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ABSTRACT
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Criticism, and rhetorical analysis in a recursive process which
enables students to see how features of words combine into figurative
patterns. Beginning at the level of the word and using John Milton's
"Lycidas" as an example, the paper shows how syntactic and semantic
features of two words interact to produce new meanings which then
interact to create larger figures through repeated patterns. The
paper points out that the heuristic also emphasizes the importance of
context in determining the meanings of figures and fictions. Three
figures are included. (Author/MS)

Facts, Figures, and Fictions:

A Heuristic for Reading and Teaching Figuration

by

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Abstract:

The article presents and demonstrates a heuristic for helping students learn how to read and understand figuration in literature. The heuristic contains elements from linguistics, New Criticism, and rhetorical analysis in a recursive process which enables students to see how features of words combine into figurative patterns. Beginning at the level of the word, the article shcws how syntactic and semantic features of two words interact to produce new meanings which then interact to create larger figures through repeated patterns. The heuristic also emphasizes the importance of context in determining the meanings of figures and fictions.

Annie Dillard argues that the best readings of literature are "by consensus, probable, workable, and fruitful."[1] We see the truth of her observation easily: we analyze and synthesize and draw on our own experience as we read in order to make coherent, insightful meaning. We also trust that our reading will be a response to the text and that we have entered a transaction with its writer.

Students are not so certain. They tend to assume that any response which they can remotely connect to the text is fine. Unfortunately they have little experience to bring to their reading and fewer reading strategies. So when we ask them to read a poem or a play or a story or an essay, we should not be surprised when they summarize the plot or "theme."

Although reader-response theory has been popular since the 1970's, signs of its inadequacy have appeared. In 1987 alone three articles appeared in College English which attempted to correct faults of reader-response theory. Brook Thomas suggested that reader-response be expanded to include New Historicism in order to correct students' tendencies to ignore the historical of a work,[2] Jeffrey Porter advocated including the enthymeme as a reading strategy in order to correct misreadings based on logic,[3] and Marjorie Roemer discussed ways to correct problems of authority in the classroom that reader-response fosters.[4] Just as reader-response replaced New Criticism in order to correct its narrowness, reader-response too seems to have drawbacks, among them a tendency to divert students' attention from the text and

to encourage careless reading habits. It also focuses more on sociology than language. We need ways to help students to read texts sensitively, without sacrificing the gains of reader-response, ways which include both reader and writer as active participants in the process of making meaning.

Linda Flower recently observed that experienced readers often use strategies to puzzle out meaning as they read. She concludes, "We need to trace...the connections between the active, constructive cognition of readers and writers and the coherence and structure of texts. And we need to discover new ways to make the strategic knowledge we see in experienced writers and readers more accessible to our students."[5] I begin with figuration because it requires students to perform several difficult operations at once. As they read a figure, they must analyze, draw on previously acquired knowledge, and synthesize constantly. Thus, reading a figure can be a major source of frustration. Figuration is so complex, so difficult to process, that students often overtax their short term memory and their patience.

To help I teach them a heuristic, drawing on linguistics, New Criticism, and rhetorical theory, that gives them a systematic way to proceed. The heuristic has an important advantage: it shows students how language (particularly figuration) influences both writers and readers without denying the validity of multiple readings or the affect of outside knowledge on a given reading. In other words, it moves students

closer to a text by drawing their attention to its language without implying that the text has only one meaning. Because figures themselves are open to multiple interpretation, the heuristic is flexible. Yet it also limits the range of interpretations to those which are consistent with the words in the text.

I call the heuristic the circle of facts, figures, and fictions. It is a circle because reading itself is often recursive: we check and recheck the meanings we make for internal consistency, for wholeness. The three points on the circle are those facts, figures, and fictions which help to create and unify our meanings as we read a poem or story or essay. Figure 1 presents the concept schematically.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

We begin at the point labeled "facts" by reading the text--usually a short poem--all the way through. Our purpose is to gather the facts--to discover as much as we can about the poem's literal level. I suggest that as we read, we look for the pictures, the images we see in our mind's eye, even if the images at this point do not make sense. Why? The best answer I have heard came from a poet-teacher-colleague Paula Scheye. One of her students had written of Yeats' "The Wild Swans at Coole," "Yeats was not talking about a bunch of birds,. . .but contemplating man in the ultimate transition from life to death."

Paula argued, on the contrary, that Yeats _was_ talking about a bunch of birds, that Yeats wrote about swans because they captured his attention: they drew him outside of himself and in that drawing stirred something deep within him that was only known through his absorption, his careful concentration of the swans.

In other words, the concrete images or experiences which appear at the literal level help to shape the whole poem, including what goes on at the figurative level. Poems are not intellectual puzzles; they are the result of far more complex human activity. Unless a reading of a poem treats both literal and figurative as equally important, the reader can easily distort the poem and the reading itself will be neither "probable" nor "workable" nor "fruitful" in anyone's eyes. As we gather the facts and look at the images we find, students develop a strong sense of this inexpressible core at the poem's center.

Once we have looked at the images, even though these do not necessarily make sense, we move on to the figures, the second point on the circle. To teach them how figures work, I use a theory formulated by Owen Thomas. Thomas observed that a "word or phrase is figurative when the definitional matrix of the word, the set of features, has been modified in some way so that it acquires, temporarily and in a particular context, a different and nonliteral meaning."[6]

I explain that Thomas' "set of features" operates in ways like our own genetic configuration which determines our hair and

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eye color and to some extent our body shape and strength. Just
as our genetic makeup both makes us unique and limits our
behavior at the same time, a word's "set of linguistic features"
determines that set of rules which governs how a word is used
(through its syntactic features) and what it means (through its
semantic features). And the semantic features can be either
explicit (denotations) or implicit (connotations). To put it
another way, the "set of linguistic features" is also a set of
"lexical restraints"--"lexical" because these restraints are
found in the dictionary and "restraints" because they outline the
parameters of ordinary usage.

Thomas then describes a the word acquires its nonliteral
meaning: as the set of features is modified, "certain
incompatible features are transferred to the definition matrix of
another word."[7] Before students can watch features transfer,
however, they must be able to identify them. The word 'berry,'
for example, has the syntactic features: 'noun,' 'common
(noun),''countable,' 'inanimate,' 'organic,' and the denotations
(semantic features): 'juicy fruit of certain plants,' 'coffee
bean,' and 'fish eggs' (as well as its botanical definition).

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Insert Figure 2 Here

We must infer the syntactic features. Making such
inferences is often difficult for my students so I show them
where the information can be found. The feature 'noun' comes

from the designated part of speech, and I caution them that

dictionaries often lump several parts of speech into a single

entry. The feature 'common' comes from the fact that the word is

not capitalized (except in the OED which doesn't include proper

nouns). The syntactic features 'countable' and 'inanimate' are

actually hybrids, coming from the semantic features of the word

'berry,' but they are classified as syntactic because they

actually determine how 'berry' is used. (An inanimate noun, for

example, cannot normally be used as the subject of a verb which

takes an animate noun: we ordinarily do not say "The book ran.")

To help students make sure they have all the important

syntactic features, I give them a checklist to remind them of the

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Insert Figure 3 Here

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various categories they can look for. I also remind them that

while any good dictionary will contain a word's essential

syntactic features and its denotations, we usually must supply

its connotations from our own knowledge and experience.

It is our inability to determine once and for all which

features are transferring and which connotations are operating

that enables us to combine close textual analysis with reader-

response theory. Let me explain. A figure changes as its

context changes: if we say "John is a lion" we could be

highlighting his ferocity or his social prowess, depending on the

situation. Yet these multiple meanings are neither infinite nor
indeterminate. Readings too have restraints.

Once we have examined the features of "berry," then we
create "violations" in order to watch features transfer. In
"She's the berries," the features 'juicy' and 'luscious' (a
connotation) probably transfer to the "she," indicating that she
may be sweet or ripe for the taking. 'Berry' may also be used as
an animate subject of a verb as in "Sweet blackberries dance in
the sun." Here, the feature 'animate' transfers from the verb
back to its subject. 'Berry' can be addressed as a person, as in
"O Raspberry, Thy thorny stem hath pricked me." Or 'berry' can
be substituted for another word which already has a figurative
meaning as in this passage from A Midsummer Night's Dream:

>   So we grew together,
>
>   Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
>
>   But yet an union in partition,
>
>   Two lovely berries moulded on one stem (III, ii, 208).

Notice how subtly this figure develops: assuming that her best
friend Hermia has stolen her fiance Demetrius, Helen tries to get
Hermia to stop. To convince her, Helen evokes their past
friendship in the image of the double cherry. She begins with a
literal-metaphorical statement, implying that they grew up
together and became alike because they were friends. Then she
creates the simile which indicates that the relationship was even
closer--like a double cherry. (Sometimes I have to remind my
students that two cherries can grow on a single stem, having one

skin, but two stones inside.) By the time halen reaches the
final figure--"Two lovely berries moulded on one stem"--students
may think that the image simply restates the earlier figure, but
another interpretation is also possible. In the poem the two
friends have become "two lovely berries," two interchangeable
young women, both beautiiul and full of love, both ripe for the
picking, both susceptible to the charms of a single man,
Demetrius. So Helen's speech could be both plea and warning.

The example reveals that we cannot limit ourselves to a
linguistic reading. We have already seen that the context in
which the figure occurs determines and controls the feature
transfer. In literature, however, we cannot be sure whether the
meaning indicated by the immediate context of a figure will be
reinforced or contradicted by other figures. (By immediate
context here I refer to those words which surround the figure.
Usually the immediate context is the sentence in which the figure
appears.) Often we must go beyond a single sentence or two to
the whole work before we can be sure we've got a reading which
preserves the integrity of the text.

I want to make one last point about using Thomas. Although
he derives other figures--personification, metonymy, synecdoche,
and so on--from his basic description of metaphor as a violation
of lexical restraints, I avoid having students name the figures
they have found. If they try to classify the figures, they soon
get bogged down and lose sight of the way figures work--to my
mind the most useful aspect of the heuristic.

Once students understand feature violation and transfer, we
turn to a poem to see how the method works. Although I would not
choose a poem of this difficulty for beginners, I will use
Milton's "Lycidas," here because it contains many different types
and various levels of feature transfer. At the outset I would
tell students only that Milton was about thirty when he wrote
"Lycidas" and that the poem was written as a memorial to one of
his classmates who had died suddenly in a boating accident off
the coast of Wales. Then I read the opening lines aloud:

> Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more
>
> Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never sere,
>
> I come to pluck your Berries harsh and crude,
>
> And with forc'd fingers rude
>
> Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year (1-5).

Even a first reading yields at least one image for most students:
the "I" of the poem is in the woods, picking berries from some
plants and tearing up their leaves.

To make more sense of the images, my students and I turn to
the dictionary. (For poems written before the twentieth century
I prefer the OED but we can usually manage with an ordinary
dictionary that contains etymologies. At this stage I also
supply any obsolete meanings being used.) We look up each noun,
adjective, and verb and write down its features. Often I make
this a group project in which each student is responsible for a
different word. As the class looks at various definitions, they
soon realize that poets often use several meanings

simultaneously. In "Lycidas" for example, we soon see that the
"leaves" could be both real leaves and the pages of a poem which
the "I" must write in memory of his dead friend, a poem which
relies on his unripe talents.

Once we have looked up the definitions and described
whatever factual images we can, we begin a "figure hunt." In
this stanza, students see immediately that by addressing the
"Laurels" and "Myrtles" as "ye" the speaker has made them
persons. The students also see that "the mellowing year" must be
some sort of figure because years do not ordinarily ripen or
"mellow." A few students wonder about "shattering leaves" since
most leaves are not brittle except in the fall, but I tell them
that in Milton's day, "shatter" meant "scatter."

Even these figures fail to explain the "once more," however,
and we still do not know why the speaker is out in the woods
picking berries when he is supposed to be mourning a dead friend
or why he mentions the laurels, myrtles, and ivy rather than
elms, oaks, and maples. At this point, we move on to the third
point in the circle, the fictions, even though we know we will
have to return to the first and second points, the facts and
figures, soon. Often, one of my students remembers that in the
definitions of laurels, myrtles, and ivy, we learned that they
are evergreens and that Milton has even reminded us that the ivy
is "never sere," an anagram for evergreen. I usually have to
explain that evergreens are a symbol for immortality and that
laurels were used in ancient Greece and Rome to crown winners--

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both in athletic and in poetry contests. (Later, I teach the
students to discover this information for themselves, but at this
point I am content if they have begun to realize that they
sometimes have to go beyond the dictionary and their own store of
knowledge--perhaps to an encyclopedia for information.)

Using what we have found, we begin to assemble a tentative
reading of the lines. The speaker of the poem has come to the
laurels, myrtles, and ivy for something, addressing them
respectfully as though they were persons having something to give
him. We keep in mind that these plants are all evergreen and
that they probably have something to do with mortality, but the
speaker does not treat them as immortal. Instead, he plucks
their berries and scatters their leaves. How destructive! Are
his the actions of a person seeking favors or a person who is
angry? Maybe the answer lies in the figures themselves.

As the laurels, myrtles, and ivy could stand both for
immortality and persons, my students and I reason, their berries
and leaves are probably figures too. Berries, as we know, are
the "fruits" of the plants--but if the plants are symbols of
immortality, then the fruits must also be immortal in some way.
Suppose Milton is using "berries" here as someone might use
"fruits" in the phrase "the fruits of one's labors." In this
passage, then, since the laborers (the Laurels, Myrtles, and Ivy)
are immortal, their labors must result in products (fruits and
leaves) that seem immortal. What are the "fruits of the

immortals?" Perhaps these fruits are like ideas or poems that
are inspired by eternal or immortal beings.

Even the speaker's use of "pluck" seems to confirm this, for
just as one can pick or pluck berries, so can one pluck the
strings of a lyre, creating music. In ancient times, moreover,
most poems were meant to be sung and accompanied by a stringed
instrument rather than spoken. Perhaps, too, the leaves are both
the leaves of plants and the leaves of the books which will
contain the poem.

To summarize, then, the figures seem to indicate that the
speaker of the poem has gone to the best natural symbols of
excellence and immortality he has--the laurels and myrtles, and
ivy--in order to gather ideas for a poem which he must publish
soon, before the year mellows or time runs out. Otherwise, he
will seem not to have cared for his friend. Probably he feels
insecure about his poem because his gift for poetry has not fully
ripened and he doesn't feel able to do his friend justice.

Once my students have tried making sense of the figures, we
move to the larger fictions, the thematic strands which weave the
poem together as a whole. This step comes directly from New
Criticism, but we are also doing what we have already done with
words and sentences, this time on a larger scale.

To begin, I like to review four assumptions New Critics
make, though I will not here explain them the way I do to my
students. First, each individual figure contributes in some way
to the overall meaning of the poem, i.e. all figures should

connect into unified, complex meanings just as, on another level,
all words should connect meaningfully in a single sentence.
Second, individual figures often combine into figurative patterns
which convey larger meanings--sometimes different, sometimes
expanded from those of the original figures which constitute
them. Third, the poet can use several contradictory patterns of
figures to create tension within the poem. The poet resolves
this tension at the end of the poem by showing how the apparent
contradictions are really complementary. (Notice that these
assumptions tend to recapitulate the process Thomas describes but
on a larger scale: rather than words interacting to create
figures, we see figures interacting to create larger figures.
Moreover, we find that just as feature violations create a
figure, causing some features to transfer from one word to
another, so the apparent contradictions between figurative
patterns create new perceptions, new ways to relate the patterns
to each other.) Finally we notice that context controls
figuration at all levels.

As we continue to read "Lycidas," for example, we discover
there are lots of words associated with the word "sheep"--flock,
shepherd, shears, herd, sheep hook, the Lamb's high feast, and so
on. But these "sheep" words often seem to contradict each other.
Some shepherds play "rural ditties" on "the Oaten flute" while
others play "lean and flashy songs" which "grate on their
scrannel pipes of wretched straw." And though the speaker and
his companion Lycidas--who bears the same name as a Greek

shepherd in mythology, by the way--batten or nourish their flocks
with "the fresh dews of night," St. Peter refers to other hungry
sheep who "look up and are not fed" by their masters.

How do we resolve the contradictions? First we learn to
examine each figure in the light of the context of the whole
poem. This context I label the "text" to distinguish it from the
immediate context we talked about earlier and from the external
context we will discuss soon. The text's boundary thus encloses
the poem or story itself: everything within this boundary is
likely to be related in some way to everything else. Thus I
teach students to look within the text for the patterns among the
figures. In "Lycidas," shepherds form two groups: good ones who
take care of their sheep and evil ones who don't. But we do not
yet know what distinguishes good from bad, and we have yet to
discover what the shepherds have to do with writing an elegy.

To help students find the answers to these problems, we
return to the circle once again, moving to the area where the
fictions merge once again into facts. This time we gather more
facts from the external context for "Lycidas"--going beyond the
dictionary to literary and Judeo-Christian traditions. It is
important, for example, to know something about the knowledge
Milton shared with his contemporaries. If a student reads
"Lycidas" without knowing that the whole business with the
shepherds is based on Christ's words, "I am the Good Shepherd"
and that Classical poets were by convention also shepherds, s/he
may misunderstand the elegy's resolution. Students are too

likely to think that Milton and Edward King actually worked as

shepherds, earning their way through school, the way today's

students earn their college tuition by waiting tables.

In the past, New Critics rightly insisted on the unity of a

literary text, assuming that it is a seamless whole. This

assumption had some unfortunate consequences, however. The New

Critics failed to realize that many of us were confusing the

theoretical concept of unity and coherence with the New Critical

method of reading texts. We assumed that we should never go to

outside sources for information which might clarify what we read.

Yes, texts do have unity, but the twentieth century is not the

seventeenth and the 1980's are not the 1950's. To see the unity

in a seventeenth century text like "Lycidas," a reader has to

become a student of the seventeenth century. The reader must be

able to understand the world view of the poem before s/he can see

its unity. For example, in Milton's time more than today, many

people believed that God created and continually intervened in

the day-to-day operation of the world. Today we no longer

believe that God has hidden messages in rocks and trees for us to

find. Instead, we explain natural phenomena in scientific terms.

In Milton's day, there was no science as we know it; his

contemporaries had not even been fully convinced that the

Ptolemaic conception of the universe was wrong. Accepting

Copernican cosmology meant giving up our traditional position at

the center of the universe, a position assumed by the Bible. The

unity in "Lycidas" depends on our assuming a Ptolemaic universe.

Once students realize this, they begin to see purposes behind Milton's methods. They begin to realize that there is no literal base of the poem--in the sense that Milton and King were never shepherds. Instead, the speaker has established shepherding as a metaphorical base--carrying with it all the sensory images we would require in a literal level today. Then the "I" refigures the shepherds simultaneously as pastoral poets (using the Classical tradition) and as clergymen (using the Christian tradition). From there, we see that if "shepherd" has three meanings, then their "flocks" must be simultaneously sheep, the audience for poetry, and the congregation of a church. Finally, the students see how the two larger categories--the good shepherds and the evil shepherds--circumscribe the others. At this point, my students ask, "Why did Milton go to all that trouble? Why not just say what he meant and get on with it?"

The answer to this question can be found in another area of the external context I teach students to examine: the rhetorical effects the poem achieves. Of course, very few poets intend to persuade their readers the way orators and politicians try to persuade us. A poet doesn't want to get us to vote or to buy a product--except in a special sense. In A Rhetoric of Motives, Kenneth Burke put it best: "Whenever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning,' there is persuasion."[8] The poet, then, is not trying to persuade us to act, but to believe, to test his vision in a very real, deeply felt sense. In "Lycidas" the speaker is not only groping his way

through the confusion he feels at his friend's death but leading us as well. And when he realizes that Lycidas has ascended to Heaven, he is convincing us too, through the figures he uses, figures that are so completely interwoven that they seem to embody God's great design for the universe.

I also show my students that the speaker uses figuration to increase the effectiveness of other rhetorical devices, the <u>ethos</u> of his character, for instance. We believe him because we see his humility in the first stanza: he is concerned that his fingers are "rude" and that the "berries," the ideas he has, are still "harsh" and "crude." We see his anger at Lycidas' death and his naivete in his assumption that Lycidas has died at the hands of capricious fates. Finally, we see his continued humility and renewed hope in his self-portrait as the "uncouth swain" at the end of the poem.

My students also discover that the speaker uses a figurative form of <u>logos</u>, to appeal to our reason and experience, to convince us that Lycidas is not dead. In the most complex stanza toward the end of the poem, we find the justification for the speaker's belief in the poem's images of transcendence. Having equated Lycidas' "sinking" with death and destruction, with Orpheus' unfortunate visit to Hades to retrieve Eurydice and his subsequent death by water, with the evils that the corrupt clergymen have sunk to, and with the location of Edward King's death, the speaker now reveals the true nature of this sinking:

> Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more
>
> For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
>
> Sunk though he be beneath the watry floor,
>
> So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed,
>
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
>
> And tricks his beams, and with new spangled Ore,
>
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
>
> So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
>
> Through the dear might of him that walked the waves
>
> (165-173).

Like Christ's descent into Hell and like the sun's setting in the ocean each night, Lycidas' sinking is a necessary part of God's plan. If we check some of the Biblical references, we find that all the apparent contradictions--good and evil, light and darkness, and rising and sinking--have become linked figuratively in the single word "day-star" which refers simultaneously to the actual sun, to Phoebus the Classical god of the sun, and to Christ, the Son of God. In other words, if we accept the assumptions Milton does--that Christ died to redeem mankind and that in nature one finds the message of Christ's redemption in the setting and rising of the sun--then it is not so great a leap to believe that Lycidas, who has duplicated the actions of Christ and the 'n, must have risen to heaven.

As they learn how to gather the facts, to make sense of the figures, to discover the fictions, and then to return to the facts once more, students begin to see how complex making meaning

really is. Only when they have grappled with this complexity do
they see what Martin Joos meant when he described what great
writers and rewriters do:

> The [great writer] is as one who packs his thought for
> a long journey. Having packed the garment, he does not
> merely straighten out the folds and close the
> paragraph. Instead, he unpacks completely and repacks
> again. And again; and again and again. Each time, he
> tucks just one more thought into this or that pocket.
> When he quits, there are more of them than words. So
> many labors of love on a single sentence, that many
> rewards for the rereader. On the surface, one teasing
> half-reward; others at successively greater and greater
> depths, so that each reading finds one more.[9]

The purpose of the heuristic, then, is not to exhaust the
possibilities for reading a poem or a story--that would be
impossible with literature worth rereading--but to help students
learn the pleasure of reading literature, the pleasure of making
a reading that is "probable, workable, and fruitful," that is a
true response rather than a contemplation of self. Above all,
though, the purpose of this circle of facts, figures, and
fictions is to help students enjoy the surface of the poem or
story and at the same time to taste the fullest joys of its
language the way Galway Kinnell enjoys blackberries:

> as I stand among them
> lifting the stalks to my mouth, the ripest berries

fall almost unbidden to my tongue,

as words sometimes do, certain peculiar words

like <u>strengths</u> or <u>squinched</u>,

many-lettered, one-syllabled lumps,

which I squeeze, squinch open, and splurge well.[10]

Figure 1

Schematic Diagram of the Heuristic

Immediate Context

Facts

Figures

External Context
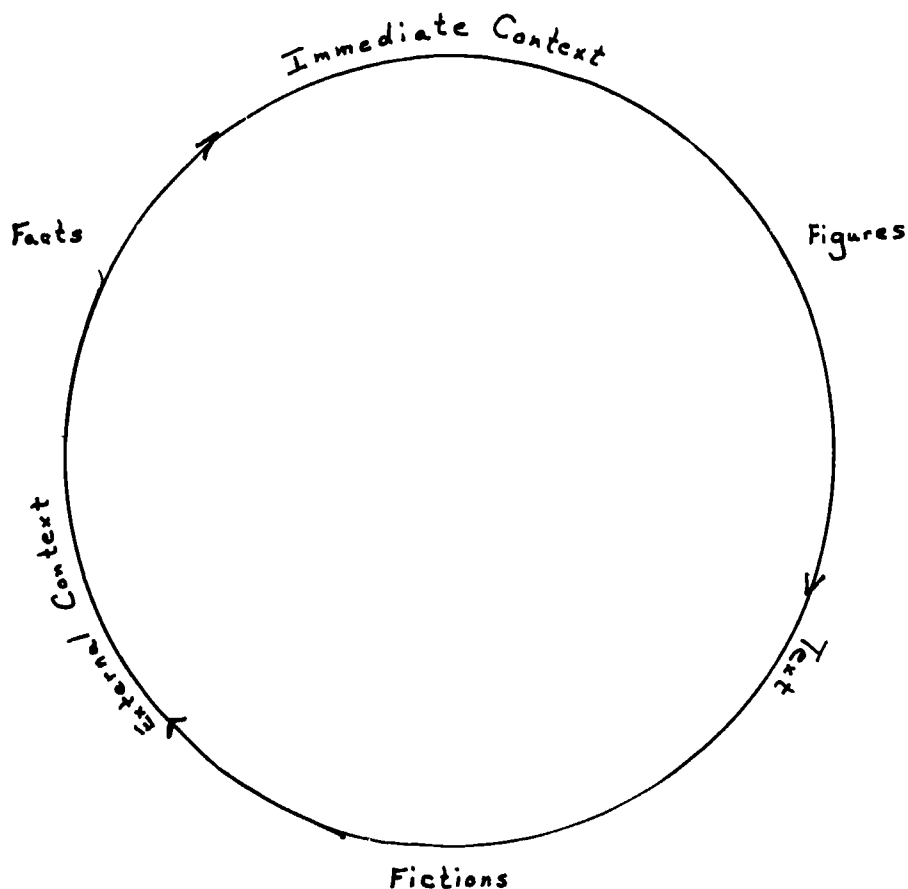
Text

Fictions

Facts interact to become figures within the immediate context
    (usually the sentence).
Figures interact to become fictions within the text (within the
    confines of the work as a whole).
Fictions are tested, affirmed, and/or illuminated within the
    external context (the social-political-linguistic-cultural
    milieu in which the work is written and read).

Figure 2

Definition of 'Berry'

Berry (be·ri) sb Found with some variety of form in all the

Teutonic langs:....The ulterior history is uncertain: *basion-

has been conjecturally referred to *bazo-z BARE (q.v.), as if

a bare or uncovered fruit, also to the root represented by

Skr. bhas- to eat

   1. Any small globular or ovate juicy fruit, not having a

   stone; in O.E. chiefly applied to the grape; in mod. popular

   use, embracing the gooseberry, raspberry, bilberry, and

   their congeners, as well as the strawberry, mulberry, fruit

   of the elder, rowantree, cornel, honey-suckle, buckthorn,

   privet, holly, mistletoe, ivy, yew,. . .laurel, mezereon,

   and many exotic shrubs; also sometimes the bird-cherry or

   'hag-berry,' the haw, and hip of the rose...

     b. loosely A coffee 'bean.'

2. Bot. A many-seeded inferior pulpy fruit, the seeds of

which are, when mature, scattered through the pulp; called

also bacca. In this sense, many of the fruits popularly so

called, are not berries: the grape, gooseberry and currants,

the bilberry, mistletoe berry, and potato fruit, are true

berries.

3. One of the eggs in the roe of a fish; also, the eggs of

a lobster. A hen lobster carrying her eggs is said to be
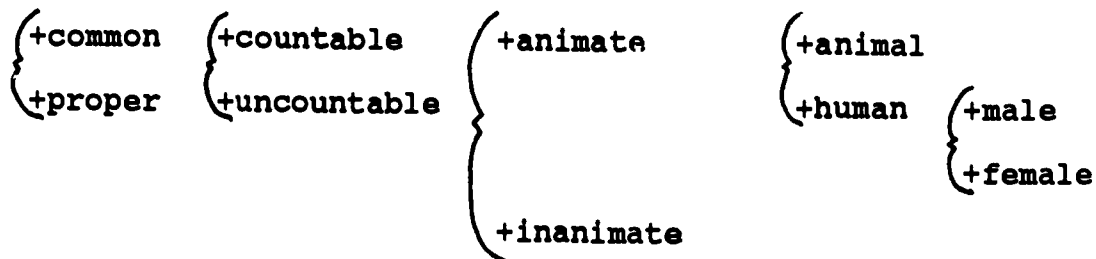
in berry.

                        -------Oxford English Dictionary, 1971

Figure 3

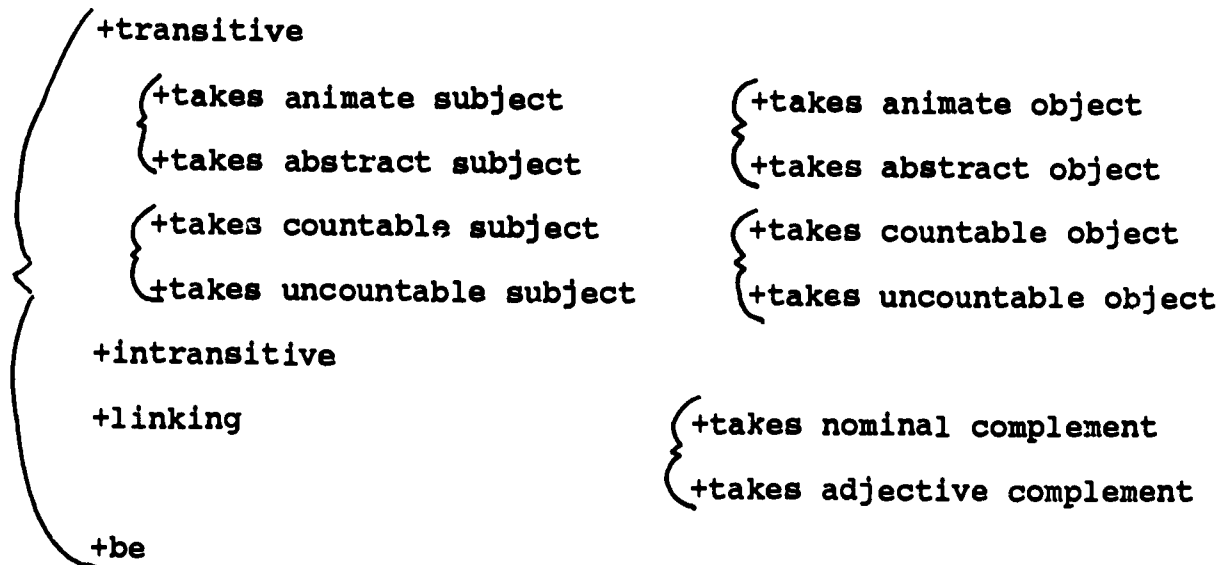### Checklist of Lexical Features

<u>Noun</u>:

   Syntactic features

```
{ +common   { +countable      { +animate           { +animal
  +proper     +uncountable                            +human  { +male
                                                                +female

                                   +inanimate
```

   Semantic features

      Denotations (dictionary)

      Connotations

<u>Verb</u>:

   Syntactic features

```
  +transitive

      { +takes animate subject        { +takes animate object
        +takes abstract subject         +takes abstract object

      { +takes countable subject      { +takes countable object
        +takes uncountable subject      +takes uncountable object

    +intransitive

    +linking                          { +takes nominal complement
                                        +takes adjective complement

    +be
```

   Semantic Features

      Denotations

      Connotations

Notes

1. Annie Dillard, <u>Living by Fiction</u>, Harper & Row, 1982, p. 155.

2. Brook Thomas, "The Historical Necessity for--and Difficulties with--New Historical Analysis in Introductory Literature Courses," <u>College English</u>, September 1987, pp. 509-522.

3. Jeffrey Porter, "The Reasonable Reader: Knowledge and Inquiry in Freshman English," <u>College English</u>, March 1987, pp. 332-344.

4. Marjorie Godlin Roemer, "Which Reader's Response?" <u>College English</u>, December 1987, pp. 911-922.

5. Linda Flower, "The Construction of Purpose in Writing and Reading," <u>College English</u>, September 1988, p. 549.

6. Owen Thomas, <u>Metaphor and Related Subjects</u>, Random House, p. 55.

7. <u>Ibid</u>, p. 23.

8. Kenneth Burke, <u>A Rhetoric of Motives</u>, Prentice Hall, 1950, p. 18.

9. Martin Joos, <u>The Five Clocks: A Linguistic Excursion into the Five Styles of English Usage</u>, Harcourt Brace, 1961, p. 43.

10. Galway Kinnell, <u>Selected Poems</u>, Houghton Mifflin, 1982, p. 130.