation in a particular way.

***Appendix A.3 The Digital & Analogy***

AB: It makes me foam at the mouth when I think of how easy it is to take "digital" forms or methods because they are so either/or-ish. And I've been told that that's absolutely not true and that I'm way behind the times. Here's an example of what I mean… A local college sponsored a television thing about how teachers… everyone in the class has a handheld device. And the teacher has given the class a demonstration of definitions of 'metaphor' and 'simile.' And the teacher has a handheld device into which stream all of the devices of the class. And she puts a text on the board and asks, "Is this a metaphor or a simile?" And the little class punches "metaphor" or "simile," then those little punches or checkboxes stream into her super device, and she determines therefore if they get it. This really gave me heart failure. The old-fashioned rhetorical definition of simile is "...when you use like" and "metaphor's not" and that rhetorical

discrimination has *nothing* to do with the concept of analogy, which can be visual or not. I.A. Richards has a wonderful essay about how we're not supposed to "see" every metaphor, and if we do try to visualize—and he uses some things from Shakespeare that are just hilarious that you cannot visualize without destroying the analogy.

When I first read about this "wonderful thing" that could tell you if you had taught "metaphor" properly, I had just written a thing in my book on metaphor, unpublished, in which I used "Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore/ so do our minutes hasten to their end." That's a simile in terms of old-fashioned, rhetorical definition. But it is the most beautifully profound archetypal metaphor for time that recurs in tens of thousands of poems. And if I was teaching that, I would want them to make their own metaphor. And I'd give them a couple of other examples in which waves, and...all forwards do contend… that marvelous line… In sequent toil, all forwards do contend. And get them to understand *that*, even though there are big words, and they haven't a clue what it means when they first read it. If they read it with some other examples, they will get the idea; that they are metaphor animals, that they are able to see something that happens and think of it in terms of something else. But if you don't understand the concept "in terms of," you can't explain analogy. So in the process of teaching metaphor… if you want to do the rhetorical definitions, fine… but then, underneath that you have to talk about analogy, and in order to talk about analogy you have to talk about *the way* we talk about it, and that's "in terms of."

But I have a collection of people saying… "Oh the Antarctica is simply marvelous, in terms of penguins." [Laughs] Isn't that marvelous? And that was on National Public Radio! People have no conception of what a term is, different from a word, or a name, of why we need the word

"term" or of what "this in terms of that" might mean. But you can teach grammar, idiom, tense—all those basic skill type things— *and* get to geist. I think the most important thing for a teacher to do is guide students to discover, in themselves—and certainly this is Montessori—the power of making meaning. And the chief means of making meaning in *all* cultures, in *all* time, have been *analogy*.

PA: The thing is, I think I've kind of changed my mind about the digital now that I've spent so much time with your work.

AB: Oh now I find that *very* interesting. Can you expand on that?

***Appendix A.4 Montessori***

PA: After doing *Forming/Thinking/Writing* my experience of the computer is different. I see it as kind of bereft of possibilities. It's very linear...not just in the underlying language that it employs, but also in what you can do with it. I can't write on it. I can't draw circles on it. Or squiggles. All of the detail of that character is absent in my interaction with the computer. I can arrange things in linear ways, up and down, and side to side, but that's not much. There is a good deal of action involved, but it's not the same level of detailed action that the move of a writing hand employs. This brings me to something I thought you might enjoy.

So my son is about to move into the elementary classroom at his Montessori school. I went to the orientation and the teacher explained that in order to prepare children for eventual transition into public schools, they have to teach them how to print. Because public schools are no longer teaching cursive, and so they are expecting children to write in print and only print. And Montessori, of course, teaches that the flow of the physical movement of writing in cursive is a a different experience…

AB: Different experience entirely. And you remember a picture in Montessori, little children on their knees in the sandbox, and in the sand box they're learning to make a "C." And they have this huge sweep of big muscles to make the C.

PA: Yes. And when a child is printing...I had this experience with my son, who resisted cursive last year, even though he's gone through the same primary curriculum with the training of the hand in cursive motions and the sandpaper letters and all of that...but when he prints he doesn't distinguish with space between words. But if you're writing in cursive, it requires you—if not consciously then intentionally—to stop, pick up and put down again. If you're printing you're always already doing that. And just that difference alone… It's so amazing in how it makes a difference in the way we think, in the way we form language and meaning, and attach meaning to the signs… and how we practice and teach literacy… Isn't that wonderful?

AB: It is. I.A. Richards would embrace you, because he felt that the first thing that one of the tasks of the earliest grades was to teach whether it was a 'p' or a 'q,' backwards and forwards, I don't remember how he put it, but 'the shapes' is what you could begin with.

Well, when you were there did she know that you were a Montessori teacher?

PA: She does now, yes. I do my best to not impose myself. And their training is much better than mine is, at this point. They are wonderful teachers. It's a wonderful school. And I can tell because when you walk into that elementary classroom you can't find the teacher. I tell you it's one of my weaknesses as a teacher that I can't shut my mouth. It's not that I lecture. I generally don't lecture. I can't stop asking questions. I need to learn how to be quiet and design an environment that compels *them* to ask the questions.

AB: Oh this is so good. I had the same problem at UMass because nobody would talk to me. So I finally took my scarf off and tied it around my mouth, and they were so horrified and amused at the same time that it broke them up so that they could talk.

PA: One of the things I like to talk about is dialogue. If you walk into that Montessori Elementary classroom all of those children are working in groups and talking. It is about society, socialness, communication.

AB: Yes. *Entailed* in meaning making.

PA. Yep. That's why the teacher isn't…

AB: Visible. Yes. Very good.

AB: [So] How can Montessori's method be adapted to something [that] in my feeble understanding is antithetical [digital environments]?

PA: I always start with the disclaimer that I'm not "adapting" the Montessori Method. you can't do that. Her particular approach to teaching is aimed at 0-6 years old (although there is a curriculum developed beyond this) her work focuses on early childhood development. You had to have… It's based on the concept of stages of development. It was her belief that that's where the work needed to be done, and when you were past 3.5 years old you had lost the sensitive period of development in order to really benefit in the particular way she perceived. The beauty of her work and the reason it was so successful, I think, lies in the focus she brought to the relationships involved in "the event": the teacher, the material, the larger environment, and the child.

AB: Do you mean the larger environment in the world or the classroom?

PA: In the classroom. So the classroom has a very specific arrangement and that's what the teacher has control over. She has control of that environment, the material itself. She does not have control over the child's attraction, mood, will, aesthetics; she can not control those things. All she can do is observe the child, really try to come to an understanding…My first experience with Geertz' "thick description" was as a Montessori teacher in training [recording observations of the students].

AB: So the computer is the classroom environment?

PA: Well, it [the computer] can be the material. That's where I see the assisted invitations coming in... Where the student uses the computer, with his body, in an interactive way, then [afterwards] the student and teacher interact—the conversations happen around what happened in the manipulation of that material. The teacher designs the material, the material is designed with certain outcomes in mind, and then the discussion is one of the ways that the teacher can guide student conversations toward the kind of awareness the materials are intended to bring about.

AB: You're not saying that computers can do things that discourse in a normal non-digital way can do?

PA: I'm not talking about online writing instruction; this isn't a replacement. Montessori actually spoke about university level Montessori education. In Amsterdam. In fact the faculty at the

University of Amsterdam in the early 20th century talked about how to integrate her ideas into their teaching curricula.

AB: I would love to know about that.

PA: The core of her philosophy was the emancipation of the individual and the cultivation of independence in young people. Seems extendable to the kinds of students we teach.

AB: But that's sort of the aim, isn't it? Not the method.

PA: Yes. And I'm not sure what it would look like methodologically…

AB: A woman I met who had some children in Montessori said that the little children marched to the sink. Then she read montessori and discovered the reason they were marching to the sink at the casa di bambini was that the little children did not have running water in their houses or apartments, and so she wanted a way to keep them from scalding themselves as they turned on the hot water, and hot water in Italy is on the right, so they were marching, mapping on their body, left right left right, and they got to the stool and they stood up (I am so dyslexic spatially, but let's see...). They stepped up right foot, and then left foot, and then right… in other words so they would know that the next thing to do would be left rather than right and therefor cold rather than hot. So the cold/hot, left/right were analogous. And because left/right could be mapped on their bodies by means of their marching, that was how she protected them. But little American children do have sinks and they do not have to learn not to scald themselves because they're used to hot water business. I thought that was absolutely fascinating.

AB: I remember from the TLS (*Times Literary Supplement*) often there would be someone who writes an article and then there's a response in the letter comment, and then there's a response to the letter and a response to the response, and it goes on for weeks, and sometimes it's simply marvelous. And one of the long ones was about Montessori and I guess either the article or the first response had been how terrible it is that Montessori is so restrictive and … not fascist but… discipline turned into orders because they had cuisenaire rods. You know what they are? [Montessori's "Red Rods" Primary material.] This little child took the rods and was making a kind of log cabin out of them and the teacher very nicely came and took them away and put them back. She redirected him to lay them out as they were intended. Again, translating from shape/size to concept of order of size–-to go from shape to size, I guess that's the point. And for this person that was so horrified at that, for her or him, the main point… let them be "creative" and if they were using the rods to do their little thing, that was the thing to nourish. And it was terrible for this intrusive pedagogue to come and take away… Isn't that comparable to the sink story?

AB: It seems to me so many great academic writers and teachers—like Montessori, like Dewey—are disparaged for their writing style: they're obtuse, difficult to understand, and in the case of Montessori "too flowery." Montessori's metaphors are amazing. And she's very much criticized for them. So much of her symbolic life draws upon her Catholic religion and upbringing. She was a popular speaker….

***Appendix A.5 Paulo Freire***

He [Freire] came to UMASS and he came here, to this house, and he came in out of exile in Switzerland, back to Brazil, and one of his translators and his chief publishers in America was at UMASS Boston, Donald Macedo. "Paulo wants to know what you said in your introduction..."

because I introduced him at the Kennedy Library...I [had] quoted Freire… Oh I was so thrilled, of course. And what I had quoted was: “We have to look at the obvious and walk all around it.” That was one Freire moment in my life that I treasured.

Another moment was...Freire was to come to the 4C’s and he fell ill. So the woman who was in charge of programming knew me a called and said, “Would you like to substitute for Freire.” And I said, “Are you kidding…” (Laughs.) And I did, and they paid me one thousand bucks, which was pretty nice. And that’s when I lectured on that… unpacked, “Dialogue is the encounter between men to name the world.”

I hope at some point you write about misconceptions of Montessori and how that is comparable to how people picking up pedagogies for writing get things wrong. Look at what’s happened with Freire? I knew once of a professor who didn’t have a pedagogical bone in her body, though she was an important feminist, so I don’t want to run her down completely, but she did not understand Freire. And she actually would say to her students: Do you know that you’re oppressed? [Laughs] I mean, it is just so awful! The Pedagogy of the Oppressed does not entail or in any way encourage the idea of telling people what you want them to discover.

The incapacity to understand the most fundamental thing about Freire, which is naming the world *together*... Have you read Freire?

PA: I have read Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

Berthoff: If you don’t read other things, and you’re unenlightened, you’re going to misinterpret Freire. In some of my introductions to Freire I tried to suggest… Well I did write an essay called “Naming the Word Naming the World,” … and that’s in some collection. I’m trying to think

about how to tell you about how Freire can be best understood. When he came to UMass I just knew that if someone asked him a question that was not well articulated then he'd be thrown for a loop or confused, so I said what we have to do is to have plants, we have to plant questions—and tell people that we do have plants, don't do it surreptitiously—we have to have people prepared with good, substantial, articulate questions, and then he could tear off. Well, it worked. And one of the questions was: Why do you think that it is not the place to start teaching with learning the alphabet? And, one of the best things I ever read was something called "learning the alphabet in fourteen hours" because he had developed a way of teaching illiterates to construe letters, to recognize letters, and pointed out that in italian it's very much simpler because they're phonetic. No spelling is necessary in Italian schools because everything is spelled as it sounds, as with Montessori, too, surely. When he came to UMAss his response to that question was, "Human beings did not begin in the trees with "A" "F" "G"" [laughs]... I thought that was so wonderful. That made the point there.

In his earliest years he was teaching literacy with "Ba Be Bo" and it was important up to a point because of the sound-shape business in Portuguese, to say nothing even in Spanish, but he decided that it wasn't liberating. It was not liberatory, and the pedagogy of the oppressed, the other side of that is the pedagogy of liberation. So that's when he decided he needed to teach meaning along with the alphabet. And he "alphabetized" them. He did something called, the card of discovery. And it was letters (I am so bad at anything spatial that I just can't remember)....but I think it was something like letters across the top and across the bottom and you put them together like an old fashioned word game and you could make up words. [The "Discovery Card" activity is excerpted and included in *The Making of Meaning*, 159.]

AB: Another translation of that mile-long word in portuguese [conscientizacao] is '*critical* consciousness' and what that means is that you're dealing with meaning, "What does this mean if I say it this way," or "How does it come to mean that," or "Why do I have to mean that…" These are all questions about meaning, whereas 'metacognition' is much more granular, meaning focused on aspects of a process. Metacognition is sort of pre-meaning, in a way, so that if you say… Have you ever read Arnheim? He believes profoundly in visual thinking and that, to my mind, is close to what metacognition is referring to. And an example is simply to differentiate the foreground and the background visually, or left and right, or up and down, all the dimensions of an image that you are aware of as dimensions, I would say, that that's what's involved.

AB: There was an article called 'Alphabetizing in 14 hours,' I think that was sort of the title. And there were pictures. They sat in a circle and they were each...This is to introduce the idea of collecting generative words. And they had two weeks to come up with words, and of course they couldn't write yet so they did it orally, to come up with words that named their worlds. like Boat. Net. Shore. They were all fishermen. And they had as they learned to write. They had cards with room for eighteen words and then every list of words had to have bomb and peace and they were at the bottom…. It's incredible how much meaning making they can pull out of working with two categories. Dialectic.

***Appendix A.6 Expressivism & The Paradigms***

AB: This whole idea of "expression" ... The chief source that I know about was the Dartmouth Conference when the excellent Jimmy Britton and Nancy Martin and Harold somebody came over and brought with them what they fondly thought was Sapir saying that "language begins with expression." And I mean I really did admire Jimmy Britton especially, well both he and Nancy were quite extraordinary teachers, but they *completely,* wrongly, because of this Harold

person, misread Sapir. That he did not mean by "expression" (say what you feel) ... Expression was the term used to mean representation, as in mathematic: how do you express this value, the value of this thing. I mean, that's pretty important, and I don't think I ever made this point in writing. Maybe because I was so fond of both of them, I didn't want to embarrass them in any way. But that is the source….

[James Moffett] thinks in binary terms. He is the absolute opposite of anything I ever tried to do. He knew that, because we were on a panel together and I was the leader, the chair of the panel. And he says, 'you always thought I was…' (and he was very funny) '...some kind of heathen.' And I said, [Laughs] that's right. And we got along very well. But he is responsible for that whole thing that they mistook from Sapir about expression. I think I told you about that, right? That Sapir means by 'expression' what mathematicians mean by 'expression,' and that is 'represent.' And they thought it meant the affective.

PA: I think one kind of thinking powerfully shapes the field, and that's thinking in terms of 'internal' and 'external.' I don't know why it's necessary to do it.

AB: Yeah. Exactly. Like the guy who says "Moffett" and "Berthoff." I mean you can *not* do that if you have any understanding…

PA: I'd like to focus on the notion of allatonceness in my dissertation. I wonder if that characteristic of your ideas really came across in your scholarship…

AB: Well, it's in absolutely everything I ever wrote.

PA: Yes. I'm not sure what drives ideas into categories that refuse whole conceptions of things… Both dialectic and dialogue are essential to your pedagogy.

AB: Yes.

PA: Although these days, when you get into online writing instruction, dialogue becomes very *not* obviously essential, and therefore really necessary and important to talk about. Because people think that reflection is an internal thing. It is *merely* a person doing something to themselves. And it is therefore 'metacognition.' But something is really not happening in that formula, I think.

AB: This is the oldest story about our so-called field, that people get a new term and put it right back into the same old boxes.

You really need to have someone who really knows what you're up to. And you know who it was for me? Dear Bob Boyton. He was a teacher after all. He was the principal of Germantown Friends and taught and wrote textbooks with Maynard Mayer. He wasn't a scholar, but he absolutely understood the field and what I was up against. And used to say, "I understand what you're doing. I love it. Just don't give me a test on it…" (laughs). Because he knew he couldn't handle things like 'the dialectic of dialogue'... Would've made him just go through the ceiling.

PA: You know it seems that a lot of people in the field consider your work on the margins or marginalized in some way…

AB: Well yeah, it is. *Not* marginalized is rotten. I don't want to be part of the rhetoric consensus, gees. But marginal meaning 'not to the point' or something that is so idiosyncratic that it can't be used by anybody…

PA: That's my concern, with my own ideas, too. But Montessori was the same way, and I feel like her work is practiced now globally more than ever. There's got to be something to that… It's not a lost cause for us…

AB: It's not a lost cause, yes. But it's not going to be helped along by something called "the new expressivism" unless that means something which I doubt it really does mean, which is a new way of understanding why we're teaching in the first place… To teach *with* things, not *the* things. To teach them [students] to produce *things to think with*, not "communication"...

AB: And you know where method comes from in the Greek? It's the *metod hodos*, the way of the way. Triadicity is the way of the universe, and if you don't understand triadicity, well of course you're going to go right back to binary oppositions.

AB: Teaching, by definition, it is a method of showing how, of practical criticism. You know that practical criticism is a phrase from Coleridge. And he understood practical in Peircean terms. Practical meaning—not, does it work? Is it operational? But, what difference does it make if we proceed in this way? Oh I do think Coleridge is pivotal. And you know that wonderful quotation that I have at the head of a review of Russo, I think it is, from BF Skinner, the famous behaviorist you know, who is a good friend of Richards, and he said: "I have never understood why Ivor thinks that we have anything to learn from Coleridge about human thought. Nor does he understand why I feel the same way about pigeons."

[Laughs] I think that's charming.

**Appendix B: The Ann E. Berthoff Papers: An Extended Finding Aid**

*"Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore, so do our minutes hasten to their end." That's a simile in terms of old-fashioned, rhetorical definition. But it is the most beautifully profound archetypal metaphor for time that recurs in tens of thousands of poems. And if I was teaching that, I would want [students] to make their own metaphor. And I'd give them a couple of other examples in which waves, and... all forwards do contend… that marvelous line… In sequent toil all forwards do contend.*

~Ann Berthoff (personal interview)

***Appendix B.1 Introduction***

I arrive at the Joseph P. Healey Library on the campus of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, early on Monday, 11 June 2018. By 10 a.m. the milky morning fog has lifted high, though strands of cool still thread the boxy tunnels beneath the building that look out onto Savin Hill Cove, a fingerlet of Dorchester Bay. Because of the summer months' reduced student traffic, I see almost no one around or in the library, and I find myself questioning whether a door will be locked each time I reach to pull it open. Yet I know the archivists are expecting me, and sure enough, as I step through the open doors of the research room of the fifth floor University Archives and Special Collections, I am greeted warmly, reminded of protocols, and directed to the long, wooden table near the front desk. Awaiting me are six gray boxes—"Four linear feet," 103 folders—housing the "Ann E. Berthoff Papers," and a black binder, splayed to the collection's finding aid.[41]

[41] "Ann E. Berthoff Papers, 1918-2014, bulk 1960-2000." *Finding Aids for UMass Boston's Collections*. Open Archives Digital Collection at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The finding aid speaks for itself, I think, though a few features render it interesting. The collection dates range from 1918 (Berthoff was born in 1924) to 2014. The collection as a whole was created by Berthoff in collaboration with her good friend, Hephzibah Roskelly, who is in the process of publishing a book on Berthoff's life and work. It is my understanding, cultivated by conversations with both scholars, that the collection's organization is shaped somewhat by their dialogue and Roskelly's vision for her book. Evidence of this dialogue can be seen in the presence of sticky notes placed like little treasures, here and there throughout the collection—some composed to a general audience, some written to "Hepsie." These notes suggest a layer of reflection that complicates the collection, for it is never a given that marginalia represent a particular time or thinking event. This is probably always true, but the matter seems more important given this collection's subject. The commentary or reflection recorded in one note, or in one bit of marginalia, might have happened decades after original marginalia, decades of experiences, generating and shaping new meanings "to think with." For a woman whose philosophy appreciates "re-cognition" as a core concept, the evidence of this act throughout the collection seems particularly relevant.

Of note, too, is the collection's general tone. Although Roskelly's book is a biography, full of the life of Ann Berthoff, the finding aid reports that "very little material pertains to Berthoff's personal life" within the collection (3). Yet the collection brims with "life." The finding aid's brief "bibliographical note" (page 2) lists Berthoff's educational experiences as a student (Birmingham-Southern College, Cornell, Radcliffe) and as a teacher (Bradford Junior College, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore and Haverford colleges, UMass Boston). It identifies four of

---

http://openarchives.umb.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15774coll8/id/425. University of Massachusetts, Boston. Accessed 01 September 2018.

Berthoff's "heroes" in Marvell, Langer, Richards, and Freire, and offers a few sentences about her ideas ("...her work explored the relationship between meaning and writing," 2). The note ends with the claim that "[Berthoff's] legacy may be seen in the current pedagogical trend towards active learning" (3). This claim suggests an imagined audience beyond writing studies theorists; the focus on teaching and learning, both in the finding aid and in the collection's organization, emphasizes praxis, just as Berthoff would have it, I think.

A focus on teaching and learning emerges in the organization of the collection itself—both as presented in the finding aid and in the experience of the artifacts. UMass Boston offers a "Certificate in Archives." It is evident that students (for whom I am so grateful!) provided much of the labor of collating and processing the collection. Their experience levels, or working conditions perhaps, result in what an experienced archivist with whom I have consulted understands is unconventional labeling and organizing strategies. For instance, I'm told that typically a collection so small would not offer "series" as a category. Personally, I did not find that the contents of the folders easily matched the categories as laid out in the finding aid. Perhaps the categories themselves are just too broad. One of the lovely features in pondering such relationality is that it's utterly Berthovian.

My purpose in this chapter is to construct a detailed account of the Ann E. Berthoff papers for scholars interested in tapping the collection to better understand Berthoff's philosophy and scholarly life, but the collection also includes artifacts of value to those concerned with feminist historiography broadly within the academy, the field of English studies, writing studies, material culture, and pedagogy. In keeping with a methodology informed by feminist historiography and feminist materialism I have deployed critical imagination in the construction of this account of the collection's contents (Royster & Kirsch, Hallenbeck, Ritter, Glenn). The

use of a narrative form enhances this deployment and positions me explicitly, consciously as a maker of the "knowledge" of the collection itself. The features and connections my mind composes in its experience of this collection are unique to my proximity to Berthoff's scholarship and to Berthoff herself, with whom I've had the privilege to visit and speak on multiple occasions over the course of a year; other possibilities exist for seeing "what is there and not there, and [for] speculating about what could be there instead" (Royster & Kirsch 20). It is my hope that this chapter serves as a resource that inspires scholars to seek out those other possibilities.

Also, the concepts organizing my rendered experience of the collection—"Topics & Exchanges," "Materials & Marginalia,"—afford me a way to honor the multidimensionality of Berthoff's ideas, that consistently appreciate form in all of its "forms," including material. The organizing concepts also act as nexus points that bring together contemporary discussions within the field of composition/rhetoric and the artifacts of Berthoff's thinking. Because her scholarly career spans fifty years, 1960s-2010s, *materially* the collection's objects vary immensely. And the nature of the "exchanges" presented in ('present-ed' by) the collection is surely affected by this materiality, as recent scholarship in object-oriented ontology, actor network theory, and other discussions about materiality and rhetoric suggests (Lynch & Rivers, Rickert, Hallenbeck).

The Ann E. Berthoff papers instantiate a period of time during which the materials mediating our literacy acts are changing rapidly, but unique to Berthoff's collection are the meanings forming there—always in potential, always in "dialogue" with the person present with the collection at any given time. These meanings are *about* forms and forming (materiality, "materiality"). Organizing a review of the contents of her papers around concepts of "form"

seems a matter of respecting Berthoff and the circularities ubiquitous to her understanding of the triadic nature of the universe (personal interview).

Finally, two things: in the takeaways at the end of this chapter, I enact a dialogic sensibility, "assaying" between my own emerging knowledge of the field and Berthoff's work, and the materials I encounter in the collection, bringing a constant intention to appreciate the reflexivity inherent in the process of "reporting" the collection's contents (Royster & Kirsch 16). My hope is that the suggestions crafted in this final section help generate questions and lines of inquiry; this is my intent more than to draw conclusions. Dialectic, and awareness of its presence, is key to a Berthovian methodology, as, according to a triadic semiotics, meaning happens dialogically, always. Remaining faithful to an awareness that I am engaged in an ongoing, hopeful process is part of the methodology's gift. Although Berthoff does not identify much as "feminist," I think there is strong argument to be made that triadicity itself is feminist to the core.

In order to enhance the readability of this narrative account, I offer abbreviated bibliographic information for each artifact in the following work; detailed bibliographic information can be found for each artifact in the next section.

***Appendix B.2 Topics & Exchanges***

The first two boxes—series I, series II, and a few folders in series III—feature the bulk of the correspondence in the "Ann E. Berthoff Papers." Some of these exchanges occur in letters, many of them containing marginalia (inked asterisks, exclamation marks, red 'pointing hand' stamps, commentary) noting connections between letter contents and Berthoff's work. A sample of what these marginalia offer can be found in the next section of this chapter, "Materials &

Marginalia." This section, however, notes in some detail significant exchanges that can be found in the collection between Berthoff and the minds helping to shape her point of view.

One of these minds is that of novelist and philosopher, Walker Percy. Correspondence between Berthoff and Percy not only requests permission to reprint Percy's "Metaphor as Mistake" (*The Sewanee Review*, Winter 1958) but identifies Percy's book "The Message" (*The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man Is, How Queer Language Is, and What One has to Do with the Other,* 1978) as "the best discussion of Peirce's triadicity" and "Metaphor as Mistake" as "an excellent gloss on Language and Myth" ("Letter to Walker Percy," 11 August 1982). Percy's handwritten response requests payment in the form of "a copy." Percy writes, "I'm interested in what you do with Peirce's triadicity which I think is the most underrated philosophical idea since Aristotle—and probably more important" ("Letter from Walker Percy, 16 August 1982"). Berthoff writes to Percy again in a letter, to "answer [his] question about how I think [he] went wrong about Susanne K. Langer" ("Letter to Dr. Walker Percy, 30 April 1984). Berthoff asserts that "the heart of PNK [*Philosophy in a New Key*] is symbolic transformation," and that labeling Langer a "positivist" is "wrong," staunchly defending her underlying theory of language as triadic.

A note from Pulitzer Prize winning biographer, Jack Bate, offers feedback on Berthoff's essays, "I.A. Richards and the Audit of Meaning" and "IAR and the Philosophy of Rhetoric." Apparently, she'd sent him copies. Bate celebrates the essays for appreciating Richards' later work ("Letter from Jake Bate," 06 February 1983). A typed note from poet-scholar Kathleen Raine also celebrates Berthoff's understanding of the later Richards, and offers an interesting perspective on Richards' "valid alternative to the scientific-materialist view of reality" ("Letter to Ann Berthoff," 06 March 1983). A letter to Berthoff from I.A. Richards' wife, Dorothea

Richards, offers valuable insights into Richards' pedagogical orientation. She writes, "IAR thought *Speculative Instruments* one of his most valuable books as a foundation for modern education" ("Letter to Mrs. Berthoff," 30 March 1983). Other letters in Folder 1—from British scholar Richard Luckett, art critic Leo Steinberg, and critic Joseph Frank—offer valuable perspective on what these thinkers understood about what Richards or Langer was trying to do, or the danger of Derrida's *Grammatology*. Luckett's letter, I think, is particularly relevant for contemporary composition, as he writes, "She [Berthoff] is the only critic of IAR whom I have read who seems properly to have understood his thinking about the process of teaching and learning and their relation to the signifying properties of language and defining capacities of the mind" ("Letter from Dr. Richard Luckett to DEP/R," n.d.).

Other correspondence provides insight into the machinations of writing program administration and the general business of higher education ("Letter to Ann from Sandra," 08 April 1983; "Letter to Professor Lois Hughson," 20 April 1983; "Letter to Ann from Geoff Swallow," 10 October 1984; "Letter from Berthoff to Professor Leo Braudy, 24 October 1984"). This correspondence is international (See "Letters to Ann from Pat D'Arcy, 1985"), some pertains to grants and awards ("Letter to Berthoff from Leso,  The National Endowment for the Humanities, 12 December 1985"), others to conferences ("Letter from David Schleicher," 5 August 1983), or the business of publishing within the field ("Letter to Richard Gebhardt," 27 February 1986). These letters, and Berthoff's responses, reflect interesting tensions between administration and practitioner, perhaps unique to Berthoff, or perhaps not.

As a matter of tone, there are several pieces in this folder that speak to communication within and about higher-ed English. An example is an exchange between Berthoff and Phyllis Franklin, editor of the *ADE Bulletin* [Association of Departments of English] in 1984. In the

margins of Franklin's reply to Berthoff's query regarding the potential publication of a paper she gave at a conference, Berthoff writes, "First and only time an editor has talked to me as if I'd been a freshman." Franklin had written, "Your thesis—that philosophy is useful to people in composition—probably needs to be narrowed" ("Correspondence between Berthoff and Franklin, 1983-84"). Another example exists in a rejection letter from Donald Gray, editor of *College English*, 1984, who declines to publish "Killer Dichotomies" (an essay that later appears in the edited collection, *Farther Along*) on the grounds that Berthoff "shouldn't" judge the ideas of theorists outside of the premises of their fields ("Letter to Berthoff from Donald Gray"). Some correspondence seems "merely" to voice grievances ("Letter to John Gage," 04 October 1984, or "Letter to Teresa Enos from Cy Knoblauch," 03 October 1984), but I can imagine these letters speak to tensions within and between academic disciplines in potentially constructive ways. In some of these letters, Berthoff champions scholars. In some, she foists defenses of teachers against perceived "condescension" ("Letter to Murray Schwartz," 07 October 1984); her responses are unflagging.

Other material in the collection speaks to larger historical relationships in the field of composition/rhetoric. For instance, one letter discusses in detail her thoughts on the damage done by Noam Chomsky's influence on the field ("Letter to Brenda, Nancy, & Bob," 01 May 1988). This letter identifies a "line of infection" of apparently bad ideas about writing (positivistic) like this: "Chomsky—Roger Brown—James Moffett—Dartmouth Conference—the British liberals (Nancy Martin & Jimmy Britton—American teachers." In the letter Berthoff writes: "Moffett's positivism (what's Real is What's Happening: everything else is an abstraction—without recognizing that what's happening is too!) is not to be confused with his pedagogy which is generally sound and unattached to his theory…" Letters also emerge here from academic friends,

admiring “The Mysterious Barricades,” and wondering if her “return to Sapir and Pierce, Cassirer and Barfield” will be “criticised or ignored” (“Letter to Ann from Frank, March 2, 2000”). Included, also, are letters from school principals and teachers. Throughout these correspondences are references to Derrida and DeMann, and sometimes “the computer”: “I think the computer is death for those who write/naturally in a linear way” (“Letter to Brian from Berthoff,” 19 March 2000).

Among exchanges with colleagues, the collection features a good deal of correspondence between “Louise” and Berthoff, though there are several “Louises” present in the collection: Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Louise Smith, and Louise Rosenblatt. Attending to signatures, it seems most of this material is from Louise Smith, who is also Professor emerita at UMass/Boston. Editor of *College English* from 1991-1999, Smith spearheaded the project, *Audits of Meaning: A Festschrift in Honor of Ann E. Berthoff* (1988). Of this correspondence, “Letter from Louise Smith on ‘Coleridge and the Imagination’” (28 September 1988) clarifies the satisfying allatonceness of polarity and triadicity existing together as a dynamic system. A wonderful printed out email with a note from Louise Rosenblatt reads: “I forgot this was an e-mail message! Do you use e-mail? my address...” (“Note to Berthoff from Rosenblatt,” 25 May 2002).

Other exchanges between Rosenblatt and Berthoff exist in the folder, mostly inquiries into projects they had going on individually. There is a valuable note, I think, in Box 3, Series III, Folder 12, on a copy of Rosenblatt’s “Writing and Reading: The transactional Theory.” Ann’s marginalia occur throughout, but a note on page 17 analyzes Rosenblatt’s visual representations in terms of Peircean triadicity:

> CSP considered John Dewey not a philosopher but a natural scientist. LR's emphasis on personal, private feeling/experience does not gainsay Peirce—or does it? She takes the Interpretant as being psychological in character, but CSP was willing to speak of the interpreter only as a 'sop to cerberus'—: too complex to explain that it is the idea/meaning—i.e. the INTERPRETANT—held by an interpreter that constitutes the triadic reign, along with the Representamen and Object. Meanings are our means of making further meanings. LR's 'attention' acts as the Interpretant, but note that it's missing from the figure. [What] accounts for the 'continuum'? The iceberg metaphor undercuts/contradicts the concept of transaction."

Berthoff refers here, at the end of this passage, to Figure 1, "The Efferent/Aesthetic Continuum," in Rosenblatt's text.

One of the lovely aspects of the experience of the Berthoff papers are these instances of what Rosenblatt identifies as "kindred spirit" ("Letter to Berthoff from Rosenblatt, 23 May"). Many people it seems have shared with Berthoff, over decades, passionate dialogue about the nature of language, writing, and teaching. In this respect, the artifacts of her archive include evidence of her role not just as colleague but also as mentor.

A substantial number of artifacts within the collection reflect Berthoff's role as mentor throughout her career. These artifacts include letters from teachers who taught to some degree, or perhaps sought to teach, FTW: Dorothy Nelson, Bob Diyanni, Joseph Summers, Ann Raines, Robert Foulke, and others. The collection also includes tenure letters for both Louise Wetherbee Phelps and Linda Brodkey, letters that are perhaps extraordinarily detailed, fortified with evidence and nuanced analysis. Both letters include a "summing up," if you will, of "the state of affairs in current rhetorical theory" as Berthoff understood them at the time ("Letter to Lazerson

from Berthoff," 06 February 1988). Also, in the collection is a letter from Linda Brodkey, a personal note of thanks, though she was not going to be tenured at UPenn, despite Berthoff's letter of recommendation. The note suggests that her having published in TEXT [Pre-TEXT] ("etc.") contributed to the situation, her "early work" rejected "either because it wasn't cognitivist or wasn't slavishly literary." She guesses in the note that she would find herself "probably at the University of Texas at Austin" ("Letter to Berthoff from Brodkey," 10 Feb 1988). Letters from other mentees include insights into how Berthoff helped shape teachers and their teaching ("Letter to Berthoff from Paulo," 17 August 1983; "Letter from Martha Clark Cummings," 20 September 1986; "Letter from Pat Bizzell," 18 November 1986).

Among the Folder 1 official correspondences are back-and-forth letters in the service of procuring permissions for Berthoff's books, particularly *Reclaiming the Imagination: Philosophical Perspectives for Writers and Teachers of Writing*. These exchanges include Susanne K. Langer, Walker Percy, and Clifford Geertz. Included is a letter to the editor regarding a certain scientist's inability "to recognize hypothesis as a primary mode of critical inquiry" ("Letter to Radcliffe Quarterly"). A fascinating letter from author and literary critic, Robert Gorham Davis, regards Pragmatism, and a note from Peter Scholl at "Luther College" addresses the article he "promised, which concerns the team-taught course in writing and drawing" he completed with John Whelan ("Letter to Ann from Peter Scholl,10 April 1998"). Other significant exchanges exist between Berthoff and author and scholar, Frank Bergon; Berthoff and editor Bob Boynton; Berthoff and colleague, scholar Sandra Schor.

More generally of note are copies of the "Letters" section of the *London Times*. Berthoff participated in several exchanges published in the "TLS" (*Times Literary Supplement*). Copies of these exchanges, and letters surrounding them, appear in the Berthoff papers in several folders as

repeated documents. The repetition, I think, speaks to Berthoff's passion for the positions she takes in these conversations. Clearly, she wanted to be sure evidence of the debates would be captured in the archive. These artifacts include lively exchanges, between Berthoff and literary critic Graham Pechey, in which Berthoff breaks down the language/writing of George Steiner (critic) ("Letter to Mr. Pechey," 24 May 2004). There is also an exchange between Berthoff and British philosopher David Wiggins regarding a piece in the TLS (newspaper article included, with marginalia). Many exchanges exist with literary critic Frank Kermode. Clearly a Richardsonian, Kermode and Berthoff share personal, political, and philosophical perspectives on readings and ideas. The folder includes a note from Ursula Le Guin regarding Berthoff's contribution to the TLS in which she critiques "two reviews of books about Ronald Reagan" and Reagan's political treatment of education "(Letter to Ann from Ursula Le Guin, 20 September".) Prominently, Berthoff's argument with Jonathan Culler regarding the importance of I. A. Richards' later work plays out in a *TLS* exchange in which Berthoff critiques Jonathan Russo's biography of Richards ("Letters" *TLS*, June 20-28, July 6-12, 1990). Essentially, Berthoff argues for the importance of Richards' education philosophy and pedagogy, as these stem from semiotics and the heuristic nature of signification practices. Culler is having none of it in this exchange, but letters from supporters suggest Berthoff has much support for her appreciation for the later Richards.

Regarding her publications, several folders are dedicated to Berthoff's books: FTW, TMM, TSL, and RI. These folders include book covers, correspondence with publishers, and casual reviews. Respondents include deans, colleagues, fellow teachers, graduate and undergraduate students. Copies of formal, published reviews can be found here, too, including a review by Ross Winterowd of Berthoff's edited collection, *Richards on Rhetoric* (1990), in

which Winterowd says: “Because Richards’ work is now largely anachronistic, one must ask whether or not *Richards on Rhetoric* gives its readers an adequate perspective on the historical importance of its subject.” The folders include some acceptance and rejection letters. Substantial exchanges with semiotician and linguist, Thomas Sebeok, editor-in-chief of the journal, *Semiotica*, are here, as are several of what Berthoff considers are her “best” essays, all published in *Semiotica* (personal interview). These essays largely presage *The Mysterious Barricades.*

Evidence of Berthoff’s experience publishing can be found outside of the “book” folders too. Box 2, Folders 20 & 21, are dedicated to artifacts surrounding communication with publishers and include lists of potential publishers, their responses, and her responses to their responses (which are often lively). Other folders include letters to Hephzibah Roskelly regarding publications, including what appears to be an outline of a draft of Roskelly’s book. An exchange between Berthoff and Dixie Goswami lends insight into Berthoff’s relationship with editor Bob Boynton. Drafts of unpublished works can be found in the collection, including “Writing it Down/Writing it Out/Writing it Up,” the follow-up “textbook” to FTW, co-authored with Tom Derrick. Also unpublished is Berthoff’s follow-up to TMB, a bound manuscript, *Metaphor and the Powers of Language* (2009; Box 3, Series IV, Folder 14). Box 3, Folder 16 features a manuscript co-authored with C. Jan Swearingen, a dialogue between the two scholars around what they term “The 4 H’s: Hermeneutic, Homiletic, Heuristic, Heirophantic.”

Several folders feature copies of articles and talks Berthoff composed over decades. Of note are the many articles published in *The Sewanee Review*. These can be found in various folders, often repeated, sometimes with marginalia. The folder featuring “Correspondance about Paulo Freire” (Box 1, Folder 5) includes a photocopy of Phyllis Lassner’s article, “Bridging Composition Studies and Women’s Studies: the Work of Ann E. Berthoff and Susanne K.

Langer" (from *The Journal of Teaching Writing*, Spring/Summer 1991). This includes handwritten notes between Berthoff and Roskelly. I am not quite sure why this article can be found in this folder, though the other items connect explicitly with Berthoff's preparations to host Paulo Freire in Boston in 1985: a typed copy of Berthoff's "Kennedy Library Introduction" of Freire, with marginalia; a list of published works about Freire by Berthoff; a double entry notebook of reflections on Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy. Box 2, Folder 26 features flyers and articles about Freire and many handwritten notes in preparation for Freire's visit to Boston.

As is evident by the finding aid, much of the correspondence available in the collection is difficult to categorize; although only two folders are labeled "miscellaneous," it is difficult to imagine the concepts organizing the "personal" and "professional" folders as particularly distinct. All of these folders (particularly Box I, Folders 10-17), contain exchanges between colleagues about professional work, though these exchanges are often "personally" invested. These conversations, and others folded into later folders, include scholars such as James Slevin, Beth Daniell, Cheryl Glenn, Cy Knoblach and Lil Brannon, Gary Lindberg, Neal Bruss, John Ramage, Susan Wells, Eugene Green, Paul Kameen, Gary Levin, Marilina Salvatori, James Zebroski, Rosamond Rosemeier, Phyllis Lassner, Howard Tinberg, Renee Watkins, Molly Wingate, Dahliani Reynolds, Kate Ronald, Richard Miller, and Jason Palmieri. Some of these voices emerge as part of the "Correspondences" project, a publication in "broadsides" featuring essays and dialogic responses on topics suggested by Berthoff as editor. Topics included structuralism, semiotics, peer tutoring, Freire, literacy, dialogue, process (Box 3, Series IV, Folder 5).

***Appendix B.3 Materials & Marginalia***

Two other areas of interest instantiated in the collection include Berthoff's research notes and artifacts surrounding her teaching. Materially these artifacts differ greatly, and in interesting ways. For instance, throughout can be found evidence of Berthoff's personal use of dialectic, via "double entry notebooks." Some of these seem to be notebooks she kept as a teacher, records of daily goings-on and her reflections. Most "double entry" exercises, however, occur as loose sheets scattered among articles, lesson plans and syllabi, sometimes with hand-drawn lines down the middle of the page. The writing is rarely a linear, line-filling experience; phrases, drawings, sketches, lines and arrows, loops and groups of words and sentences roam areas of the pages, relationships suggested across the middle line by virtue of proximity. Other materials include blue books, printed out/Xeroxed assignment sheets, green/beige computer paper, dot-matrix computer paper, greeting cards and postcards.

Many newspaper articles exist in the collection, some whole pages folded and unmarked, many cut out with scissors and mounted with paste on lined notebook paper. For example, one will find in Box 2, Series III, Folder 4, the newspaper article from Rodney King's "People can we all get along?" speech; this is the piece that features so prominently in Berthoff's essay "What Works? How Do We Know?" (*Journal of Basic Writing*, 1993). Although the King article does not, many others include marginal notes in the form of Asterix and stars, exclamation marks, underlining and circling that appears to draw connections. More interesting perhaps are the sections of typed passages cut out and pasted onto notebook paper. The effect, especially in some of the later folders, is quite a montage of mixed print media.

Of note as well, the ink used for most of the handwriting throughout the collection, especially in research notes and on note cards, is very colorful. Several stacks of notecards can

be found reflecting on readings for courses taught and taken, and readings in research for her books and articles. Marked in black, blue, and red ink, these notecards also contain markings in the form of ink stamps, marker, and pencil. The markings don't appear to be systematic. Also, unsystematically, sticky notes can be found throughout the collection, sometimes stuck directly to newspaper or other kinds of paper, sometimes also fastened with plastic paper clips. These notes seem to represent a layer of reflection composed late in life, as Berthoff gathered materials to contribute to the archive. Some notes are addressed to "Hespie" or "you." Other notes are typed and appear to more formally communicate to a general audience; these notes might represent earlier reflections on work, given their distinction materially from the sticky notes. It's interesting to note the manner in which correspondence in this folder becomes more and more printed-out over time, less and less handwritten or typed; artifacts from the 2000s seem noticeably less composed via typewriter. Letters are either handwritten or printed out. Two artifacts (one from Louise Rosenblatt, one from Cheryl Glenn) appear to be emails, printed out and snail-mailed to Berthoff.

Mostly typed, several syllabi from Berthoff's teaching experiences exist in the collection. Marginalia, if present, is mostly in pencil, though she includes some typed remembrances (on blue, lined note paper). A sample student blue book examination response with Berthoff's markings, checks and underlining, exemplifies the kind of marginalia on course materials that can be found; there is very little evidence of her feedback to students throughout the collection. Box 2, Series III, Folder 7 includes notes from her post as Randolph Visiting Distinguished Scholar at Vassar College 1989-1990. This folder also includes course and instructor evaluations, a commencement program with checks beside names and notes on the back. Course materials from classes and workshops Berthoff delivered include a "Language & Literature" course at

UMass/Boston. These documents offer student feedback on the course and her thoughts about that feedback. A substantial number of documents exist from "Workshops on Writing across the Curriculum." These include double entry notebooks and workshop activity descriptions. Also included is a packet of assignment descriptions apparently generated in teacher-training workshops during which Berthoff asked teachers to analyze how specific assignments they had created in the past went well or went wrong. Participant work includes reflections from Frank Bergon, Tom McHugh, Bill Gifford, and Beverley Coyle. Other course materials include syllabi, etc., for courses "Shedding the World," "Languages of the Imagination: Multimodal 'meetings' of English 482F," and materials from a "Geography" WAC workshop she taught at Butler University in the 1980s.

Some of the earliest material in the collection comes in the form of grade reports from Berthoff's early schooling in Alabama. The browned paper is brittle to the touch, the type fading. A copy of "The Mirror," high school yearbook from 1941, features a "senior report" penned by Ann Evans (Berthoff's maiden name), and also features an early photograph. Overall there are just a few photographs in the collection. Of Berthoff there is one photo from Marquette ("spring 1983"); one with Tom Derrick; a few in black and white, xeroxed along with published articles or essays they accompany. Of these headshots, only one features Berthoff smiling. She seems to notice this upon reflection, as the marginalia next to the picture reads, in blue ink, "grrrrrr!"

A final note about the marginalia: many of the artifacts do not feature it. These include copies of her published articles and chapter drafts. Two whole copies of the *Semiotica* article, "Sapir and the Two Tasks of Language," for instance, can be found in different folders, unmarked. Actually, much of the contents of Boxes 3, 4, and 5, contain artifacts in their entirety,

without marginalia. For example, Box 3, Series IV, Folder 19 includes copies of the published *CCC* Berthoff/Lauer debate responses, without marginalia.

Yet much material in the earlier folders, including letters of correspondence, and some items of note in the later ones, too, feature marginalia inscribing Berthoff's thinking-through of the relationship between her theoretical orientation and those of others, both in our field and in related fields, such as linguistics and anthropology. These instances hold potential to serve as both illuminating and clarifying. Often the marginalia is not linguistic. For instance, on a note from scholar Marty Bickman Berthoff links in red ink "Jane Addams" to the phrase "active mind" ("Letter to Berthoff from Bickman, 06 January 2000"). More often, though, we find notes of commentary in phrases, sentences, paragraphs. An example: blue notes in the margins of a review of FTW written by Bill Woods (*College English*, April 1981) can be traced to Berthoff's "reply," a two and a half page, detailed argument against his claim that her textbook does not engage students in full rhetorical inquiry ("Letter to Professor William F. Woods"). A copy of the letter reads, in blue pen at the top, that it was "never answered."

***Appendix B.4 Takeaways***

Having touched every article at least once—if not with my hand, then with my eyes—I am moved most by three of the collection's aspects. First, the papers instantiate the allatonceness key to both Berthoff's philosophy of language and this dissertation, specifically in their representations of dialectic and dialogue. The substantial marginalia is evidence of Berthoff's re-*cog*nizing meanings as she reads/writes, her mind forming connections and relationships, creating distinctions and affinities, evolving dialogically with colleagues, in correspondence, and with her own previous meanings, via marginalia on early drafts and published drafts. Also "allatonce," the personal and social exist as one within this collection; I am struck by the extent

to which this collection speaks to the usefulness of resisting the dichotomizing of knowledge and the knowledge-making process into "personal" and "social." The constant presence of dialogic reflection—on personal notes, personal letters from others, published texts, even "business" memoranda—demonstrates allatonceness. And considering my role as "reader" of the archive, and writer about the archive, my own constant practice of dialogic reflection *enacts* allatonceness.

What also strikes me is the nature of Berthoff's circles of influence. The voices emerging in this collection, both supporting Berthoff's ideas and challenging them, belong to assorted disciplines and interests: semioticians, literary critics, ethnographers, novelists and poets, rhetoricians and philosophers, teachers, historians, scientists, administrators, publishers, politicians, philosophers from multiple continents. At every turn the artifacts suggest a mind gathering from a wide field, not just in terms of disciplinarity; Berthoff's operationalizing of the resources of language and signification enable her to claim common ground with all disciplines (thus, too, her investment in WAC/WID), but it also invites a queering of roles and communities. Represented in the collection are teachers as students, students as scholars and writers, colleagues as audience, editors as friends. I don't mean to romanticize, as if the collection offers mere resistance to notions of purity; likely many archival collections that include business and personal artifacts can be reasonably interpreted as challenging clear categories and roles. Rather I am wondering about the extent to which voices outside the field of composition/rhetoric emerge as central to this collection, and to Berthoff's ideas, yet those ideas seem directed to one specific audience. Berthoff's goal was to encourage writing teachers (of all grades and ages) to think of themselves as philosophers, to encourage them to teach writing as a way of forming meaning (personal interview): The audience of her life's work consists of people who teach writing, in

any genre or discipline, of any grade. So just as Berthoff resources a variety of perspectives to form her own meanings, the overarching concept shaping those perspectives into her purpose and message seems singular: "teaching." Much as pedagogy—the art of crafting teaching/learning spaces—shaped the later work of Berthoff's hero I. A. Richards ("Letter to Berthoff from Dorothea Richards"), just as it also shaped much of the work of Berthoff's heroes Vygotsky and Freire, so pedagogy, it seems, serves as Berthoff's steering concept.

Finally, and perhaps more than anything this reflects my positionality as an early-career scholar, I am impressed by the representations of struggle and success throughout this collection. The presence of rejection letters, and entire "failed" projects—afforded equal treatment with "successes" within the collection, in terms of amount of reflective attention—this balance of evidence supports Berthoff's focused dedication to "the cause" of triadicity. The projects themselves (failed promotion procurement, *Writing it Down/Writing it Out/Writing it Up*, the course at UMB that "didn't make") seem accounted-for dispassionately within the context of a lifetime's work. Although explicitly "about her," these works, and their measures of success, stand as mere evidence of a scholar in the field during a particular period of time. Even the frank, very passionate marginalia ubiquitous in the collection, seems less personal in this even context; the dispassion balances the consistent vehemence with which Berthoff argues for triadicity and its pragmatic implications. Generally, Berthoff views assessment in equally dispassionate terms, and the result, I think, is an ironically feminist accounting of relationships, "...assessment, without the sense of evaluation" (Berthoff, personal interview). When Berthoff says that "the most obvious thing about what [she] thought [she] was doing never got across," I hear in her voice a sense, not of regret, really, but more of wonderment, tinged with a heavy hope. The struggle against dichotomizing, to get triadicity through, to operationalize it in our teaching via

method… Although she soon will not be contributing further to the effort (thus the heaviness), it goes on, the triadicity's potential impact never diminishing. A generous, balanced resource, the Ann E. Berthoff papers exist now to help continue the work.

***Appendix B.5 Bibliographic Details from the Archive***

Bate, Jack. Letter to Ann Berthoff, 06 February 1983. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Bergon, Frank. Letter to Ann, March 2, 2000. Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 2000-2010," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Brenda, Nancy, & Bob, 01 May 1988. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Brian, 19 March 2000. Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 2000-2010," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. "Correspondences." Box 3, Series IV, Folder 5, "Writings: Correspondences 1-11, 1984-1988. The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to John Gage, 04 October 1984. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Lazerson, 06 February 1988. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence,

1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. to Professor Leo Braudy, 24 October 1984. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Professor Lois Hughson, 20 April 1983. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. *Metaphor and the Powers of Language*, 2009. Box 3, Series IV, Folder 14. The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Notes from post as Randolph Visiting Distinguished Scholar at Vassar College, 1989-1990. Box 2, Series III, Folder 7. The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. "Letter to Mr. Pechey, 24 May 2004. Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 2000-2010," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Murray Schwartz, 07 October 1984. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Radcliffe Quarterly. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Richard Gebhardt, 27 February 1986. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Dr. Walker Percy, 11 August 1982. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Dr. Walker Percy, 30 April 1984. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Berthoff, Ann. Letter to Professor William F. Woods. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Bickman, Marty. Letter to Berthoff, 06 January 2000. Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 2000-2010," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Bizzell, Pat. Letter to Ann Berthoff, 18 November 1986. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Brodkey, Linda. Letter to Berthoff, 10 Feb 1988. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Cummings, Martha Clark. Letter to Berthoff, 20 September 1986. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and

Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

D'Arcy, Pat. Letters to Ann, 1985. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Evans [Berthoff], Ann. "Senior Report." *The Mirror*. City of Phillipa High School, 1941. Box 3, Series 4, Folder 11 "Writings: juvenilia [Berthoff's student work, quad] 1941-1943," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Freire, Paulo. "Letter to Ann Berthoff, 17 August 1983. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Gray, Donald. Letter to Berthoff, n.d. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

King, Rodney. "People can we all get along?" Box 2, Series III, Folder 4, "Teachings: classroom exercises" 1970-1984. The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Knoblauch, Cy. Letter to Teresa Enos, 03 October 1984. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Le Guin, Ursula. Letter to Ann, 20 September. Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 2000-2010," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Leso, The National Endowment for the Humanities. Letter to Berthoff, 12 December 1985. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Luckett, Richard. Letter to DEP/R. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Percy, Walker. Letter to Ann Berthoff, 16 August 1982. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Raine, Kathleen. Letter to Ann Berthoff, 06 March 1983. Box 1, Folder 18, "Correspondence: with and about I.A. Richards, 1966-2007," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Richards, Dorothea. Letter to Mrs. Berthoff, 30 March 1983. Box 1, Folder 18, "Correspondence: with and about I.A. Richards, 1966-2007," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Rosenblatt, Louise. Letter to Berthoff, 23 May. Box 1, Folder 10, "Correspondence: miscellaneous, 1983-2001," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Rosenblatt, Louise. Note to Berthoff, 25 May 2002. Box 1, Folder 2, "Correspondence, 2000-2010," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Rosenblatt, Louise. "Writing and Reading: The transactional theory." Box 3, Series III, Folder

11, "Teachings and Syllabi for UMass Boston English courses," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Schleicher, David. Letter to Ann Berthoff, 5 August 1983. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Scholl, Peter. Letter to Ann, 10 April 1998. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Schor, Sandra. Letter to Ann, 08 April 1983. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Smith, Louise Z. Letter on 'Coleridge and the Imagination,' 28 September 1988. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Swallow, Geoff. Letter to Ann, 10 October 1984. Box 1, Folder 1, "Correspondence, 1980-89," The Ann E. Berthoff Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Joseph Healey Library, University of Massachusetts, Boston.