DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 117 CS 205 417

AUTHOR Miles, Josephine
TITLE Working Out Ideas: Predication and Other Uses of Language. Curriculum Publication No. 5.
INSTITUTION California Univ., Berkeley.
SPONS AGENCY Carnegie Corp. of New York, N.Y.; National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 58p.; Project also sponsored by University of California, Berkeley.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications Department, Bay Area Writing Project, 5635 Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720 ($1.50 postage and handling)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cognitive Development; Educational Research; *Expository Writing; Higher Education; Student Improvement; Teaching Methods; *Writing (Composition); Writing Exercises; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Bay Area Writing Project; *Composition Process

ABSTRACT

This booklet is one of a series of teacher-written curriculum publications launched by the Bay Area Writing Project, each focusing on a different aspect of the teaching of composition. The introduction describes an analysis of predication that offers teachers insights into ways of helping students develop an expository thesis and study more closely and consciously the relationship between a subject and an idea about the subject. The rest of the booklet is a collection of essays written by the author over a period of 40 years on the power of students to compose their thoughts and the power of teaching to help them. The first essay describes the results of an experiment with a freshman composition class; the second essay summarizes the report of a subcommittee established in 1960 to study students' actual classroom writing abilities and means of improvement; the next two essays deal with the principle of using reason in writing, and the next two with more technical analyses of the way language works in selecting subject and style. The last essay is a general restatement of what is already known about composition and what research has yet to uncover. (AEA)

Working Out Ideas: Predication and Other Uses of Language

By

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Bay Area Writing Project

Curriculum Publication No. 5

The Bay Area Writing Project is an effort by school teachers, college faculty, and curriculum specialists to improve the teaching of writing at all levels of education. The Project is funded by the CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK, the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, and the UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY. The findings of this study do not necessarily represent the views of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Individuals desiring information concerning The Bay Area Writing Project or the National Writing Project should write to Bay Area Writing Project, Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Preface

For years I have wished for a publication introducing teachers to Josephine Miles' insights on the teaching of composition. This publication fulfills that wish.

For the past twenty years Josephine Miles has been an inspiration and guide to teachers of literature and composition through her work with the Central California Council of Teachers of English, the California Association of Teachers of English, and the teaching credential program in the School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. She helped plan the Bay Area Writing Project in the late 1960's and annually participated in the Bay Area Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute. Her analysis of predication has given teachers new insights into ways of helping students develop an expository thesis. Her writings have identified one of the central problems in the way writing is taught: "It is that a sort of inert trust in data as data, uninterpreted, and a counter mistrust of human thought, has led Americans to teach fact rather than ideas and accumulation rather than composition."

I particularly want to thank Richard Murphy, Bay Area Writing Project teacher consultant from 1978, now at the University of Santa Clara, for helping coordinate the preparation of this publication.

James Gray, *Director*
Bay Area Writing Project
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I.

Introduction

How to develop an idea at eight or eighty? That is the question to which teachers devote themselves, and on which teachers of composition in every subject spend a special amount of time. Graphically, we recognize an idea when the lightbulb in a comic strip goes on. In language, what are its traits and how can we help people of all ages and purposes make their ideas light up with ease and pleasure?

An idea, as I am using the term here, is a generalization. It makes not a statement of specification, like "The boy built the boat," but a general remark like "Boys build boats"—that is, it pluralizes the person or extends the time of the predicate by saying something ongoing, applicable to more than one instance. What we call a proposition, or assertion, or theme, or thesis is this general idea which can hold specifics together. It is the way of thinking that makes possible the forming of plans, choices, theories, hypotheses: "We plan to leave tomorrow *and* to go from here to Chicago." "We'll *either* drive *or* go by plane." "*If* we are delayed, we'll let you know." In other words, the logic of generalization allows for additions *(and)*, or choices and alternatives *(or)*, or causes and implications *(if)*, with their negatives *but, nor, though*. These concern *all, none*, or *some*,—the last being usually what we know enough about to generalize, though scientific law may try to deal with absolutes. As a basis, the grammar of generalization cooperates with logic and rhetoric by providing just the forms, the adjunctive (adjective) and conjunctive modifying phrases and clauses which supply context for the subject-predicate and the stages of its development.

When journalists ask for the context of *when, where, how, why, about who-what* they are focusing upon this nucleus of grammar-logic, the assertion with its adjoining qualifications. Even a word has such a form. In *intermediate*, for example, the *med* is the nucleus of meaning, the *inter* the prefix of where or place, the *ate* the suffix of how or manner. So too a sentence has a nucleus of meaning, the subject-predicate in a context of adjuncts—as for example in "Intermediate schools in the western states grow more complicated when they grow older," the assertion about the topic intermediate schools, that they grow more complex, is qualified by place where and time when. So too a thesis paragraph or chapter on intermediate schools could be supported by adjunctive paragraphs or chapters

with more about the western states and more about the stages of their growing older. A paragraph may modify other paragraphs just as a word or phrase or clause may modify others.

As people have ideas at eight or eighty, they may develop these ideas in a word or sentence or a paragraph or a chapter or book. The center is the simple generalization: that's what we need to teach at every stage, from "What if we went to the zoo tomorrow?" to "What if we revised our zoo management?" When the making and supporting of generalizations is understood, then the teaching comes: adapting the use of various stages of knowledge in various courses and subjects.

At different school ages, people have different beliefs and opinions and can volunteer or search out the specifics to support them so that each can take his own responsibility; there's no subject "too large," no verb like "is" too simple, no subject like "I" too personal to be useful if the context calls for it. Style or rhetoric is a force aiding grammar and logic by habitual devices of emphasis like order, parallelism, varieties in structure. The student can learn to distinguish between his own style and that of the encyclopedia: what he can be responsible for saying in his own way as distinguished from other matters in other ways. A young child may choose the zoo over the aquarium, while an older student may choose realism over romanticism; they vary procedures with choices in both cases.

The standard so-called genres like essay, narrative, drama, lyric, have strong historical literary validity and are important for courses in literature. But every subject is concerned with daily writing as the development of ideas. People eight or eighty, verbal or manual or mathematical need practice to make choices and follow consequences.

So, we may say to students--you have done some writing at home and in school, reports and letters and stories—whatever you have needed to write. Now you are going to study more closely and consciously the relation between your subject and your idea—what you write about and how you write it. You have an idea about something. You make a generalization about something, and then you support that idea with specific examples of *where* or *when* or *how* or *why*, so that your readers will understand what you mean.

For example, you may write about the beach near your house. You want to tell others that it is too rocky for safe swimming. That's the generalization or theme: Is it true all the time? No, not in winter. Is it true over all? Not at the south end. So you may write, "Except in winter and except at the south end, my beach is too rocky for swimming." Then you may want to explain more—"because of the irregular tides, especially in stormy seasons." How?--with sand worked away to a depth of three feet. Each of these specifications may be given a word or phrase as here, or a whole sentence or a paragraph or a chapter. You could tell a little or a great deal about the irregular working of the tides depending on how much you knew

and wanted to communicate. But always your basic generalization says *who or what* about *who or what*, with the additional specificities of *when, where, how*, or *why*, time; place, manner or cause. These are the traditional matters of information we think of; what we need to know in order to verify or believe the generalization.

The logic of presenting such additive material suggests that it may simply be added; item and item and item (*tides* and *winds* and *weathers*); or it may be suggested as alternatives or comparisons; item *or* item; or on the other hand; or it may be suggested by implication; by *if* item, *then* item, or *because*, or *therefore*; with such negatives as *but, nor, though*.

Practice makes this basic thought easy. You can practice briefly every day with a ten minute piece of writing which we can then collect or exchange and read aloud, to see if the various attentions are clear. For example: Everybody think of a subject for himself: *jewels, football, school, whales, cheeseburgers*.... *Whales!* What about them? See them! And what about them! – or, take Moira's, for example, cheeseburgers—now Moira what will you generalize about that subject to make an idea for development? How about "cheeseburgers put me to sleep?" All the time? Late in the evening, when I'm home, and they're loaded with pickles. Note that the when and where are added with the use of an *and*. A different choice could be a comparison: cheeseburgers put me to sleep faster than hamburgers do. Or an explanation: cheeseburgers put me to sleep, so I shouldn't eat them for lunch. Now that you have the core of the idea, development follows: the sentence or paragraph steps of how cheeseburgers put you to sleep, or why less in comparison or what your reaction is. You develop the idea or predicate "put me to sleep," in one way or another, depending on what your point is, stressing yourself in contrast to a friend, or time of day when true, or what reasons are. You may sometimes have heard that you organize the topic, the cheeseburgers, but that is confusing, because anything can be said about them; it's what you choose to say about them that determines the development of your writing.

No subject is too big or too small or too complicated just so long as you control what you have to say about it. A subject like death may sound more abstract or complicated than cheeseburgers; but if you decide what you yourself can say about it, as, for example, "When death appeared in my life it didn't frighten me" or "I came close to death with the death of my cat and it upset me for weeks," then you are on the firm ground of experience. It's dangerous to use superlatives like *closest*, or *never*, or *always* because they are difficult to give good evidence for; but in the statement on the cat the possibilities are safely limited. You can say "Aside from the cat, I can't think of any animal I've seen die," or whatever the truth may be.

If you are getting some of your facts from secondary materials, books, articles, encyclopedias beyond your own knowledge, be careful that you phrase the chief generalization in a way that you yourself can support

and that you make clear the difference between others' information and yours.

When you have clarified your main idea by developing its stages and coming to a stop, try having someone else read your paper to see whether he can recognize that main idea and its stages, that is, whether you are as clear as you hoped to be. For a while, until you've had practice, your readers may question either your main idea or the way you develop it; stay with them till there's general agreement you're making sense.

From there on, you may proceed till you are writing cost-analyses for the business you're in, or proposals for governmental reform, or studies of films you like, or specifications for contracts, or editorials, or essays, as in tests, or feature articles in magazines, or philosophical debates, or any of the forms in which people propose, develop, share, revise the ideas so necessary, both generally and specifically, to making the world go round.

The essays gathered here have been written at different times during four decades, with one steady theme, the power of students to compose their thoughts and the power of teaching to help them. The first two essays deal with an early group of experiments; the second two, with working principles; the third, with more technical analyses of the way language works -- the movable, composable parts of composition; and the final essay, with a general restatement. In addition to objective reports and subjective journal entries, essays in ideas are making clear their power in the developing of individual thought and responsibility.

II.

The Freshman at Composition

At the first meeting of an English 1A class, in February 1948, I asked the thirty students to write a half-hour essay on their home town. I did not discuss the problem except to say that by an essay I meant a brief and unified exposition which would make clear to the reader the student's town as he saw it.

The following paper on Pittsburgh represents the work of two-thirds of the class.

I.

It has often been said that if Pittsburgh, New York, and perhaps two or three other cities were bombed until their industry was rendered useless that the United States would be powerless and at the supreme will of the enemy. Such a statement is possibly very true.

My home town is Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and I take great pride in the fact that Pittsburgh is my hometown. The great steel industry gave my family a very comfortable living. I was able to develop in the city in a way that I had pride in my town. Pittsburgh—a city of about 700,000—seemed to me a small town where I had interest in the surroundings and events in every part of the city.

Pittsburgh is not merely a memory of smoke and soot to me, but more as a place that recalls memories of gay and colorful times. Picnic grounds, city parks, zoos, and even the smoke stacks of other cities will never have the appeal to my eyes as those of Pittsburgh.

The reader will note that each separate paragraph makes a separate point, the first about the vulnerability and importance of large cities, the second about the familiar comfort of Pittsburgh as a town to grow up in, the third about the memory of good times despite smoke and soot. In no way do these three points make a whole. The student has taken no responsible point of view; he has not thought of the city as a whole; he has not thought of his essay as a unit.

This lack of responsibility, characteristic of most of the members of the class, seems to me the central serious problem in the teaching of composition. Matters of sentence and paragraph structure, of agreement, reference, and transition, all seem to me subordinate to, and indeed dependent upon, the matter of the student's responsibility for his own guiding ideas. Sentence-making is predication, and to predicate is to assert an idea, selecting and treating facts from a point of view. Paragraph-making is the development of such ideas and the relationship between them. Composition involves an individual responsibility of thought. The student from Pittsburgh does not compose.

The best single summary one could make of this essay would say that though Pittsburgh is important as an industrial center it is also pleasant as a home; but this statement does not really reflect the student's intentions. When, at the next meeting, I asked each student to write one sentence summarizing his essay, this student wrote, "My home town is one of the greatest steel centers in the world situated around the point where the two rivers join to form the Ohio." Most other sentences were equally far from their essays and equally unuseful as even possible ideas for development. It seemed to me therefore that the students had almost no concept of the problems involved in stating and developing an idea, the central process in writing exposition.

Subordinately, the unease in putting words together may be noted as typical. The first confusion of *thats*, the repetition of "home town," the difficulties in the "I was to develop" sentence and the "surroundings and events" sentence, the misused *as*, show that the lack of organization in thought makes for a difficulty in phrasing as well. The student was probably trying to write as simply as possible, yet the chaos of his thought made even simplicity of sentence structure impossible.

The next paper, on Boulder, is typical of a smaller group.

II

Boulder Colorado is a city of fifteen thousand people. The University of Colorado is located there and most of the city's activities and functions are closely related to the college. The college is actually the main industry of Boulder, and without the school the town would have little life.

During the summer months many tourists stop or pass through Boulder. It is one of the gateways to the Rocky Mountains which are a great tourist attraction. The town is built on the edge of the great plains with its back to the rising range of the Rockies. Within a few minutes of Boulder you can be high in the mountains or far out in the flat plains.

In winter months skiing and ice skating are the main attractions. Hundreds of students and local citizens flock to the frozen lakes or to one of the many ski runs.

As in any small town you soon know practically everyone you meet. It is hard to realize the value of many friends and the feeling of being known which is hard to obtain in a larger city.

This is a little more smoothly written. It has, moreover, a good useful central idea in its first paragraph, the second sentence: and such a helpful beginning is relatively rare. Yet the development of this idea again shows no responsibility of point of view or plan. The second paragraph tends to undermine the first by its emphasis on the importance of tourists. Perhaps a contrast between winter and summer characteristics is intended, but the point of contrast is never started or made clear in relation to first or last paragraphs. The concluding idea of friendliness is again a new and unassociated one. In phrasing, the difficulties though present are milder; the whole essay, like a half-dozen others, sounds fairly easy and pleasant; yet it is merely a series of scraps of thought.

Fifteen thousand people... importance of the University... location and tourist attraction... winter sports... friendliness, these are all bits from a commercial folder. They do not represent a habit of thought. They do not represent a sense of composition. They indicate neither the awareness of community which Social Studies aim for, nor the awareness of technical skills which the study of English as a tool would make plain; they show indeed by their very confusion the need for greater integration of methods.

The reader may wonder whether there was no adequate paper among the thirty, no essay which did simply develop an idea about the character of a town. This one on Oakland comes closest to adequacy, I think, though it makes troubling omissions. At least it takes an attitude, a negative one about the size and interrelation, and develops the idea of dependence through three clear paragraphs to a fairly summary conclusion.

III

Oakland is my home town although it is more a fairly large city than a town. Its chief characteristic seems to be that it covers a large area and thus makes transportation very difficult.

The city is apt to depend upon San Francisco, its neighbors, rather than to have a more or less independent existence as do other similar cities. Many Oakland residents work across the bay, and Oakland is known as San Francisco's bedroom. Just as occupational activities are concentrated in the other city, so are cultural matters considered almost second class in Oakland. The Oakland Symphony orchestra is not the equal of the San Francisco Symphony orchestra; the museums and art galleries and the theatre are slighted in Oakland. Thus, what goes on in Oakland must be considered in the light of its proximity to a larger and more important city.

Industry in my home town is growing, in fact, growth is every-

where, and the city holds more promise at the moment than it does actual accomplishment. The port promises to become very important in the future. Army and navy installations should play an important part in this development. Oakland is the western terminus of the railroads, and will not be bypassed by expanding industry for this reason.

My home town then is this. It is a large city, but it is not like similar cities because of its relation to other cities of the bay area. It is one of a network of towns and cities which have grown up around San Francisco bay.

This was the only paper which seemed conscious of the problem of exposition: the need to make a statement, to develop and substantiate it through the selection and arrangement of pertinent detail, and to reconsider it finally in the summary of detail. The fact that the author of this paper is the one who in six weeks of practice has managed to progress to C and B grades would indicate that the first-day exercise had some representative merit. The fact that he is the only one is not, I hope, representative of freshman classes as a whole. My 1A section may be this time an especially unfortunate one. Even so, its members come from all parts of the country, from all sorts of teaching systems, from Berkeley, Oakland, Piedmont, San Francisco, Los Angeles, as well as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and it is the more surprising that all the difficulties center at the same focus: at the making and developing of statement.

I have an idea about the reasons for this difficulty, and I am not sure of its truth, but I shall propose it tentatively. It is that a sort of inert trust in data as data, uninterpreted, and a counter mistrust of human thought, has led Americans to teach fact rather than ideas and accumulation rather than composition. When I ask students what sort of practice in writing they have had in high school, they say they have written "descriptions" or "reports," and when I ask by what principles these were organized, they look blank. When they bring me high school exercises at which they felt themselves successful, I find that they are indeed well organized, and always chronologically, as in the description of a trip, or a brief biography in the style of the encyclopedia; yet the students have copied, and have not consciously been aware of this chronological order or what use it was or to what purpose they were putting it. And of other logical orders, like implication, alternation, exemplification, they seem unaware.

It may be that we are so unaware ourselves of how to choose, how to co-ordinate and subordinate, how to generalize and exemplify, above all how to compose, that we cannot teach a younger generation. We may be, as the scientists have suggested to us, the victims of sheer uninterpreted data, as meaningless as can be. If so, if we have no attitudes for

our facts, we shall have no predicates for our subjects, no themes for our essays, no points for our remarks, no responsibilities for our actions.

But I think the teachers of composition are the very ones who need not be so lost. They know that the subject is what the predicate makes it, and that the theme is what its development makes it. They know that the human mind can take a consistent responsibility for what it has to say. They know that the selection and arrangement of materials to a purpose, a purpose weighed and evaluated, is as serious a task as can be conceived of.

III.

The College at Composition

This is a summary of a report to Berkeley's Committee on Educational Policy by the Committee on Improvement of Students' Prose, 1950-52. Widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of students' writing, a dissatisfaction expressed strongly both within the University of California and from outside, led the Committee on Educational Policy, with the encouragement of the President, to establish in 1950 a subcommittee for experimental study of students' actual abilities in classroom writing, and means of improvement. Under the advisorship of Professor B. H. Lehman and the directorship of the English IA-IB Chairmen, the committee comprised advisors from Philosophy and Speech, representative faculty members from fifteen collaborating departments, and a staff of five teaching assistants.

Each teaching assistant worked with one department the first year and with two the second, in ways developed by departmental suggestion. Ways ranged from close guidance of all students in small courses, through limited individual guidance of the worst students in large courses, to general guidance by lecture for all the students of large courses. They ranged also in intensity, from compulsory rewriting to voluntary conference and to general suggestions made in lectures. The work was concentrated when possible in courses central to departmental majors in the junior year, in order to check normal upper-division ability. Some lower-division courses and some unguided control groups were included. Teaching assistants read and marked, analyzed and graded at least one midterm and final, or two major papers, for each of 1500 students.

The committee found that in all departments, in all types of written work, at all levels studied, about 25% of the students wrote inadequately (D or F) in midterm work. This D writing was most often *both* illogical and ungrammatical. Only a small proportion of students wrote merely ungrammatically; most wrote illogically; that is, did not fulfill the assignment, answer the question, or relate evidence to generalization.

There were correlations: (a) With Grade Point Average in University: that of the D writer averaged 1.3, while that of the adequate writer averaged 1.6; the D writer, that is, is educable, or at least will probably receive his degree from the University. (b) With background of passing

work in Subject A, English, or Speech: half the D writers checked for such background have it, half have not; that is, mere background is not enough; demand for its use is necessary. (c) With grades given by course-readers: a 50% discrepancy in midterm papers and a 30% discrepancy in final papers, the grade for writing usually the lower.

And there was improvement. Whatever the method of guidance, as long as there was some clear guidance supported by course instructor and reader, about 50% of the D students improved by at least one whole grade both in writing and in subject from midterm to final. In control groups, only 5% to 20% improved. As a whole, the most effective results were obtained in courses where course instructor and reader collaborated with prose-assistant in two hours of detailed technical discussion of student papers and methods, once after midterm, once before final. Students with positive backgrounds in English-Speech were most apt to improve. Integration of demand and instruction appeared to be essential.

The committee has therefore suggested that the problem of student writing is fundamental to the problem of student learning. One fifth of our students write badly, and mainly because they think badly. They are given C's by readers and degrees by the University not for their ability to state and develop ideas but for their use of key-phrases or answers to true-false questions. At least half of them have skills in writing and thinking which they can put to use if called upon. The subcommittee has therefore suggested a further and deeper integration of writing with learning throughout the University by further collaboration with instructors and readers.

The studies of the past two years have shown that at least a majority of writers can meet the demand for good writing if it is brought firmly and instructively to their attention: and that, indeed, it is less the skill than the incentive that is lacking. The skill, however, is only latent; it has not been focused on learning at the University level. The instructor and his reader can help the student adapt treatment of material to the time available: how to analyze the form of questions and assignments in order to organize answers into relevant form: how to develop a working vocabulary for the course: how to take responsibility for thinking through problems and supplying adequate evidence for generalizations. Such practical help does much to eliminate the hasty, haphazard, and hysterical examination and paper writing that so drastically deflates the instructor's own sense of accomplishment in his teaching and the student in his learning.

As aid to the clarification of a standard, the following section makes points for consideration on reading and evaluating, as well as on teaching.

Specific Standards

Of Rhetoric: Does the answer show awareness of audience and clear points of view?

Of Logic: Does the answer fit the question or assignment: does the solution fit the problem?

Does the answer fit the full requirement of the question? (adequacy)

A question asking for comparison of X and Y is not satisfied by a listing of qualities of X and of Y.

Does the answer fit just the one question, not two or three others? (relevance)

Discussion of pre-X and post-X is often not pertinent to a requested description of X.

Do the main parts of the answer fit together to make a whole? (coherence)

Is there clear presentation of such basic relationships as the conditional (if...then), the alternative (either...or), the additive (and...and), with their negatives?

Of Grammar: Does the construction of the answering statement fit the guiding conventions of the English language?

Are appropriate signs put to use? (spelling and punctuation)

Does the writer distinguish between hyphens, which connect, and commas, which separate?

When studying the construction of the Erie Canal, does he distinguish between the spelling *Erie* and the spelling *Fire*?

Is there misleading capitalization in "The Pacific Settlement of disputes," as if there were one specific settlement?

Are the terms of the course, as well as the standard terms of the language, put seriously to use? (vocabulary)

Does the student learn in time for his examination in History what the word *institution* usually means for History?

Are statements clearly constructed? (syntax)

Does predicate fit subject? and are connections and modifications clear? Are references accurate? Are person, numbers, tenses consistently used, without confusing shifts?

Clarity of statement is closely associated with clarity of understanding. Note for example an unclear bluebook statement in contrast to a clear one, the two written in the same class under the same pressures:

(1) Viscosity of magma affects the texture of a rock by its ability to change position on the respect of raising to higher level allowing the magma to cool faster giving glossy texture. In lavas the same hold but the environment differs in that it may be exposed allowingeven faster cooling. The moving magma due to lo viscosity may pick up rock particles will alter texture.

(2) If the viscosity of a magma is high, the movement of ions towards centers of crystallization is impeded. Therefore more and smaller crystals tend to form. On the other hand, if the magma is very slightly viscous there is rapid movement of ions toward centers of crystallization which attract the ions, and fewer and larger crystals form.

In the second example, the guiding words *If... Therefore... On the otherhand* establish the structure of the situation to be described, so that the special conditions and modifications may fall clearly into place. The statements avoid empty modifications like *in the respect of*, and stress important contrasts like *more and smaller* vs. *fewer and larger*. They employ the powers of language in the service of understanding.

Effective prose writing connects, directs, and forwards ideas. Writing defective in logic or grammar or rhetoric short-circuits ideas and prevents their successful functioning. Thus bad writing short-circuits the potentialities of those departments, instructors, readers, and students who believe that good writing is a function of good thinking and a continuing force in the process of learning.

IV.

Writing in Reason

Prose-essay like prose-narrative or prose-drama is an art of prose, and as an art it works in basic patterns. Rather than a sequence of events, it is a sequence of ideas, and it shapes the sequence in certain ways, depending upon its main idea, its attempt or "essay."

It makes a leading statement, that is, predicates its subject, and then unfolds, develops, substantiates both subject and predicate in the specific relation it has proposed for them, with the specific connections of that relation: the conjunctive *and*, disjunctive *or*, conditional *if*, concessive *though*.

Students in California have usually read widely and well in books of essays in ideas. The first week of the Fall term of 1961, thirty freshmen, my teaching assistant, and I talked about ideas we had met with during the past year. We were able to range from Thoreau to Jung and Freud, from Milton to Edith Hamilton, from Plato to Riesman. There were enough ideas for months of talking and writing.

Then I asked the students each to make a statement of one idea which particularly interested him, and to suggest two or three different ways in which it might be developed into an essay. Blockade. Few associated the concept of an *idea* with the concept of a *statement* or a *sentence*. For many, ideas were at best abstract words or phrases; at worst, as one student suggested, "opinions or untrue facts." Inasmuch as a fact or topic assumes no responsibility for predication, no pattern of organization is obvious for it, and the student is at a loss to know what development may mean for it. Therefore the most typical response to the assignment is something like: "The importance of music: (a) development by examples, (b) general development." Or "The necessity for world government: (a) subjective, (b) objective." Not many aids to reason here!

Idea as Structure

First need then is to talk about ideas as sentences, as saying something about something, as establishing relations, as predicating subjects. The student hopefully proposes, "Music is important" or "World government is necessary," and then goes on: "First I'll write a paragraph saying what I mean by *music* or *world government*. Then I'll develop my point in the

predicate about important or necessary." But can importance or necessity be shown without showing possible alternatives? Says the student, "Here's where I switch from objective to subjective!" He becomes vague because his purposes are vague. Important? Necessary? For whom? In relation to what?

After some time discussing these terms as well as *general* and *specific*, demonstrating the need for both pairs and for the clarity of their relations, we come back to develop the useful structural implications of a good leading sentence. Here is one of the few really organizable ones achieved in the first week. Please ignore the horrors of its wordiness, and refrain from *Dic* or *WW* or *P* in the margin. These problems are secondary to sheer understanding of the point, and will mostly clear up when the student's thought clears up. And he is on the right track:

> "A prevalent disease, mental retardation has received a minimum of public attention and this neglect has hampered any progress toward alleviating the problems of the disease."

What is the main point here? "Well, that lack of public interest in the disease has hampered progress in understanding it." Cheers. The subject is *lack:* the predicate, *has hampered:* so what will the basic organization be? "Chronological – stages of hampering: development of the verb. But now I see I don't want that kind of organization. I want to talk about ways of studying retardation and how they need public support." So? So: "Most ways of studying and improving mental retardation depend on public understanding and support." Then you'll have to demonstrate the predicate *depend*, and talk about *how* and *why*. "That's what I want to talk about – three *how*s and one *why*." Now we are beginning to work out the development of an idea.

Chronology, spatial description, comparison, work mainly conjunctively: *and-and-and: then-then-then: also: moreover*—"Here are the main stages in the study of retardation." Disjunction strives to separate, to insist on mutually exclusive alternatives: *either-or: on the one hand-on the other: not this, but that*– "Either we get public interest, or we give up." Concession assumes but denies: *though-yet: nevertheless: however*—"Though we need public interest, yet we can take the following steps without it." Conditional shows interdependent causal relations, conjunctive but subordinative: *if-then: because-therefore*—"If public interest improves, our study of retardation will be aided in the following ways." This is the structure which, it turned out, our student intended to establish.

Elements of Support

The first help we can give the student then is to help him see whether the predication he has chosen to make, the verb he has chosen to apply to the subject, is really supportable by what he knows or can discover; and then, second, to see whether he has arranged the elements of support in

the order and connection best for his purposes. A syllogism, the classic unit of reasoning, is in itself a small paragraph of substantiation. "I want to say something about Socrates, and what I want to say about him is that despite his great wisdom he is still mortal. Why is he mortal? Because all men are mortal, and Socrates is a man, as I can show in a paragraph of characteristics." Most of our thought concerns *some*, rather than the *all* referred to in this syllogism; the pattern may be adapted to *some* by taking explicit cognizance of negative as well as positive evidence: "Though two specific authorities deny it, public interest does help, and by public interest I mean not press-publicity, but active individual concern."

Reasoning means giving reasons: that is, it deals with the relations between statements, and these relations are of a few basic kinds: of cause or purpose – *if* this, *therefore* this, or this is so *because:* or of choice – this *or* this – both are impossible at once; or of association – this *and* this go along with this. These are the kinds of possible simultaneity or sequence of statements. Once a student recognizes that his own thought moves in these basic relations, he will be apt to enjoy both the art and the social force of the simple reasoning process of the paragraph. His planning or outlining will show first what main point or predication he is planning to make about his subject, then the main blocks of material he will use to support it, with *pro* connections *(and, or, if)* or negative *con* connections *(but, nor, though)* and finally a new main point, revised from the first hypothesis in the light of the evidence as it has developed. It is the predicate, not the subject, which is planned to be thus supported and modified. There is no such thing as too large or unwieldy a subject; what the student wants to say about the subject is what needs estimation. A student who tries to outline his material rather than his idea is trying, as one student has put it, to eat sardines without opening the can.

Man does not receive raw materials through the senses and then try to make meanings of them through the mind. Rather, the meanings that he makes, tentative and provisional as they may be at every stage, lead him to look for materials of experience which will test his meanings. So the student does not need to stuff his mind with so-called "facts" before he can be responsible for a tentative statement and so, on the other hand, for *any* statement he makes he can be held responsible. If we do not teach the student how to make responsible statements, we give in to the myths of "raw fact" or of individual autonomy, and let him be the victim of the extremes of either the outer world or the inner. Thus we see the dangers on the one hand of the so-called "report" in composition-writing, which leads to an inert sort of copying, and on the other hand the dangers of so-called "creative" writing in which anything goes because there seems to be no valid outer check.

A recent study of suggestions for teaching high school and college composition presented in journals and handbooks over the past few years found that either the so-called "creative" assignment or the so-called

formal practical assignment like report-writing bulked large.* Hopefully we may soon change some of this emphasis—moving away from extremes of "raw material" or "self-expression" toward the center where they can meet in thoughtful argument, the making of statements based on interest and speculation and the supporting of them by evidence pro and con. To build community between personal and impersonal we need reason to compose our thoughts.

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V.

The Use of Reason

Though reason is a basic human faculty, we hear much less about it today than we hear about imagination or social action. Does it not mediate between these other two, between individual invention and factual adaptation? When a man reasons, he sets up a provisional expectation, then he checks it against the evidence pro and con, then he reformulates it in a form strengthened by what he has discovered or called to mind. Reason, in other words, emphasizes and then subordinates in the light of knowledge and purpose; it can be both individual and shared.

Reason and Relevance

While we are agreed, I believe, about the characteristics we wish to foster in a student, a teacher, or a citizen, some pressures, both philosophical and practical, have tended to lead us away from our purposes. Copernicus put the sun in the center of our universe; Marx put class and state, and Freudians put an inner mystery. The practical result has been a fight between romantic individualism on the one hand and behavioristic stimulus-response patterns on the other, with so-called creative expression appearing to be in conflict with so-called objective reports and true-false tests. David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* pictures man torn between inner and outer forces, and our College of Letters and Science name their divisions Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities, as if in only one-third of his study man were humane, beleaguered even there by brute fact and mass pressure. This is a fearful picture, and one perpetuated for some strange reason by "humanists" themselves.

But there is another picture available to us, that of the Renaissance humanist tradition, in which man through his reason mediates between other powers, between animal sense on the one hand and angelic spirit on the other. Here man has all three of these powers, but reason is characteristically his alone, giving human form to the others. Reason tries to answer for man the question of relation and relevance, the question *so what?* The world may be hot or cold, bright or dark, good or bad, but how does man know how to feel and act unless he can reason out the relevance of these states—which leads to which, which is subordinate or alternative to which? This Renaissance view has been strengthened by modern science. As Einstein has reminded Copernicus, though earth may not be

the center of our universe, the center of perspective is still the human point of view. From this point of view, physical science is not cold and impersonal, because what we know of it is warmed by the questions we ask of it. From this point of view, the inner psyche is not a bafflement; rather, its many likenesses from one person to another provide a basis for communication between us. And from this point of view, social forces are not pressures against the inner psyche but powers emerging from it and establishing the contexts in which individuality may come into its own. From such a point of view, the natural division of man's studies is one based on the major subjects of his concern—materials, actions, and artifacts—and to all of these his perceiving, valuing, and reasoning powers are applicable.

Say, therefore, that you are a teacher of science, a teacher of history, or a teacher of art, and in any of these realms of emphasis your students say to you, as many today do: I want to think clearly, but what does it mean to think clearly? How do you reply? I think one may well reply with practice—with an example first of all from everyday life. You hope to go to San Francisco one evening this week-end. Which way shall it be? The short way across the Bay Bridge, or the long by San Rafael, where you have friends you would like to see? Set up the hypothesis that the long way would be better, then check against it the amount of time you have to spare, the fact that your friends are or are not at home, the dependability of your car and of the weather, and in the light of all available evidence, conclude by either confirming or revising your hypothesis. Why, it's simple, says the student; I've been reasoning all my life!

Reason and Writing

As described in "The Freshman at Composition," the University of California English Department tried an experiment with rational organization in composition by asking all students in all sections of English 1A to write in class for a half hour on a topic they all knew about—their own home towns. The danger was that most of the students began with an unsupportable predication and therefore never managed to develop any support for it. For example, a common proposal was, "My home town is the best little home town in the world." This statement would have demanded a demonstration surveying other good little home towns in the world and showing why theirs was the best. But it turned out that was not what they had meant. They said they had meant, "I like my home town a lot." But this also required a support they were not prepared to give—a demonstration of the qualities of the new subject, I, in its relation to the town. Working back from the actual main steps of demonstration in many of the essays—for example: point one, my town is friendly; point two, my town is located on a main highway; point three, my town boasts a big canning factory—we may learn that the student is not really supporting any predication at all; he is not taking any personal responsibility but is

borrowing fleeting cues from his memory of Chamber of Commerce ads. Indeed, when we reported on our experiment, we were reprimanded for the lack of motivation in the assignment. How, we were asked, could students organize when they didn't care? I agree that a heartfelt interest could have made for more responsible predicating and substantiating for some students, as indeed it did; but I think that, for many, even a simple sense of the rationale involved would have been sufficient. In fact, many did invent supportable predicates whether they cared or not—for example: "My home town has changed overnight," "My home town is the biggest city in America, but it's still a home town," "My home town is the home of California brandy." These are all supportable propositions in their pleasantly different ways.

Question as Knowledge

But note, too, that the lack of ease which the majority felt in the assignment was not only a weakness in the logic of the majority, it was a weakness also in the understanding of the teachers of 1A. Over the years since then we have come to agree that assignment by topic is artificial, not only because it is unmotivated, but because it is too far removed from the central unit of thought, the statement. It is the question to be answered, rather than the topic to be predicated, which gives the student the central clue to the order and structure. Only after he can handle questions easily can he move easily to those mere half-questions which are topics.

We learn from assigned papers in all departments how hard it is for the student to recognize the structure implicit in questions. For example, if the question in a history course is, "What was the difference between the fall of Greece and the fall of Rome?" the average student will not even notice that the key word, the subject, here is *difference*, and will therefore not write a paragraph contrasting the two falls, but will rather do just what the home-town student did—give a few cues in response to the cue words *Greece* and *Rome*, which may be factually accurate but which may not be relevant to the question on difference. As a basis for difference or contrast, the assumptions of likeness need to be spelled out—as, for comparison, the assumptions of difference.

Recently, at both Berkeley and Davis, we have been working on a new plan to stress the uses of reason in writing in every field where writing is meaningful—indeed, where reading and speaking are meaningful, or where any use is made of thought in language. Teaching assistants and readers in all participating departments are focusing on showing students the relations between the structure of the questions asked and the materials of substantiation thus made necessary in the answer. In the study of English literature to which the English Department is devoted we have always tried to make this emphasis, but too often it has seemed to stop with literature, not to extend to history or geology. Through the assistants

and readers, now we are trying to remind students of the universality of the need for reasonable writing, the equal need for it in every field.

Sometimes instructors in other departments say, "But it's the English Department's job to teach English, not ours." Here is a great confusion based on a telescoping of terms, a confusion of the English masterpieces, which are the subjects of departments of literature, with the English language, which is the medium of thought in all fields. As the subject matter of English departments and courses is literature in the English language, in that subject matter as in any other, but neither more nor less than in any other, the processes of reasoning are relevant and teachable. Paragraphs on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as on the nature of chemical change, on the reasons for the fall of Rome, on building a bridge or electing a president need to make their supportable predications and then to support them. Just recently one of my colleagues on the Prose Committee, Professor Benbow Ritchie, a psychologist, reported a clear instance of the inextricable relation of subject matter and expression. In his class for readers and assistants, a student used the sentence, "He was an old camel, but grey," and the question was raised, why not *and* rather than *but*? The answer depends upon a knowledge of camels; it is not merely a matter of logic. If one should expect old camels to be grey, then *and* is appropriate; if the color is rare in the old, then *but* is the proper term. So English is the direct and essential medium of zoological, not only literary, knowledge. And if a Prose Committee, which is made up of faculty members from many fields, can succeed in its efforts to persuade students that their knowledge in every field has life and meaning only in their embodiment of it in language, that sheer fact is inert and generalization dogmatic unless related to perceptive questions and answers, it will have achieved something not only in the realm of prose composition but in the realm of reason as well.

Hypothesis and Hunch

Such belief I have found recent support for in a number of new and illuminating books in a variety of fields. My colleagues, Wayne Shumaker in his *Literature and the Irrational* and Ernest Tuveson in his *Imagination as a Means of Grace* have undertaken to show historically how unreason and reason, hunch and hypothesis, have been understood to work together. E. H. Gombrich of the Warburg Institute in London has made vivid for us in *Art and Illusion* the function of habit and therefore hypothesis in perception. When the painter Constable portrayed a meadow as green rather than as the usual brown of the day, he was portraying not an obvious fact but a theory, one so heretical that the Royal Academy called for the removal of "that nasty green thing." Gombrich supports what he calls the "searchlight" rather than the "bucket" theory of mind, saying, "All culture and all communication depend on the interplay between

expectation and observation, the waves of fulfillment, disappointment, right guesses, and wrong moves that make up our daily life." And again, "Without some starting point, some initial scheme, we could never get hold of the flux of experience. Without categories, we could not sort our impressions."

In another field, Roger Brown of MIT in *Worlds and Things* undertakes to clarify for us the fact that words and even things are categories as they are recognized: that is, words and things themselves are not just facts, but ideas among which one must choose.

F. G. Teggart's *Theory and Process of History* argues against the concept of history as a sequence of isolated, individual, unrepeatable events. We cannot even know what events to put in a sequence unless we have made some assumptions about their qualities and connections. To believe in something is to believe in its categories and continuances and thus in its possibilities as well as its actualities. Rational history notes the similarities in events and in observed processes of change and asks both what things are and are like and how they have come to be. We achieve stability by association, exchange, imitation—that is, by gradual change rather than by disruption—yet there may be, as in evolution, sudden leaps from within as well as disruptions from without. The scientist and the historian share with the artist the need to guess and to imagine as well as to observe.

These books are supported by an older but no less modern work, Morris Cohen's classic *Reason and Nature*, republished in 1953. Cohen sees reason, like nature, constructing patterns from variety. Given a flash of intuition, a vision, reason looks around to see what are the other possibilities; as Roger Brown has said, it differentiates. It is alert to alternatives and to plain inconvenient facts. Thus the basis of reason is doubt, wonder, curiosity. It enriches us with a greater number of hypotheses or anticipations of nature, and thus makes possible a richer variety of observations, a recognition of what Cohen calls "the ineradicable contingency of existence.... Logic enables us to organize fields of experience by providing us with relations like exclusion and inclusion whose recognition contributes sanity. A day cannot become a piece of butter and a color cannot become a sneeze.... Everything is connected in definite ways with definite other things, so that its full nature is not revealed except by its position and relations within a system."

Possibilities of Discovery

Cohen the lawyer and logician agrees with Brown the psychologist and linguist and Bomhrich and Teggart the historians of art and society on the subordination of inert fact and of subjective hunch to the processes of hypothesis and demonstration. We may note that these men ask not for the all-or-nothing proofs of the old syllogisms, to which modern semanticists have been so opposed, but rather for simple, testable possibilities, for the *somes* rather than the *alls* of logic. So, as in debate, we need not

ask for pure scientific proof, but rather for the weighing, under a proposition, of the positive and negative evidence for it. As Elizabeth Sewell puts it in her more poetic way in *The Orphic Voice*, "poetry and science are activities in which thinker and instrument combine in some situation which is passionately exciting because it is fraught with possibilities of discovery."

The other day I read in a book called *Schools for Tomorrow*, by Alexander J. Stoddard, concerning the use of television in teaching, a statement that seemed to me a confusion of the sort I have been trying to argue against here. Under the heading "How We Learn," it said as follows: "Learning consists fundamentally of two phases: The first has to do with gathering the raw materials of learning through one or more of the senses. The second involves doing something with or about one's sensations, that is, turning these raw materials into the finished products of knowledge and wisdom. The first phase might be called *perception* and the second phase *thinking*." Every other book I have been quoting from today has been devotedly opposing such a view by trying to show biologically, psychologically, historically, linguistically, artistically, that man does not receive raw materials through the senses and then try to make meanings of them through the mind. Rather, the meanings that he makes, tentative and provisional as they may be at every stage, lead him to look for materials of experience which will test his meanings. So the student does not need to stuff his mind with so-called "facts" before he can be responsible for a tentative statement; so, on the other hand, for *any* statement he makes, he can be held responsible.

Two teachers of English at the College of San Mateo, Elizabeth Kaupp and Jean Wirth, recently made a study of the suggestions for the teaching of high school and college composition presented in journals and handbooks of composition over the past few years. They found that either the so-called "creative" assignment or the so-called formal, practical assignments like report and letter-writing bulked large, almost to the total exclusion of rational processes. I hope that the books of the 1960's, along with many others, may help change some of this emphasis, moving away from "raw material" and "social adjustment" toward the center where they can meet in thoughtful argument – the making of statements based on interest and speculation and the supporting of them by adequate evidence pro and con.

The experience of the Committee on Prose has been that brief, pointed instruction in these principles has resulted in immediate student improvement. If, just after one examination in any field has been given and just before the next one is to occur, the instructor or even the reader spends a mere half hour talking about the logical structure of the preceding questions and of possible future questions and about the implications of such logical structure for both the form and substance of the answers, more than 50 per cent of the class improves a whole grade, whereas in the normal class only about 20 per cent improves. There may be improve-

ment in understanding, therefore, as well as in emotional motive if the patterns of our assumptions are realized to be not arbitrarily operable, but clear and usable.

When we read many reports on education, we find ourselves dealing with large impersonal forces – with sizes of rooms, exhaustion of teachers, curricular units, and massive costs. Or when we turn in distaste from such generality, we find ourselves in the equally puzzling interior realm of individuality, justly mysterious and irresponsible to generalization.

In math sections, in history, in French, in English, in art, in biology, I'd ask students day after day first to write down in a sentence or two their understanding of a certain material of study at that particular point, and then to back up this statement with statements of the evidence on which it is based. Day after day I would (indeed, do) give them practice, not in elaborate papers but in short paragraphs, in using the major terms of relation which are the bases of verbal reasoning: the difference between positive *and* and negative *but*, between positive *if* and negative *though*, between positive *therefore* and negative *however*, until it dawns on them, in a way that is always a pleasure, that thinking is not a vast welter, but a simple set of clearly definable and usable patterns for learning to get, whether in metaphors of inner or outer, lower or higher, from where we have been, to where we are, to where we want to go.

Sometimes we are told that the student's effort to "pre-structure" his material is dangerous, that it imposes patterns upon raw material. I have been suggesting that the pattern it provides is the pattern of humanity, both stable and changeable; that pre-structuring may well change, in the light of new evidence, to a very different post-structuring, but that without its guidance at the outset, the evidence cannot be evidence but mere dross, mere inert material susceptible to either mechanical manipulation or subjective distortion. This is not to speak against social organization or the unique powers of the individual sense, but it is to try to focus our responsibilities as teachers in the central realm where men can best agree, the realm where they can learn to establish the fine and simple guiding lines of the reasoning human mind.

VI.

What We Compose

The word *composition*, with its relation to *compose*, *component*, *composure*, is the word of the active composing artist and of the poised, the composed philosopher. When we try to teach composition, we are trying to teach art and philosophy, and I cannot think of a better task. But it is a difficult task, and we often go wrong with it.

One reason we go wrong is that no one of us is a good enough philosopher or a clear enough thinker to be sure what we want to say. Our thoughts are not well enough composed because they are not even yet fully developed. Another reason we go wrong is that we are not good enough artists: that is, we do not seriously understand the powers of the medium in which we work to shape our thoughts. A sculptor would not leave to chance his choice of marble, clay, or wood to work in; a musician would not accidentally shift from key to key; yet the writer, because he has been using language all his life, forgets to treat with consideration the language which he must use formally to shape his thought. Further, not only artists but even scientists have had difficulty in standing away from their own language far enough to see it clear. So we have tended to understand our own mostly through other languages, and have developed a number of Latin, French, and German analogies for it, rather than a direct view of it. Now, by increasing the number of analogies to the most distant horizons, of Maly, Bantu, and Athabascan, we are able, often by the very absurdity of the distant relation, to see our own more clear.

But the question has naturally risen, how can such objectivizing, such particularizing of the traits of all languages, into phonemes, morphemes, sememes, serve the needs of art, which rather synthesizes and subjectivizes, which aims not to take apart but to put together, not to analyze but to compose? I think the simplicity of the answer lies in the question itself; to make a whole out of many parts requires some knowledge of the parts. Composition needs components. The worker in wood needs to know the grain of the wood.

Over the years in which I have been teaching essay-writing and trying my own, I have looked many times at a page of printed text, hoping to see a simple pattern of thought on the page. Accustomed to poetry, where the visible and audible pattern is dominant, I have been steadily impressed

by the straightforward *pro* quality of prose, and have shared the sense of students that in writing prose they commit themselves to some sort of tide of words. Where has been the design, where the pattern, of what I was reading and what I was writing? How amorphous were the materials of language with which I dealt? Memories of study of a multiplicity of grammatical categories, and more recent acquaintance with form classes and immediate constituents, served to stress the unredeemable complexities of prose.

It was clear that for practical, describable purposes some sort of drastic simplification, a moving to a level beyond the molecular structure, to the grain of the wood, was necessary, but I did not know if it was attainable. Then three sorts of clues came together to aid my puzzling: first, reading the work of Zellig Harris, and discussing linguistic theory with Sheldon Sacks and Ann Stanford; second, debates with Bertrand Evans, Benbow Ritchie, Richard Worthen, and Leo Ruth, in problems of teaching; and finally, in relation to poetry, the reading of classic English prose, beginning in the Renaissance with Sir Thomas More and ending with Shaw and Russell. Suddenly one day when I looked at a passage of prose, I recognized a structural pattern in it, and when I tested my sense of this pattern, in a number of different writers, I found three or four major variations which served to suggest its relevance and pervasiveness. My specific method was to combine analysis of the frequencies of the main parts of speech in an eight thousand word prose text with a structural analysis of representative passages from the text.

The basic fact for observation is the articulation in formal prose: that is, first, the nucleus of predicated subject; second, the specification of context by verbal, phrasal, or clausal modification. The main function-classes, each with its substitutable forms, are assertion (subject-predicate), and modification. Like a word, with its root and specifying affixes and connecting affixes, a sentence specifies and relates its nucleus of assertion; and like a sentence, an essay or formal prose passage also asserts, develops, and relates. The sentence then may well provide an example of the choices of distribution and emphasis in the paragraph or essay as a whole. Thus a style, a regularity of distribution of sentence-elements, an habitual set of choices and emphases from sentence to sentence, may be discriminable in certain main types of English prose (Z. Harris, *Structural Linguistics*). And the student may choose between types as models.

One of the great insights into grammar is that not content alone, but also context, defines the working units; that both character and location are part of their definition. Thus we may see that the basic parts of speech, substantive, predicate, and verbal phrasal, or clausal modifiers are not just items but are also functions, and perhaps any of the items may serve any of the functions interchangeably, and word-order may be as vital to meaning as word-form. (The present sight. The sight before us. The sight which is before us.) So too with sentences. The root of the sentence has

its affixes, that is, time-place-manner-modifiers, as does the root of the word; and the sentence like the word is not an independent unit, a free form, because its meaning is dependent upon order as well as on content. The order of "He did not sing. He wanted to sing," makes a meaning different from "He wanted to sing. He did not sing." Even more, the use of connectives rests upon order. "He did not sing. But he wanted to sing" is normally more meaningful than "But he wanted to sing. He did not sing." Content and context thus are accentable by the connective signals. In composition, the selection of material is supported and conditioned by the ordering of the material, its *position*, and by the devices of signaling order, the connectives, which make up a large part of the *com*—in *composition* - the signs which put the idea together, and put us together with it.

One of the simplest ways to observe and follow significant order, then, is to pay close attention to the connectives in a passage—to note not only whether the idea moves by words, phrases, or clauses, but also by which sort it moves - by additives like *and, then, also;* by comparatives like *as, so, how;* by disjunctives like *but;* by alternatives like *on the one hand... on the other;* by causal subordinates like *if, because, for;* by descriptive subordinates like *who* and *which;* by temporal and spatial locatives like *where* and *there, when* and *then.* Behind these guiding signs lie basic logical patterns of which we profoundly need to be aware.

What it seems to me important for the young writer to know is what these choices are, how they have been made in the past, and how he may make them in the present. They are not infinitely various, for example, but limited and significant for certain tones and attitudes: the phrasal, for a receptive objectivity of observation, as in many scientific writers; the balanced, for a reasoned subordination; the active verbal for a commitment to natural temporal sequence, events as they happen. What the writer chooses to say about his subject, and how he develops and composes it is a matter of his awareness of, his power over, his thought and language. To think of him as only individual robs him of his participation in values, makes him a mere atom among the rest. But he is not. As an artist he is most solidly a worker in the values of his medium. So the student is the young artist too. Once he is able to see how others have worked before him, how others work around him, and once he is able to estimate the powers of his own language, he can consider deliberately, weigh and reject consciously, plan and proceed effectively, with a sense that his fate is at least partially, in composition, in his own hands; that he can decide where he wants to go, and then go there.

The major word-connectives we use today had their sources in other forms, in other parts of speech. *And* was *ante* or *anti*—two parties face to face across a border, one and the other. *But*, on the other hand, excluded, made an exception of the other party. *Because* was the phrase *by cause*. Most conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositions are signs of spatial, temporal, and conceptual relations, of separating and joining, preceding and following.

Let us look at their procedures in some vigorous and distinguished prose

styles: for example, that of Emerson near the beginning of *Self-Reliance*. The subject-predicate units are italicized, in contrast to the modifiers.

> *Travelling is* a fool's *paradise*. Our first *journeys discover* to us the *indifference* of places. At home *I dream that* at Naples, at Rome, *I can be intoxicated* with beauty and *lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark* on the sea, *and* at last *wake up* in Naples, *and there* beside me *is the* stern *fact, the* sad *self*, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. *I seek the Vatican and palaces. I affect to be intoxicated* with sights and suggestions, *but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes* with me wherever I go.
>
> But *the rage* of travelling is a *symptom* of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. *The intellect is vagabond*, and our *system* of education *fosters restlessness*.

Note the simple subject-predicates without connectives: *Travelling is a fool's paradise... I pack my trunk, embrace my friends... I seek the Vatican...* To these, what are the simplest additions? The modifying noun *fool's*, the adjectival *our first*, the phrases *to us* and *of places*. Then the patterned parallel additives, *at home, at Naples, at Rome;* and *on the sea, at Naples, beside me*, culminating in a pile-up of adjectives—*the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical*. Also then, the subordinate clauses, *the self that I fled from, wherever I go*, are not very complicated, and, along with the phrases, less structurally important than the simple temporal sequence of verbs: *is, discover, dream, pack, embrace, wake up, seek, affect, go, fosters, travel, are forced*.

Notice that simple subject/predicate and modification need no connectives: that connectives come in by adding place, time, manner, cause; that is, the phrasal and clausal specifications of simple modifiers. The proportioning of parts of speech is characteristic of Emerson's style—one adjective to three nouns, to two verbs to two connectives—and this proportion is characteristic also of what we may call the predicative or active verbal style, typified by such a sentence perhaps as: *The bright boy came to the beach and built a boat*. Alternative emphases would increase either the adjectival or phrasal modification, on the one hand, or clauses and clausal connectives on the other—both thus with richer modification, with assumption, rather than statement, of qualifying data. *The bird is yellow* makes a statement about yellow; *the yellow bird sings* assumes yellow in order to talk about singing.

Emerson's style puts a maximum premium, for English prose, on the separate items of predication, the free functioning of active verbs. Whitman differs: he substantiates with phrasal connectives: *in, into, of, with*, and the comparative or alternative *or* and *than*, with the barest minimum of causal and relative terms. His adjectives and nouns and connectives are more than Emerson's, his verbs less; he is one of the few for whom

many verbs are given the form of adjective participles, three times as many as Emerson's. In the third paragraph of *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman in effect introduces his style as well as his subject:

> But precluding no longer, *let me strike the key-note* of the following strain. First premising that, though the passages of it have been written different times, *it is*, in fact, *a collection* of memoranda, perhaps for future designers, comprehenders) and though it may be open to the charge of one part contradicting another—for there are opposite sides to the great question of democracy, as to every great question—*I feel the parts* harmoniously blended in my own realization and convictions, *and present them* to be read only in such oneness, each page and each claim and assertion modified and tempered by the others. *Bear in mind*, too, *that they are not the result* of studying up in political economy, but of the ordinary sense, observing, wandering among men, these States, these stirring years of war and peace.

Here no more than a fifth of the material is direct predicate of subject, in contrast to Emerson's half. Whitman admits the possible charge of self-contradiction, but dismisses conscious contradiction, so strong for Emerson, from his style - "each claim and assertion modified and tempered by the others." Modification is the key-note, and sensory modification, not from argument, but from observing, wandering. *In, into, of, with, or, than:* "Our fundamental want today in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors...accomplishing...a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States...Never was anything more wanted than, today, and here in the States, the poet of the modern is wanted, or the great literatus of the modern."

Between these extremes of Whitman and Emerson, there is a middle ground—not a mere compromise, but a mode of its own, as its vocabulary exemplifies. Note Twain's chapters 15, 16, 17 in *Life on the Mississippi*, for example. The chief connectives are prepositional like Whitman's, but of a more directional adverbial sort: *about, at, between, on, through, to, under, upon*, with, like Emerson, a minimum of locative and possessive terms. While Whitman's prepositions of place show presence or possession, Twain's show action, befitting his stronger use of verbs:

> At the first glance, *one would suppose that* when it came to forbidding information about the river *these two parties could play equally* at that game; *but this was not so*. At every good-sized town from one end of the river to the other, *there was a "wharf-boat"* to land at, instead of a wharf or a pier. *Freight was stored* in it for transportation; waiting *passengers slept* in its cabins.

Here about a third of the material is direct predication of subject, between Emerson's half and Whitman's fifth, just as Twain's style in general balances adjectives and verbs.

One may well suggest that these distinctions I have been making are simply based on subject-matter. Emerson argues an idea, Whitman describes observations, Twain sets forth events; therefore the difference in verbs and connectives. But it is not so simple; while subject is a matter of style, so is attitude, and the habit of speech. So we may find in the Renaissance, in a trio of essays on morality, that the same stylistic contrasts occur. Sir Thomas More in his Utopian debate is like Emerson, spare in adjectives, strong in verbs and the logic of *by, how, that.* Ascham in a similar moralizing on education takes Whitman's role of blending alternatives and degrees in *amongst* and *in;* he ignores relative and *how* clauses. Bacon has Twain's vigor and crispness, his *to* directions, his moderately strong use of clauses.

Comparing Jonson, Milton, and Browne in the seventeenth century, we see that Jonson, the actively predicative writer, uses relatively few *and, of;* many *about, against, with, because, but, for, if, so, than; that.* Like More then, he combines simple verbs with clausal structures. His prepositions show especially a relation of opposition. Browne, on the other hand, uses little opposition, but much *above, from, in, of, into, upon,* the vocabulary of location. And Milton, in the middle, is characterized by the most *and, as before, now, into, out of,* prepositions of active direction like Twain's, as well as a high proportion of relative connectives *that, what, which, who.* In other words, we may see that certain styles vary but persist. In the twentieth century, the decline of subordinate clausal terms lessens the distinction of their whole style, but still retains in Lawrence's *because, if, what,* a great contrast to Huxley's locational *between, from,* Russell's *about, since.*

On the other hand, to note the power of temporality, consider the prose of the sixteenth century as a whole, in such works as Tyndale's translation of St. Paul, Thomas More's *Apology,* Hugh Latimer's *Fifth* Sermon, Roger Ascham's *Schoolmaster,* Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles,* Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* John Lyly's *Euphues,* Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy,* Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning,* and Thomas Dekker's *Gull's Hornbook.* The fact that all of these but the *Schoolmaster* are strongly predicative, that is, use verbs twice the adjectives and two-thirds the nouns, suggests that more than individual choice was involved; and the variety of topics and genres suggests that time, rather than type, provided the common bond. Even certain specifications were agreed on in emphasis by a number of the writers; especially *to come, to find, to give, to know, to make, to see, to take.* These were related to adjectives *good, great, true, whole,* and nouns of human and social value like *mind, reason, word, work,* and to a multiplicity of major connectives, especially conjunctions.

So not only type of choice, but time, may provide meaningful generalizations. Time, with its general lessening of connectives, limits in its way the choices of a writer today, making probable the shortening of his sentences to forty, rather than an older seventy words, cutting down the probabilities of strong logical connective use, and raising the chances for the adverbials. Within time and type then, the individual writer makes his own unique combinations of choice.

From choices, let us turn to necessities: the writer's commitments to predication. Suppose a student is considering the question: What does the first scene of *Hamlet* do for the play as a whole? And suppose he decides a good answer is: The first scene establishes Hamlet in the view of his contemporaries, a view emphasized first by Horatio, then by Laertes, Rosencranz and Guildenstern, and Fortinbras. Then he knows first of all that his predicate is *establishes Hamlet* and that the steps of unfolding this predicate will be the steps of his paragraphs. The *first scene* is the subject; from it the material relevant to the predicate will be drawn. The predicate then is further modified by two phrases—*in the view* and *of his contemporaries*. And finally, the last phrase of the question, *for the play as a whole*, is prepared to be dealt with in the apposition, *a view emphasized by Horatio, Laertes, and others*. In other words, both question and answer consider what possible predications can be made for Scene I, and then proceed to select and develop one of them. It is not the substance of Scene I which will guide the essay; rather, it is the pertinence which the predication will attribute to Scene I. In such a way, the writer is master of his material. He is not conditioned by his material; rather he is faithful to it in terms of the responsibility he takes toward it, and the evidence he finds and provides for the predication—in our instance, for the statement *establishes Hamlet*—and then for the views of Hamlet's companions throughout the play, even to the final speech of Fortinbras.

If I have a hero, the predication or idea, I have also a villain, the "preliminary outline." Lest you accept what I suggest too easily, and agree that of course we teach the following-out of a *thought*, not of a mere *subject*, remember the usually accepted form of outline, the outline of the "topic." Topic: Scene I of *Hamlet*. Outline: main steps of Scene I: A. The Guards, B. Horatio. And so on. Even in the writing of theses in graduate study, the student carries the confusion of such inertia with him, and provides outlines and bibliographies of such a field as "the early sixteenth century" or "the industrial novel," without yet knowing what he wants to say of it. For such a student, the beginning is not in the word, but in the hell of no intentions. So then he says, I have taken too big a subject; I must narrow this topic or this location; and looks puzzled when one asks: Will one industrial novel be easier to outline than *the* industrial novel? Will California be easier to outline than the United States? Will Berkeley be easier to outline than California?

Further, the standard outline conceals rather than reveals the crucial

articulations of connectives. A, B, and C subordinations stress a sort of parallelism usually inherent in the subject according to certain taxonomic presuppositions, but not related to the main line of predication and the supplementary modifications which the writer must work along. To answer about the *who* and *what* of an event the main questions of time, location, cause, and manner, in *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*, is to work through the words, phrases, or clauses of this information, with emphasis and alternatives most probably related to the main point the author is making about the event, and thus, transition for transition, marking the main stages in the development of that point.

You may notice that my example of a subject has been Scene I of *Hamlet*. I have a serious reason for this choice, namely, that fidelity to the relevant evidence in the subject-matter is best studied when the studying group shares the subject, has the text before it. No doubt all of us have done interesting experiments with the providing of common materials. My colleague, Jackson Burgess, for example, reports the effective use of the view from his classroom window. Charles Muscatine works with vast shared concerns like death. Benbow Ritchie works best with two or three translations of *The Odyssey* in hand at one time. For composers of all kinds I think the important point is that they compose responsibly in fields they are studying—literary students in literature, botany students in botany. As all of us think through the medium of our language, English, so all of us need to learn; and to teach, composition in whatever field we are working in and knowledgeable in, and to treat the material of that field with fidelity. Every field of knowledge, every center of inquiry, carries its own responsibilities in its own language, English—if indeed it claims English as its language.

Almost twenty years ago, the Berkeley Plan for prose composition was begun under the direction of Professor Benjamin Lehman and later was worked out by Professor Benbow Ritchie and others. As it is now being worked out at the Davis Campus, it may well widen its name as well as its function. Central to the plan is the belief I have just expressed about subject-matter, that every department should teach composition in its own subject. Central too is the belief that well-constructed questions, in tests and assignments will with a little care, get well-constructed answers in which a predication will carry the burden of argument, rather than a mere list of cue-items under the term "discuss." Central too is the belief that individual power over problems comes from practice in conscious choice of alternative relevant materials and structures, alternative modification. Therefore the University of California Prose Committee, made up of members from a variety of academic departments, undertakes to give a course for readers and assistants in all interested departments, teaching them how to make assignments and how to guide and evaluate the resultant writing, even for large numbers of students at a time. This aid is not fully made use of because many departments feel that they more economically

use their assistants in the guiding of laboratory experiments and reading of true-false questions. Nevertheless, in a range of subjects from music to economics, from classics to psychology and sociology, the advanced students may learn to teach the beginners the rudiments of thoughtful writing in their field.

Recently, colleges in this country have been confronted with a sad and true report by Professor Kitzhaber on the progressive deterioration of writing by students at Dartmouth. All the gloom, unease, queasy mediocrity, slipshod inadequacy of which teachers of composition are aware, and which are so tellingly set forth in this report, were felt too at Berkeley in interdepartmental studies of student-writing in 1950-53. But one further important fact should be noted: that deterioration is less in the supply of good writing than in the demand for it. That is, the student is apt to adapt himself to the demands of the course of study, and to supply only minimal cues rather than complex structures of thought, if these are all that the questions, or the readers of the answers, require.

So the upperclassmen in a wide range of departments at Berkeley also write badly, and write badly whether or not they wrote well previously in first-year composition. But after only two widely spaced half-hours of explanatory lecture, by instructor and assistant, on the sort of reasoning stressed in this essay, that is, the need for responsible predication of a subject adequately evidenced, over half of the students improve by a whole grade. In contrasting groups, without this compositional guidance, a fifth of the students improve by simply increasing their understanding of the subject matter. Knowledge can be strengthened therefore by conscious awareness of responsibility. Every writer, in every sentence he writes, needs to relearn his method in relation to each new complexity of his medium. Composition does not work in a vacuum; it cannot be learned "once and for all." It works rather in a medium which grows increasingly complex as we learn more about it and requires further and further adaptation of the powers to compose.

In the word *grammar*, as admirable as *composition*, lies a fairly simple, or simplifiable, answer to our questions. Grammar gives us the articulations of language with which we can compose. And they are not infinitely multiple and confusing; rather they are fairly basic and elemental: the individual and powerful purpose of the predicate; the relevant substance of the subject; the specifiable details of manner and location in modifying clause, phrase, and word, and the explicit formal guidance of connectives: thus we compose our purpose in substance, quality, order and linkage. To know our purpose is not easy: it takes a philosophy. To know the malleability of our medium is not easy; it takes an art. But difficulty need not mean confusion. The composer in language, young or old, can look at his language and see its potentialities for his purpose and for purposes beyond him. Grammar for him can be as clear, strong, and potentially expressive as for the most accomplished artist. Our own best principles of coherence,

would we apply them to our language, would tell us that we need not lose sight of the forest for the innumerable small branches of the trees.

It is the grain of the living wood we are after, the character of the language by which we live and compose.

VII.

Styles In Composition

A style is an attitude, a set of values which underlies a set of habitual choices. A style of dress, a style of action, a style of speech, a style of writing—a stylus was a pen—all tell us something of what we want to know about the character and motive represented in the habitual choices. The *how* with the *what*, is the message.

Is it useful to be aware of one's own style, or does such awareness interfere with being natural? My belief is that, once having become conscious of the possible choices and once having made the choices, one can be secure in them and they can become natural. Knowledge and conscious choice, in other words, support rather than oppose intuition, and give it flexibility as well as ease, sympathy as well as surety, a sense of alternatives as well as a sense of preferences.

The beginning essayist in prose is not apt to be very conscious of what he is doing because he is not apt to know what the possibilities are. Or if he is excessively self-conscious, stumbling over the furniture, it may be because he has thought too much about his difficulties in writing, not enough about his purposes, strengths, and favorite ways of procedure.

What are some of the specific grammatical, and thus stylistic, alternatives in prose? A sentence has a ring to it, the sound of its character and construction. *Give me liberty, or give me death*, we say, and hear the two similar imperatives, the two dissimilar objects, joined by an alternative. Though for the structures we recognize these grammatical terms seem unduly weighty, just as the name *James W. Anderson, Attorney at Law* may seem weighty for someone usually called *Jim*, the greater formality may be useful for distinguishing one *Jim* from another. The representative force of such aphorisms is limited by their unusual succinctness, and their re-inforcement by patterns of sound.

The usual sentence is more complex, yet less closely organized, moving along as part of a sequence. At its simplest it predicates a subject; relates one concept to another: *The bird is yellow. The bird flies over the field. The bird sings a song.* As part of a sequence of subordinate clauses: *The bird which is yellow flies over the field while he sings a song.* As qualification by adjectives: *The yellow bird, flying over the field, sings a song.* As connected phrasal material: *The yellow bird, in flight over the field,*

sings a song. Differing proportions of the chief referential terms, nouns, adjectives, and verbs, and of their connectives, result from these differing choices. Of the basic subject, verb, and object, *bird, sings,* and *song,* even subject and object may be differently constructed: by pronoun and clause, for example: *He who flies sings what he feels.* There is, in other words, structural substitutability as well as the referential substitutability we call *synonym.* Only the verb cannot be replaced in structure, and thus, with its subject and object, provides the statement's stable center.

A masterly prose will employ all varieties of possibility, yet will maintain a main line of emphasis. So, for example, the prose of Sir Winston Churchill exemplifies all the alternatives noted here yet moves along in the basic moderation characteristic of its author. "No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time" (1947). The verbs and adjectives here work equally to give significance to the nouns, in forms explicitly connected and subordinated.

A more common, but still carefully subordinated way of speaking, is to be heard in the strong inner clauses of his writing from 1943: "Some people's idea of [free speech] is that they are free to say what they like but if anyone says anything back, that is an outrage." Under *idea is that* come successive verbs under *what, but,* and *if*—the activity of thought, in a dominance of verbs over adjectives which is characteristic of a majority of English prose writers.

The "curt" version of this predicative style is less subordinate. From 1915: "The truth is incontrovertible: panic may resent it; ignorance may deride it; malice may distort it, but there it is." The free verb, unbound by connectives, is nevertheless related by the parallels of structure and function. Sentence by sentence, verb by verb, the curt style, fostered early by Seneca, and imitated by Elizabethan Senecans like Sidney and Lyly, scants the connectives of clauses and thus the complexity of subordination, though not so averse to phrasal modification.

Churchill indeed sometimes turns to phrasal pile-ups with the greatest zest, and provides, often in irony, the height of modification as alternative to predication. "I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence which is a noble thing." The adjectives here are dominant and thematic under the strongly modifying *bones* phrase. "Nothing is more dangerous in wartime than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of a Gallup Poll, always feeling one's pulse and taking one's temperature." Under the theme *dangerous,* the phrases of atmosphere and *Poll,* the adjectives of *feeling* and *taking* keep the sense of *dangerous* in suspension and continuity. So, even more emphatically, in 1944: "At the bottom of all the tributes paid to democracy is the little man, walking into the little booth, with a little pencil making a little cross on a little bit of paper—no amount of rhetoric or voluminous discussion can finally diminish the

overwhelming importance of that point." The *little, little,* and *little* adjectives, *walking* and *making,* culminate in the final adjective *overwhelming.* Even in his most characteristic balanced form, Churchill may stress the epithet, as in 1945: "The inherent vice of Capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent value of Socialism is the equal sharing of miseries." Here is the classic matching of adjective to noun in both subject and predicate as these are joined by the single verb, with, in addition, the paralleling of phrase by phrase.

Of his own style, Churchill wrote, "I affected a combination of the styles of Macaulay and Gibbon, the staccato antithesis of the former and the rolling sentences and genitival endings of the latter; and I stuck in a bit of my own from time and time." But also, "Broadly speaking, the short words are best and the old words are best of all." (Man of the Century.) The elaborateness of the first combination is balanced by the simplicity of the second.

Churchill stands at the center of English prose style, both for past and for present. The strong active verb which he uses vigorously he supports with richly adjectival and with explicitly connective materials. Most writers make choices similarly varied, but not always with balanced emphasis. The dominant English style, indeed, is the predicative.

Note, for example, the following two passages, one written in the Renaissance, one recently. Note the independence of the many verbs in each.

> This is their sentence and opinion of virtue and pleasure. And they believe that by man's reason none can be found truer than this, unless any godlier be inspired into man from heaven. Wherein whether they believe well or no, neither the time doth suffer us to discuss, neither it is now necessary; for we have taken upon us to show and declare their lores and ordinances, and not to defend them. (Sir Thomas More)

> It is hard to hear a new voice, as hard as it is to listen to an unknown language. We just don't listen. There is a new voice in the old American classics. The world has declined to hear it, and has blabbed about children's stories. (D. H. Lawrence)

To hear, to listen, to decline to hear, to blab, these verbs provide the content, connected by a minimum of words like *as, and, about,* and modified very little. Little is assumed by Lawrence; much is stated. For More, the adjectives are equally few; the connectives more frequent—subordinative as with *that, than, unless, whether, neither,* coordinative as with *and;* but the strongest are the verbs *to be, to believe, to discuss, to show*—the process of thought and argument.

When strongly connected, predicative prose sounds as follows, again in an old and a new passage:

Another man may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels, as gold in a mine, and be of no use to him; but this bell, that tells me of his affliction, digs out and applies that gold to me: if by this consideration of another's danger I take mine own into contemplation, and so secure myself, by making my recourse to my God, who is our only security. (John Donne)

Note the short frequent clauses linked by cumulative *ands*. There is an *and* series too in a passage by Shaw, plus a series of *by* and *that* and *how*.

Democracy, then, cannot be government by the people: it can only be government by consent of the governed. Unfortunately, when democratic statesmen propose to govern us by our own consent, they find that we don't want to be governed at all, and that we regard rates and taxes and rents and death duties as intolerable burdens. What we want to know is how little government we can get along with without being murdered in our beds. That question cannot be answered until we have explained what we mean by getting along. (George Bernard Shaw)

These, like More's and Lawrence's, are styles guided by predicates, with minimal qualifications. For such "classical" or balanced writers as Sir Francis Bacon and T. S. Eliot, qualification goes along with predication in establishing balance.

The second fruit of friendship is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thought. (Bacon)

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. (Eliot)

Note Eliot's *only, immediate, blind, timid, simple, better*, and others, explaining the *should, cannot, must*, of the verbs, as Bacon's *healthful, sovereign, fair* establishes the *maketh* and *maketh*. The structure seems more solid, more phrasally as more adjectively modified.

The extreme of qualification is to be seen in such an ancient-modern pair as Aschan and Ruskin:

Thus experience of all fashions in youth, being in proof always

dangerous, in issue seldom lucky, is a way indeed to overmuch knowledge, yet used commonly of such men, which be either carried by some curious affection of mind, or driven by some hard necessity of life to hazard the trial of over many perilous adventures. (Roger Ascham)

Not only does almost every noun have its adjective here, but both are strong in relation to the verbs; with *of* and *in* and *by* phrases, and *either, or*. So too for Ruskin – the *or*, the many *of* phrases, and the persistent qualification of each noun, from *no frost-ploughed paths* to *joyful flowers* and *all the blessings of the earth*.

No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures; no splintered heaps of ruin break the fair ranks of her forest; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers rend their rude and changeful ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear green streams wind along their well-known beds; and under the dark quietness of the undisturbed pines, there spring up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. (John Ruskin)

No prolonged prose sequence could afford to use just one of these exemplified patterns. But with a natural play of variety, of stating, assuming, qualifying, subordinating, explaining, weighing, it is probable that for the sake of unity and progress there will be one prevailing thematic structural choice to carry the main tone and meaning. The paragraphs quoted, therefore, are not only representative of their authors' habits in general, but represent also in particular a recurrent unit of stylistic expression, a recognizable model of the way in which the author characteristically puts his ideas together. Graphically, for example, we may see the above by separating its working components into lines, somewhat as William Carlos Williams arranges his lines in what he considers to be the "American idiom."

No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths,
of ancient glacier
fret the soft Jura pastures;
no splintered heaps
of ruin
break the fair ranks
of her forest;
no pale, defiled, or furious rivers rend their rude and changeful
ways
Patiently, eddy
among her rocks.
by eddy,
the clear green streams wind,
along their well-known beds;

and
under the dark quietness
of the undisturbed pines,
there spring up,
year
by year,
such company
of joyful flowers
as I know not the like of
among all the blessings
of the earth.

Breaking the lines with each explicit connective, we see the power of qualification both at beginning and at end. In contrast, Lawrence's verbal style runs as follows, with fewer adjectives and connectives.

It is hard to hear a new voice,
as hard
as it is to listen
to an unknown language.
We just don't listen.
There is a new voice
in the old American classics.
The world has declined to hear it,
and has blabbed
about children's stories.

A reader may well feel a distinct taste for one choice or another; he may have an immediate sympathy for crisp predicative sequences on the one hand or cumulative adjectival structures on the other, for connections expressed by preposition and conjunction or left implicit. At least he will recognize the differences in pattern.

Part of the value to the reader may rise from the dexterity with which the form is treated, the fulfillment of possibilities in the choice. Part may rise from a judgment, beyond that of the skill and form itself, of the attitude carried in the style, the evident purpose to declare relations in coordinate sets, for example, in contrast to the constructing of a complex of more and more minor subordinations. Cicero was famed for supplying as much evidence as possible, especially in qualifying phrase and relative clause, before he arrived at his completed predication in the main verb. In his sentence, thought was to be taken as a *fait accompli*. It was considered the great virtue of Seneca, on the other hand, and later of Montaigne, that they seemed to carry the reader along with them in an incompleted process of thinking, with main verbs unpredictably supplemented by other main and other minor verbs, with statements possibly short and unmodified, possibly rambling and open-ended.

Often it is stated that one of these methods is preferable to another, more

effective, more true to English; but inasmuch as lastingly effective English prose has been written in a number of different ways, it seems wise to recognize both the method and the purpose, as well as the limits of the reader's taste, before evaluating in any but an impressionistic fashion. The student who likes the inner sound of what he reads, and who wishes to achieve something like it, or who dislikes and wishes to avoid it, had best be able to discern just how it works.

In the pairs we have looked at, some readers may recognize, rather than a preference for one of the modes, a consistent preference for the modern, finding strangeness in all the early forms. Most of this strangeness is in vocabulary, in labels now out of use; but to some degree there is a difference between early and modern structures which we would do well to observe and define. Most simply, English sixteenth and seventeenth century prose was more predicative and connected; modern is more qualified and juxtaposed, in a reversed proportion. A defining trait of modern prose style in general, then, is its minimal subordination, its decrease in explicit connection, in phrase and clause structures. In the past, only a few, notably Sidney, Dryden, Swift, Johnson, Carlyle, scanted connectives as much as do most of the moderns from Shaw on. In the past, on the other hand, only a few: Ascham, Hobbes, Browne, Smith, Gibbon, relied on adjectives as strongly as do many moderns; from the group of De Quincey, Carlyle, Macaulay, Darwin, Ruskin in the nineteenth century to a majority of writers in the twentieth.

Like syntax and word-order, vocabulary too is open to choices which are related to time and to type of interest. What we want to talk about, what alternatives we select from a number of possibilities, are involved with our concerns and with the structural patterns we have in mind. Certain ideas and certain structures seem to go together. For example, and perhaps surprisingly, the scientific writer is usually not the logician but rather the observer, communicating more through adjectives and noun phrases than through verbs and clauses. His is the language of substance, concrete, descriptive, literal, as distinguished from the argumentative connections and abstractions of the civic philosopher and from the presented dilemmas of the artist. As a whole, the major vocabulary of the essayist has grown more concrete over the centuries, losing some of its key terms of value in favor of terms of sense, which in turn may be symbolic of value as the users of language emphasize new implications.

From literal to figurative is one range that a word may take: from *foot* of a person to *foot* of a mountain, a substituted or metaphoric use. To this are related other substitutions, as of a foreign, archaic, or coined term. From concrete to abstract is another range: from *foot* to *extremity*, stressing one of the abstract characteristics of foot, a contrast for which the terms *image* and *symbol* as distinguished from *concept* are also used. From particular to general is another range, from *this foot* and *these feet*, plural, to *most* or *all feet* in general. A fourth range is from denotative or

descriptive to connotative or associative. A fifth range is from neutral to evaluative, from *foot* as fact to *foot* as value as in "There's a foot for you!" These ranges do not necessarily run parallel; that is, the concrete may be more similar to the figurative than to the literal, the particular may be both an abstraction and a value. A sympathetic and understanding reading of a prose style will take account of the interplay between these possibilities.

For sound patterns too there are ranges of choice: from euphony to cacophony; from smooth to rough transitions; from little pause and stress, to much; and from a patterning almost as close as that of poetry, with symmetry in syllable, phrase, or clause, though not in measure to a patterning of forms and intervals highly irregular.

Not many years ago we were troubled to be told that an apparently solid table top was really a mass of swarming molecules, and that a human being was a subtle carbon compound. But we grew accustomed to accepting differences in levels, and came to consider at once the scientific and the everyday table, the concept and the use. Now we undertake to consider our own language also in these ways. We follow as scholars point out to us the complex underlying structures of phonemes, morphemes, and syntactic units, and try to create a grammar which will account for not just any but all possible sentences. At the same time, we look again at the surface of our language, able to note in relation to these deeper complexities the surface simplicities. Qualificative and connective sentences, for example, represent transformations of simpler "kernel" sentences. *The yellow bird sings* has combined *The bird is yellow* and *The bird sings*. The norms of prose practice work in patterns of grammar.

Here we have a pattern of structures—word, sentence, paragraph—each with its internal and external relations in implicit and explicit connection by agreement, order, or connective terms. For the word, its root and its affixes, derivational and inflectional; for the sentence, its subject-predicate focus and its adjuncts of qualification by word, phrase, or clause; for the paragraph or whole composition, its controlling theme-sentence and subordinate qualifying and substantiating sentences. As in speech these structures are distinguished by both stress and pause, so in print they are at least partly distinguished by punctuation and spacing.

For example, in the word-structure, *unlikeness*, the stressed root *like*, already qualified by its negative prefix *un-*, its derivational noun-making suffix *-ness* and its pluralizing suffix *-es*, is given a boundary of space to distinguish it from its qualifiers, let us say *many extreme*, and from its predicate, let us say *demand recognition*. In turn, the sentence, *Many extreme unlikenesses demand recognition*, is set off at either end by both space and punctuation, a capital and a period or semi-colon; and a parenthetical extra phrase or clause would be set off by its own two marks, two commas, a capital and comma, or comma and period. In effect, a truism of Aristotle's, a functioning unit has a beginning, middle, and end. These

are given graphic marking in suitable ways, including additional white space for new paragraph and new chapter.

In other words, in some simple ways, the page before us records the measures of the voice in grouping subordinate around dominant units in the chief structures of word, sentence, and paragraph. In each, the focus is on the relation of the dominant unit to its adjuncts. The simplest visible and audible relation, of each sentence's chief verb to its subject and complement, can then be seen to be amplified by simple modifying qualities in adjective and adverb, and then, with the guide of specific connectives and further punctuation, carried into phrasal and clausal elaborations.

As grammar provides a design of ordering, emphasizing, and linking its units of meaning to achieve relation in statement, and logic works toward a design of consistency between statements, so rhetoric works toward a design of effect between author and audience. And this rhetorical design includes, as all do to some degree, art as well as reason, the powers of sense as well as the powers of mind and feeling. So into rhetoric come all sorts of conscious questions of effect in reference, in sequence, in emphasis: not only the grammar of compounding qualities in such a phrase as *smaller and briefer unlikenesses*, but the rhetorical impact of this order. Would *briefer and smaller* be a better order? Better for what? The questions of purpose and intent become important as part of effect. The traditional divisions of a prose composition, Introduction, Proposal, Demonstration, Conclusion, correspond to the forms, adjuncts, and connections of word and sentence.

Rhetoricians think of situation and purpose as a defining force. They distinguish showing, proving, and persuading: the first to make clear and plain; the second to argue a case, using all possible evidence on all sides; the third to move the hearer's belief and approval. Different purposes take different techniques; the achievement of clarity, for example, is more important to showing than to moving. To these purposes, poets and prose writers have added pleasure: they combine moving and instructing with the most delightful of sense impressions, so that the hearer of poetry may enjoy what he learns.

Questions of design, of aesthetic and effective pattern, have therefore been much discussed: the effects of series of terms, of balances and oppositions, of cumulative structures, of short incisive units or long involved suspensive ones. Questions of connection as well as of order: the logic of conjunction and disjunction, of *and... but;* the logic of alternative, *either... or;* the logic of implication, *if... therefore;* the ways to make explicit connections between statements. Questions, also, about individual words and sounds, differences and combinations between harsh and mellow sounds; differences between foreign and familiar words or figurative and literal uses of them.

Given all these choices, of ways to arrange in certain patterns for

certain effects the units of sound, syllable, word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, which we distinguish in language, how do we ever get around to making a choice from the innumerable possibilities? In speaking and writing, as in daily life, we develop certain habits of combining materials, so that we do not have to think through each combination each time. Our habits make our style, for individual, for community, for whole culture.

Think then how an individual can develop a style of writing within his own world, like enough to his friends' that he can communicate with them, different enough so that he may call it his own: by being aware of the chief possibilities in his language, the combinations that will work pleasantly and effectively to get him where he wants to go.

Choose, in the light of purpose and situation, not only from among materials, whether you will talk about Greeks or Romans, about cats, felines, tigers, or dogs, but from among qualifying structures—simple qualifiers, or connected phrases and clauses, to support the main direction of what you undertake to assert or query. Certain habits of selection will characterize your style. For example, Demetrius in Alexandria in the third century B.C. characterized styles not only by the rhetoric of purpose but, as we have done, by the rudimentary uses of certain grammatical constructions. The plain style, he said, is simple, using many active verbs and keeping its subjects spare. Its purposes include lucidity, clarity, familiarity, getting its work done crisply and well: so it uses few difficult compounds, coinages, or qualifications, avoids harsh sounds or odd orders, employs helpful connective terms and clear series with firm endings, and in every way tries to be natural, following the order of events themselves with moderation and repetition as in dialogue.

The eloquent style, in contrast, changes the natural order of materials in order to effect control over them even before predication. So the style may be called *passive* in translation of *pathos*, and in contrast to active. Subjects are tremendously amplified, as strong assumptions are made, without the activity of much predication, because inherent qualities rather than new relations are stressed. Sentences are lengthy, rounded, suspended, with a great deal of elaborately connected material. Words can be unusual, coined, figured; sounds can be mouth-filling, even harsh; and meanings can be implied, oblique, symbolic.

The modern student of prose may quickly praise plainness and condemn the eloquent, which he often calls "flowery," but after consideration may remember that purposes differ, and that if he wishes to move, to enhance, to persuade, some language of flowers, some structure of suspense and excitement, may be valuable in contrast to a plain naturalness.

Demetrius cut across this contrast with another, that between styles energetic on the one hand and polished on the other, between short, even harsh phrases, broken, loose, and spontaneous, as if under great stress, with a choice of terms symbolic like the eloquent, though not so elaborated, and without interconnected qualifying structures, in contrast to the pol-

ished, smoothly connected, aesthetically pleasant in reference and tone, which embellishes the familiar with charm and grace. Two centuries later, Dionysus of Halicarnassus characterized Pindar by this same contrast, his harmony natural, stately, spacious, articulated by pauses, rather than smoothly polished and joined by connectives; naturally off-balance, not rounded and symmetrical.

Note that his contrast is another version of the first, between an art of naturalness and an art of inventiveness; the first contrast, grammatically stressing the choice between predication or qualification; the second, between implicit or explicit connection; these grammatical choices providing the structural basis for choices of reference, reason, and tone. Gradually the choices, in certain combinations, settled into three: plain, middle, and high; because, though the high could not easily descend or blend, the plain could easily be somewhat energetic, somewhat polished, even somewhat eloquent, and thus effect a middle style. In grammatical terms, the predicative style could be either implicitly or explicitly connected, abrupt, or smooth; while the high qualifying style, because of its greater mass and extension, could not so easily get along with the abruptnesses of connectives merely implied. For the high style, the terms of reference are implicative of further qualities, rather than of further active relations. The gamut in choice between sparest and fullest materials of qualifications is mediated by the choice along the way of sparest or fullest signals of relation. The sentence is a synthesis, a composition, an arrangement of sounds, references, and structures, put to a purpose of showing, weighing, moving, and pleasing along with these.

From the high style of Aeschylus and Demonsthenes, to the smooth of Isocrates, to the moderate fullness of Cicero, and the intense brevity of the Stoics, classic prose tradition came into English with all its variations still possible in the new language, so that More, Ascham, and Bacon all within one century could well disagree on what different styles would be appropriate even to similar subject-matters. Still today all three basic styles and their variations are useful, and are, indeed, still discernible by the measures of the most technical linguistic analysis, as beneath the differing surfaces of procedure may be seen the simple kernel forms for the plain style, the deeper and deeper levels of transform for the high. Perhaps the lesser pertinence of the eighteenth and nineteenth century forms of grammatical analysis to our purposes is explainable by their emphasis on the parts of speech, without attention to the clarifying main lines of function. In addition to the main function of grammatical structure, predication itself, we have only to consider degrees of modification, and degrees of explicit connection. So we are able to distinguish the main choices by others and put such choices to use ourselves.

Sentence-making, idea-making, has a strong ethical function, because it helps bring together and temper the extremes of the range, often unfortunately dichotomized, between objective and subjective, between com-

munity and individual. Forms of mechanization or of bureaucracy have tended to draw modern men toward the subjective and individual extremes of emotional superlatives unrelated to evidence, while fears of personal responsibility have drawn them to extremes of inert acceptance of evidence.

Statement of idea, in its implications of generality and its susceptibility of particular substantiation, shows how a man may take both firm and limited responsibility for his universe of subject matter. His predicate controls his subject; his adjectives and adverbs specify his assumptions; and his further materials, linked to the basic statement by explicit prepositional and conjunctive connectives, add the specifications of context, the *when, where, how, why,* to the basic *who* and *what.*

The process of statement-making thus develops two ethical powers: individual responsibility and, through awareness of one's own responsible choices, awareness of the like and unlike choices and responsibilities of others.

The English essay, the small trial of an idea, has been tried in many ways, with many tones and styles, in many variations upon the powers of the language, and with increasing emphasis upon some of these powers. For one who plans his own small trials in prose there is no better guide than the versatility of his predecessors.

For the reader over-accustomed to searching out cue words to respond to, rather than whole patterns of speech to comprehend, the way of reading here suggested may be useful in contrast: first to mark the main independent verbs, to see what they are saying about subject and object; then to note the single words and connected groups of words which qualify or parallel them.

For the explorer of ideas, both reader and writer, awareness of the patterns of idea-making may clarify and enrich the ideas themselves.

VIII.

What We Already Know About Composition and What We Need To Know

The term *we* here means us literally, students and teachers of English composition, not just an editorial figment but a lot of practiced people. At least, my proposals aim toward such a meaning.

First, we know that good writing, like good thinking and feeling, can't be taught "once and for all." It's not a simple skill like swimming; indeed, even a swimmer can be coached to get better and better. Thinking is one of our most complex abilities, and writing is an evidence of it. So students need help with writing at many stages, from third grade to eighth, to tenth, to college and beyond, and from subject to subject. Whenever a new stage of thought and a new subject-matter come along, the accumulated abilities of the student need conscious and thoroughgoing adapting to the new material and maturity. Therefore, the concept of "remedial" work is misdirected; the teacher who sends a student back to brush up on technical details is trivializing his own serious job of helping the young writer adapt his present active skill and latent knowledge to important new demands.

The latency of much knowledge is rich and easily to be called on. In conducting an experimental study of student writing abilities during the 1950's (described in Section III, "The College at Composition"), we found that a majority of junior and senior students in fifteen departments at Berkeley could improve from one paper to another by a whole grade merely by one half-hour of reminders by their readers and instructors, these in turn having been reminded by readers from the English Department about the essentials of composition. Even so-called technical problems, like spelling, decreased measurably when larger compositional problems decreased—that is, when the students were called upon seriously to use what they knew. If such a program of reminders could be used systematically throughout the students' careers, working at all stages and in all departments of knowledge, aided when necessary by support from English department advisors, that invigorating sense could be fostered of building on what we know we know.

What do we know good composition is? Shucking away the varieties in such terms as *descriptive, narrative,* and *expository* or *creative, scien-*

tific, and *historical*, at what kernel do we arrive? At the combination, suggested by the term *composition* itself, the putting together of two processes, the selection and the arrangement of the materials for consideration: to choose and to put into order; or to have in mind an order from which then to choose. The processes of this combination may be relatively spontaneous and unconscious, organic or fused, as some say, but in learning them, we need to distinguish and practice their interrelations for the sake of understanding and future use. Some orderings are relatively more sequential, like narrative; some more subordinating, like argument; some more substantiating and qualifying, like science and description; or, in other terms, some more presentative, like drama and film; some more analytical, like debate; some more involved in close sound pattern, like poetry—with cross-currents for all of these. *Genre* is indeed a vital stabilizing force for recognition of intent.

But whatever the kind and purpose, the guiding idea focuses and asserts itself in language toward its effect, from writer to reader. The step-by-step response of the reader is guided by what the writer tells him and establishes expectations at each point. As we know, the medium serves the message, because it combines the *what* and the *how* of expression and communication. Therefore, it would seem wise to teach at every level the possibility of many sorts of combination—not just stories in grammar school, descriptions and journalism in high school, and exposition and poetry in college, but how each of these can supplement the other or can be chosen by a student at any level. The principles of composition will hold for all and can be strengthened by the perceptions and practice of their varying forms.

So what do we know about the principles of composition? A putting together of parts to make a whole implies a recognition of parts and of wholes. Parts from which to select; wholes towards which to arrange. Or wholes intuitively felt, parts more analytically recognized. The lack of clarity in our sense of the working of language has been one of our greatest difficulties; but now we know from the clarifications of linguists how the parts of our language function. The predicate says what is being said, asserts or questions or commands a relation, verifiable in terms of time: "The boy is a good scout now; but was he then?" The subject: noun or pronoun, phrase or clause, about which the predicate speaks. The adjunctives: adjectives and adverbs and determiners, which qualify both subjects and predicates—"good," "now," "then." The connectives: prepositions and conjunctions, linking predicates, substantives, or adjuncts—*is* "and" *was*, *boy* "and" *boy*, *good* "and" *better*—or linking more complex units of phrases and clauses to function as words—"in those days" or "when he was younger" as a substitute for "then." As structuralists point out, not only do various forms have varying functions, but also various functions can take varying forms, so that selection and arrangement may the better interact.

When we know these simple forms of grammar, we know that logic and

rhetoric follow in their emphasis on the predicate as the organizing force because of its statment-making, its verifiability. The noun "boy," the adjuctive "good," the connective "when" may have powerful associations of denoting and connoting, of image, metaphor, symbol, but still can tell us nothing precise unless given a context by their predicate statement. So when we come to composing, we need the predicate to do the organizing: the steps of our composition are the steps to be taken by the whole statement, not merely by some of its materials or qualities. So we have learned, I trust, not to talk about "defining the topic" or "cutting down the material" to make composition more wieldy: it's not the size of the cities but the trip the predicate takes between them that controls the arrangements. Any writer can take full responsibility for any selection of subject—death, taxes, New York, small-town, my cat, your lion, Argentine oil—so long as he knows what he wants to relate it to, to get said about it, and thus the steps, the stages, of the saying.

There are just a few basic relations in these steps: to a larger or smaller class, to comparable or contrasting items, to alternatives, to consequences. "New York has become a trade center for the world"—this will be a tracing essay for "has become." "New York used to frighten me, but it doesn't any more"—this will be a contrastive essay for "used to," "doesn't." "New York need to be rebuilt"—this will be an essay arguing, giving evidence, for "needs to be." Or the meaning may be given structure in other forms, "in other words." In all these, temporal contrast may still apply—we may transform the active verb "frighten" to an adjective ("The old frightening New York is gone") or to a subject ("My fright in New York is gone"). The alternatives for selection are many and are a part of style, as style is a habit of writing toward certain ends. Any student at any age can be made aware of his habits and his purposes and of how to choose and bring them together.

We know, or should if we have read the many histories of prose style in the past few years, that various grammatical alternatives have been emphasized by different authors and by different traditions in literary history so that we cannot wish to say that one is absolutely better than another but rather hope that the range will be available to all. It's not that one part of speech or function is weak; rather it is that any one of them may be overstressed or ineffectively used. Elizabethans were powerful arguers, subordinators, and connectors; Augustans by a fascinating shift of interests began that change toward greater adjective and phrase modification, which would culminate in the scientific prose of Darwin and Huxley, as well as in the serial poetries of Whitman and Dylan Thomas. Some moderns like Joyce and Lawrence, meanwhile, have returned to the curt predicative styles of some Elizabethans, eschewing not only adjectives but connectives also, creating the fragmentary juxtaposed effects of much present-day prose.

Who are we to condemn adjectival prose or the verb *to be* or strings of

phrases or short sentences, or passives or abstractions or generalizations, when these are the life-blood of one style or another? Rather, we may talk about their suitability to certain purposes, the choices that may be made from among them by students aware of the possibilities of choice. Any student may master any style if he knows what he is doing and practices enough. Practice in reading, in paraphrasing, in making précis of styles of the past as well as the present, will make him aware of what he wants not to do as well as of what he wants to do, and that is a big step.

Those of us who emphasize spontaneity, fluency, the naturalness of situation, as in journal-keeping and letter-writing and creative invention of all kinds, need not fear this other cognitive kind of knowledge in what we know about language and composition. What we know about the whole human being tells us the intuition and cognition are complementary, support each other. Intuition invested in learning brings it to life; learning invested in intuition gives it strength to work with raw materials to simplify complexities. The student adrift on a sea of language is an object of pity we need not allow; his language, understood, is, rather, his transportation and his farthest shore, his chance to make mistakes and survive them. Free flow of expression allows for one sort of success and error, careful practice and repetitive analysis for another; gradually, the two blend to support each other so that one can learn from the error to increase the success.

It has been also the idea of many leaders of the past that the special function of education is the development of rationality. As California Superintendent of Schools Wilson Riles says, all life is education, and all life, especially in early years the life of home and community, prepares us for skills and sympathies, for careers and values. But reasoning can be especially taught by schoolroom practice and needs to be, because every new stage of learning requires the study of a new stage of reasoning in increased complexity.

Rational thought considers ratios, that is, proportions, the connections made in composition, what is important in relation to what else. It deals with choices, priorities in making decisions, not only immediate but future ones as hypotheses. The logic of rational reasoning, the way it works as we have seen by the basic methods of adding or comparing or arguing, in putting ideas together, requires both positives and negatives to be considered in time and space. Addition and subtraction work by "and" and "then"; their negative, "but" and "then not." Multiplication and division, "on the one hand," "on the other," "either . . . or," "neither . . . nor." The possibilities or causes and consequences of these work by "if," "therefore," "though," "yet." All work on the ratio or relation of one idea or proposition to another, whether in sequence, alternation, or supposition, so that we need not be stuck with mere immediate cue-responses but can extend our wishes into time and space and try to figure out how they fit.

The heart of the matter, the student's own life, his own home, his own community may require the rationality of a primary and secondary edu-

cation of reading, writing, arithmetic, a workable skill. A wider reaching out, for those who desire it, may include the rationality of a community order: social work, politics, tradesmanship, teaching, professing. The farthest reaching out, the peripheries or boundaries of education farthest from the center, are those of university research study, most hypothetical, most like the outposts of a frontier, where possibilities are contemplated both for protection and advancement. It is farthest from home and even from community, and it is the least part of the standard culture, except as it may predict by forethought what will happen as new changes occur.

At each of these stages, from central home to widening community to peripheral frontier, the processes of rationality, of changing priorities, need to be reapplied to newly complex materials and problems. So education never stops, working either wider and wider or deeper and deeper. Nobody can do everything. Nobody can make all his choices work, But he can learn how to make the choices, and composition of ideas is one good way to learn.

I hope we agree that an educated life makes deeper and more complex mistakes, not just fewer, and education in reading and writing can give superb opportunities for making errors not fatal. So we learn. So we teach by the encouragement of thought-about-experience, not about "summer-vacation" experience, which is beyond our reach, but about the kinds of thought relevant to the kinds of writing available to our direct scrutiny. Why do sequences of narrative often begin effectively in the middle? Why is a strong debater one who allows most strongly for all the evidence on the other side? Why is negative evidence, that which is not to be found to support a proposal, as necessary as what is?

Some realists complain that the development of an idea is not a real form, not in demand except by college classes. Rather, it is the realist unit I know, giving practice in what is most asked of citizens every day, choice-making and the adding of reasons for choice, generalizing and giving evidence pro and con for the generalization. "We should wait till Saturday to visit the Joneses." There's a potential composition. "Why don't people like cabbage?" "Which school would be better for Jim?" "Shall I keep this radio?" "Shall I work in politics?" "If that's fire we hear, what shall we do?" – these are the practical everyday processes by which people live, the *if's*, the alternatives, the accumulations of experience which lead to plans and conclusions, important and real. Of course, they are not usually written down in essay form. But the essays give the helpful, formal written practice to make them work. And there are enough actual demands for reports too, in all sorts of work, to make the form practical— the report formed, as it needs to be, on the basis of purpose and perspective. If we can think easily of generalizable propositions, say, quickly, "The days grow shorter," then the how and the when will follow to support the idea rather than to outline the substantive; and more serious ideas

will grow more easily: "There is a better way to live this life," as the writer is freed from the materialism of subject matter.

Often, as Moffett, Macrorie, Christensen, Berthoff, and others have said, the student needs to be aware of his main responsibility toward the reader, to establish an expectation and then to fulfill it. Often he's not aware of expectation, of the stance or voice or ethos of rhetoric, of the explications of true dialogue, of the suspensive qualities of language-structures. He doesn't recognize his own power because he has been working hit or miss. He doesn't see his audience in friend or class or teacher or general reader. He doesn't recognize the consistency and power of his own dialect and its relation to standard dialect. He doesn't recognize the relation of writing to art as controlled limited experience. He doesn't recognize the power in the very limits of thought and language—that thought works in certain basic ways.

Such awareness is naturally so common, so enjoyed, that it provides the basis for jokes, the humor working in the slip from one expectation to another, for any grammatical form we can think of. Do we confuse singular and mass? "I'm worried that my hair is getting thin. But who wants fat hair?" Or abstract and concrete? "She has curves in places most people don't even have places." Or the power of the predicate in "Why does Uncle Sam wear red, white, and blue suspenders?" We know that the *wear* is the crucial term. With such humor, who needs confusion?

We know that composition is an art and that in addition to principles of logical and rhetorical relation, principles of aesthetic judgment function. So we are able to talk about effective forms: parallel structures for example, theme and variation, negative-contrast, cumulative series, balances and other values of art, as in painting and music also. And so we support intuition and knowledge with strong sense impression, the very body of thought, and with practice in running these scales, drawing these lines and colorations.

We know enough about students, language, art, reading, and writing in English to make the study of composition in English a sustaining and steadily accruing and culminating practice, supportive of subject matters other than literature as well as of literature and supportive of the maturing of the student's confidence and sense of responsibility.

What don't we know, so that we don't bring students to a stage of confident maturity in English at age 11, or 18 or 30, ready to go on to a new stage? We don't know how to follow our own principles, to compose not our own field merely but our own purposes. We don't communicate with each other, and therefore repeat or forget certain partial necessary steps at every level. We forget the powerful latency of knowledge, of competence, in bilingual students and can build much more than we do upon strengths, progressively rather than remedially.

We forget the powerful relation of grammar to logic and rhetoric and to the principles of art, so we let the debris of grammar confuse our own

striking modes of predication in English. And, without security in our own principles, we cover papers with corrections of detail which in fact would follow easily from a clearly purposive voice in the writing of a paper. Instead of *awk*, *sp*, *ref*, *ww*, and such other non-parallel examples of our principle of parallelism, we need chiefly the responsive critical statement: "The main idea of this paper is...," "the main steps of its development are...," "how then does paragraph 4 fit in, and what transitional connective terms would be helpful?" Teachers in Subject A, the special pre-college course in written English at Berkeley, have found that the use of a few basic connective terms of agreement and reference will indicate the student's degree of mastery over the arrangement of his motives. So diagnostic tests become a special kind of helpfully sharable communication.

There's a nucleus of teaching to be much further developed, a nucleus involving the teacher of composition in departments of literature, the teacher of composition in other subject matters, the apprentice teacher who attends the classes, reads many of the papers, and confers with many of the students, under direct and daily guidance, the young graduate who goes out to teach in college, high school, or grade school, and his colleagues and students there in their roles of associates and apprentices in the teaching of English. At every level, teacher and associate and apprentice and novice, all need to participate in a plan of learning, of agreement on a few basic principles of composition.

We need to know what we believe to be a good composition in the English language, so that we may know what are the values of judgment at every stage. And we need to know what are the main effective and cumulative ways of teaching such composition to students, apprentices, teachers, and associates, so we may work in the strength of our knowledge and help each student to recognize and work in the strength of his or hers.