1990

Facilitating creativity through the discipline of craftsmanship within the writing process

Toni SuzAnne Dingman

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etal-project

Recommended Citation

Dingman, Toni SuzAnne, "Facilitating creativity through the discipline of craftsmanship within the writing process" (1990). Theses Digitization Project. 770.
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etal-project/770
FACILITATING CREATIVITY THROUGH THE DISCIPLINE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP WITHIN THE WRITING PROCESS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Toni SuzAnne Dingman
June 1990
FACILITATING CREATIVITY THROUGH THE DISCIPLINE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP WITHIN THE WRITING PROCESS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Toni SuzAnne Dingman
June 1990

Approved by:

Helene Koon, Chair

Clark Mayo

Larry Kramer

Date 6/15/90
Within the framework of this thesis, craftsmanship is the term I will use to express a high level of skill and expertise in writing through a diligent adherence to control, regulation, and rules. Creativity is the term I will use to indicate the ability required to manipulate fresh perspectives, to give substance to imagination, to grasp new associations, and to consider old ideas in a novel form.

It is my goal to support the idea that one way creativity in composition can be understood and tapped as a writer gains a maximum control over the skills necessary to master writing. This control, or craftsmanship, enables the writer to access creativity by what, otherwise, may be achievable only through revelation, inspiration, or the genius of an exceptional natural capacity.

Linda Flower and John R. Hayes in *A Process Model of Composition*, have constructed a model of composing which accounts for a writer’s internal discoveries, and a variety of composing subprocesses. This recursive process demonstrates methods writers use, by way of concrete and identifiable stages, to make unusual associations and combinations of ideas, thus creating meaning through the discipline craftsmanship demands.

In *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing*, Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper outline a set of invention strategies which
are neither mysterious nor magical, nor do they rely upon leaps of imagination, but upon practices in which natural abilities and aptitudes, when subject to the rigors or these diligent practices, will produce a viable method for enhancing the writing product.

I demonstrate how stimulating the elements of inventive ability will improve the mode in which those elements find expression and facilitate creativity for the purpose of writing by examining such authors as Ann E. Berthoff in *The Making of Meaning*, Erika Lindeman in *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, Linda Flower in *Thinking, Reasoning, and Writing*, and T.D. Allen in *Writing to Create Ourselves* as well as other respected writers too numerous to list here. I describe their findings; place special emphasis on the concept of creativity, what that concept can mean and how it can be accessed using the discipline of craftsmanship to produce writing; and introduce my perspective.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My friend and husband, Joel, patiently supported me while I allotted family time to research, draft, revise, and revise again ideas for this project. Had his attitude been anything but positive, I might have never seen the completion of this work. This thesis also owes its existence to the wisdom and experience of Dr. Helene Koon, Dr. Clark Mayo, and Mr. Larry Kramer whose welcome advice provided a means for me to hurdle the many obstacles which often stand in the path of a novice writer. I would also like to leave a special thanks to Dr. Edward White whose encouragement enabled me to believe in the cogency of my chosen topic.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNATURE PAGE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTERDEPENDENCY AND RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: CREATING MEANING</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS PROCESS</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS CITED</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTERDEPENDENCY AND RELATIONSHIP

Within the writing process, an interdependency exists between creativity and craftsmanship. At each identifiable stage of the writing process creativity can sometimes be maximized through the discipline of craftsmanship. Writing is the result of a combination of factors and influences. This combination within the writing process takes place, for the composer, through what sometimes is and sometimes only seems to be the unanalyzable mystery of genius given form. In reality, there are many substantiations which attest to the indefinable verity of genius actualized. I would, however, like to explore the possibility that composition can take place through a discoverable, evidential methodology, demonstrating the incorporation of the concepts of creativity and craftsmanship.

I will discuss a set of assumptions before showing the connections between creativity and craftsmanship within the writing process.

First, creativity is the process by which ideas, already in the mind, are associated in unusual, original and useful combinations. More specifically, creativity is the term for the developed skill and nurtured dexterity required to manipulate fresh perspectives, to give substance to imagination, to consciously name thought, to grasp new associations, and to consider old ideas in novel forms; not
to be confused, here, with genius which can be defined as an exceptional, natural creative ability for invention.

During a creative act the writer does not usually make unconnected, abstruse leaps from one idea to another, but is probably following an unperceived path of methodological, though often non-sequential, steps to arrive at the point of a composition product. In A Process Model of Composition, Linda Flower and John R. Hayes have constructed an empirically based model of composing which accounts for the writer’s internal discoveries, and a variety of composing subprocesses. The model is based on five fundamental precepts:

* Writing is goal directed
* Writing processes are hierarchically organized
* Some writing may interrupt other processes over which they have priority
* Writing processes may be organized recursively
* Writing goals may be modified as writing proceeds. (29)

This recursive and interruptive process provides a method for the writer, while writing, to make unusual associations and combinations of ideas, thus creating meaning.

Second, craftsmanship is a demonstration or expression of a high level of skill, ability or expertise in practicing a particular art, through a diligent adherence to control,
regulation, and rules within a specific discipline. Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper exemplify this adherence in their discussion of invention heuristic in The St. Martin's Guide to Writing (366-67). These invention strategies described below are not mysterious, magical or the result of some creative leap of the imagination. Rather, they are practices available to everyone who uses common sense and has had any experience in problem solving and critical thinking. These strategies for invention are grouped into three categories:

* Mapping: a brief visual representation of the writer’s thinking and planning
* Writing: the composition of phrases or sentences to discover information and ideas and to find relationships among ideas
* Reading: a systematic use of reading to understand and to explore information for its possibilities in your own writing. (366-7)

The following pages will provide a closer look at the ways and means by which developed and disciplined natural abilities and aptitudes (creativity), when subject to the rigors of diligent practices (craftsmanship), will produce a method for enhancing superior results, an alternative to waiting for a sudden jolt of insight or inspiration, a visit
from one of the muses, or a masterstroke of genius, bestowed only upon a chosen few.

Some hold what Robert W. Weisberg in his book, *Creativity: Genius and Other Myths* has coined "the genius view," (Weisberg 3) which explains a possible perspective about the origins of creative achievements. At the core of this concept is the belief that creativity comes about through great leaps of imagination which occur because particularly gifted individuals' are assumed to possess extraordinary intellectual and personality qualities which play an important part in bringing about these distantly connected cognitive jumps characteristic of genius. These intellectual and personality characteristics are considered genius, and are also considered a reliable explanation for profound creative achievements.

An example of this genius view involves Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s creation of the poem "Kubla Kahn." According to Coleridge’s report, he was in ill health and living alone in a secluded farmhouse. After taking opium one afternoon, he fell asleep in a chair while reading a passage from a large book of tales about exotic places. According to a report which Coleridge makes about himself:

> the author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he had the most vivid confidence
that he could not have composed less than from two
to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called
composition in which all the images rose up before
him as 'things' with a parallel production of the
concurrent expressions, without any sensation or
consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared
to himself to have a distinct recollection of the
whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly
and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here
preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately
called out by a person on business from Porlock, and
detained by him above an hour, and on his return to
his room, found, to his no small surprise and
mortification, that though he still retained some
vague and dim recollection of the general purport of
the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or
ten lines and images on the surface of a stream into
which a stone has been cast, but alas! without the
after restoration of the latter. (Schneider 27)

This is a report in which a final product, in this case
a poem, appears effortlessly to the creator, without any
prior work on the creator's part. Coleridge states that
what happened could not really be called composing because
the lines of the poem simply occurred to him without
conscious effort, except that he had been reading related
material when he fell asleep. According to his account, Coleridge produced a complete poem without tentative steps, false starts, correcting or editing. Though his readings' influence may have been a stimulus, the gap between that influence and what Coleridge produced is large enough to perhaps warrant some intervening steps; steps which some conclude did occur in his unconscious mind.

To assume that the unconscious mind is responsible for creativity when the thought process seemingly jumps a gap or where there is an inexplicable leap of imagination may seem reasonable to most, especially when there appears to be no external aid to help the thinker make the leap across the gap. However, there are a number of reasons why we might consider means of accessing invention and consequently implementing inherent abilities other than those revealed in the reports such as this one made by Coleridge. A close analysis of the subjective reports and laboratory work concerning the origins of some 'traditional literature do not provide strong support for the notion of unconscious processes, or leaps of creative imagination (Schneider 35). Genius, though undeniable, remains enigmatic. However, if a writer is not of that profoundly able, elite group, capable of powerful creative invention, imbued by some source unknown, then let that writer discover apprehendable methods available to the craftsman who is willing to apply concepts
resulting in employable strategies or devices. An examination of four discernible stages of problem solving is in order.

Before proceeding with the examination, however, we must consider the role of the unconscious process in creative thinking and the potential problem of the author’s memory. Obviously, if an incident is reported long after it occurs, there is a chance the person will have forgotten some significant aspects of the event in the interim. There is also the risk of distorted recall of an earlier event. That is, not only might parts of the event be forgotten, but new information might be included that was never a part of the original event at all. Also, it is impossible to tell if the subjective report is accurate.

Coleridge’s report of his opium dream of "Kubla Kahn" has interested poetry critics considerably. One of these critics, Elisabeth Schneider, analyzed "Kubla Kahn" carefully and concluded that almost everything Coleridge reported about the poem’s creation is probably untrue. According to Schneider, the poem was not created in a dream, it did not appear in its completed form, and opium and the workings of the unconscious mind probably had little or nothing to do with its creation (35).

Another version of the poem was discovered that is slightly different from the final version in ways that
suggest it was written earlier. If so, then Coleridge apparently did some editorial work on the poem, indicating that it was not perfect when it supposedly appeared to him. Also, this earlier version of the poem was accompanied by an introduction that differed slightly from the introduction reported earlier. Most importantly, Coleridge says that the poem was composed in a "sort of reverie," (Weisberg 28) which, much different from a dream, is a state of meditation, musing or daydreaming; just the condition of the mind most likely to intensely employ one of the identifiable stages of craftsmanship, resulting in a product. Schneider also notes that Coleridge was notorious for not telling the truth, including those occasions when he discussed his work.

Studying the inception and formation of just one product of creativity does not nullify the indisputable concept of creative genius and its profoundly mysterious origins; however, analysis of an apprehendable method of invention strategy will allow a writer to broach seemingly inaccessible resources.

According to Graham Wallas’s *The Art of Thought*, (Lindeman 28) there are four stages within the creative process and applicably, the writing process. The first stage, *preparation*, involves a long period of intense conscious work, without success. After this period of preparation, the problem is often put aside, and not thought
about consciously. During this time, according to Wallas and others, incubation occurs where the problem is not consciously thought about, but work on the problem continues unconsciously. If the incubation stage is successful, then in the next stage the person experiences a sudden illumination, an insight into the solution of the problem. Then final stage is verification, or in the case of composition, verification becomes the product or the product in process.

The four stages of the creative process strongly parallel, as outlined in the chart below, the identifiable stages of the composition process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIVE STAGES</th>
<th>WRITING PROCESS STAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incubation</td>
<td>Invention, Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illumination</td>
<td>Coherence, Rational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>connection, Unity,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intelligibility,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verification</td>
<td>Presenting information through narrating,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>defining, classifying and organizing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Axelrod, Cooper 367).
Of Wallas' four stages, the present discussion is primarily concerned with the stage called incubation, because it is in this stage in which unconscious thinking is assumed to occur.

According to researchers referenced in The Psychology of Invention by Jaques Hadamard, invention and discovery, or creativity, involves the combining of ideas. Since we possess many thoughts, a tremendous number of possible idea combinations exist when we try to solve a problem. Those we become aware of become potentially fruitful. In the initial stage of conscious work, Wallas' stage of preparation, combinations of thoughts to be considered are determined. In this stage, certain thoughts are consciously considered as possible solutions to the problem. If none are successful, then during the second stage, incubation, a person considers thought combinations that begin with the thoughts activated during preparation. When we combine ideas and positively evaluate them, we suddenly become conscious of them and experience illumination.

When we evaluate and analyze problems, we are consciously aware of only a small number of combinations of solutions that are potentially relevant. From this perspective it is possible to see that empirical problem-solving can be similar in process to artistic creativity.
The relationship between creativity within the writing process and a product is bridged by the hard work and discipline associated with craftsmanship. Experimental studies with poets, as well as the examination of early drafts of poems written by well known poets, (Weisberg 115) show that poems do not often spring complete from the mind of the poet. Neither the general structure of a poem nor the specific word, lines, and phrases are always all known before the artist begins working. Rather, the process involves extensive revising and modification of early versions until an acceptable version is finally produced. The act of writing itself produces opportunity to create and refine meaning. Writing is subjected to intense critical scrutiny as it is crafted and developed, and even the greatest writing is often extensively modified and revised. It is during this revision process that we see the need of craftsmanship in support of creativity enhancement.

We have already established that the stages of preparation and incubation provide the arena for combinations and recombinations, as in pre-writing, writing, revising, altering perceptions, free association and re-association, and the necessity of these recursive actions to generate novel concepts. These very steps, or identifiable stages of writing, germinate new combinations of thought, producing the moment of illumination which, as Thomas A.
Edison so aptly stated, is the result of "one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration" (Mearns 51). Through adherence to the stages of craftsmanship, we as writers use what we know and have learned to produce something new and imaginative, inventing meaning and creating form.

Genius seems to be an exclusive gift granted to a fortunate few. Writers such as Trollope, Scott, and Azimov, to name only three, seem to have written at great speed and without lengthy consideration, but it is more likely, for the average writer, that creativity is discovered and nurtured through the toil of craftsmanship. It is true that the cognitive processes brought to bear on any writing problem are more complex than most of us realize, but understanding them, becoming conscious of them through the act of writing itself, forces us to see the achievability of positive results through the marriage of the concepts of creativity and craftsmanship. The skill of craftsmanship telescopes the time and ability required for composing, especially for those whose work demands rapid and immediate results.

Although we still have much to learn about how the brain functions, current theories agree on one significant point: to create is not beyond the capacity of the normal human being. If creativity
is somehow a special ability, it is special for us all. (Lindeman 57)
CHAPTER 2
CREATING MEANING

As a young boy, Clive Staples Lewis toyed with ideas and philosophies, particularly about the future. He once asked his brother, "Is the future a line we have yet to draw, or a line we simply cannot yet see?" (Lawler 53) The same question can be asked about creating meaning. Is meaning waiting to be discovered, inertly suspended within some vast non-place, or is it made, invented, originated, produced or called into existence by the writer/creator? Beyond this quasi-philosophical inference of this rhetorical question lies another possibility. We create meaning or make meaning, among other ways, by introducing control through abstraction, through enriching language, and through sharpening perceptions.

Writing is a craftsman’s medium enabling people in every discipline to wrestle with concepts and ideas. It is a much more physical activity than reading. Writing requires us to operate some kind of mechanism—pencil, pen, typewriter, word processor—for capturing meaning on paper. Writing compels us by the repeated effort of language to capture thoughts, to organize them and to present them clearly. Writing forces us to ask continually whether or not we are saying what we want to say; indeed, what we mean. Very often the answer is "No," which, in spite of its apparent negativity is a useful piece of information.
Writing is thinking, reasoning, naming meaning, creating understanding.

For the purpose of communication, I assert that there are four elements within the writing process; something to be said—meaning; someone to say it—the writer; someone to hear it—the reader; and some medium of communication—the language. How is it that language is able to say anything at all? This is the problem of creating meaning. How are we able to demonstrate meaning through language, and how do we cause it to mean what we want it to mean? Craftsmanship employs systems and techniques which enable us to manipulate language to state concepts coherently and effectively.

According to Lawrence Sargent Hall, there are three corollary aspects of the problem of meaning: (1) how words acquire meaning, (2) what kinds of meaning they acquire, and (3) how we control this meaning for our practical, scientific, or artistic purposes (206).

By way of definition, we understand through the naming process that "thinking in language is an arrangement of the universe in classes by means of words" (Hall 206). We further observe that a class is established on the basis of common or group characteristics. A particular name or word is connected with these characteristics and consequently with the group possessing them. The word "oak", for example, is not connected with an individual tree or with
the thousand characteristics peculiar to a single tree, but with the common or class of characteristics of many similar trees. It is connected with, and it therefore stands for and means, the relatively few class characteristics of those individuals.

Consider the previous illustration which Lawrence Sargent Hall includes in How Thinking is Written: An Analytic Approach to Writing (206-7). In the top row is a
class of figures whose common characteristics are (1) four sides, (2) four equal sides, (3) opposite sides parallel, (4) four equal angles. To these class characteristics we connect the word "square," the meaning of which is defined as (1), (2), (3), (4).

In the second row is a class of figures whose common characteristics are (1) four sides, (2) opposite sides parallel, (3) four equal angles. To these class characteristics we connect the word "rectangle," the meaning of which is defined as (1), (2), (3).

In the third row is a class of figures whose common characteristics are (1) four sides, (2) opposite sides parallel. To these class characteristics we connect the word "parallelogram," the meaning of which is defined as (1), (2).

In the bottom row of the illustration is a class of figures whose common characteristic is (1) four sides. To this class characteristic we connect the word "quadrilateral," the meaning of which is defined as (1).

Notice in this example the following principles:

* The larger the class the fewer the common characteristics.

* The fewer the characteristics the less the word connected with them means.

* The fewer the characteristics a word means the
more different the individuals it is connected with, and the less it says about them as individuals.

* Words connected with progressively expanding classes mean less and less about more and more. Meaning shrinks as classes expand.

* Words connected with progressively shrinking classes mean more and more about less and less. Meaning expands as classes shrink.

This model demonstrates the process of abstraction and concretion. The word abstract comes from the Latin, meaning "to draw out." In talking about the first four different figures as a single class, we drew out of their many individual characteristics four which they have in common and assigned the word square to them. To talk about the first eight different figures we drew out three characteristics which they have in common and called them rectangle. Then, from those three characteristics we abstracted two more, putting the first twelve different figures in a single class we call parallelogram. Finally, we abstracted from these two characteristics one for the class quadrilateral in which sixteen different figures belong.

Each time we abstracted, we reduced the number of characteristics designated and admitted more figures, more
dissimilar figures. The more we abstract, the fewer
characteristics we designate and the more class members we
have. Therefore, as words grow abstract they designate less
and less about more and more.

There are, of course, no completely abstracted words or
completely concrete words. Abstractness and concreteness
must be regarded as relative. These words lose and acquire
greater meaning in relation to other words which are more or
less abstract or concrete. For instance, in relation to the
term plant, the term tree is more concrete, but in relation
to the term oak, tree is more abstract.

Concisely manipulating the naming process in an
accurate balance between concrete and abstract; general and
specific, a writer is able to assign meaning by moving
intellectually from the nebulous and ethereal creative
sense, using the medium of disciplined craftsmanship, and
able to concretize thoughts and ideas which would otherwise
remain outside the parameters of clear communication.

Another aspect of craftsmanship which enables the
writer to control meaning and consequently give substance to
an otherwise nebulous concept of creativity is through
enriching language.

'And only one for birthday presents, you know.
There's glory for you!
'I don't know what you mean by glory,' said Alice.
Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'

'But glory doesn't mean a nice knock-down argument,' Alice objected.

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

(Carrol 117)

Another aspect of craftsmanship which enables the writer to control meaning and consequently give substance to an otherwise nebulous concept of creativity is through enriched language. Words are a writer's raw material; he needs many and varied words at his disposal.

Our language, one of our most precious natural resources, is also a dwindling one that deserves at least as much protection as our woodlands, streams and whooping crane. We don't write letters, we make long-distance calls; we don't read, we are talked to, in the resolutely twelve-year-old vocabulary of radio and television. Under the banner of timesaving we are offered only the abbreviated, the abridged, the aborted....Before it is too late I
would like to propose a language sanctuary, a wild-word refuge, removed and safe from the hostile environment of our T.V.-talked world. (Lipton 37)

Listen closely to the sound of words, or derive original words from onomatopoeic values which gives exercise to creative imagination. Examples are the names of the C. S. Lewis characters, Screwtape and Wormwood, or the sneezles and wheezles given to us by A. A. Milne.

New words sometimes come from language blending. English is been enriched by almost every language that has touched it. The native Mexicans, who inhabited what are now Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, and who first owned California, provided the English language not only with place names but with much of the Southwestern tradition—its sombreros, rancheros, and caminos.

Telescoping sounds and ideas is another effective method for creating words. The line "Worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie" from Gerard Manley Hopkins contains two telescoped words. "Wanwood" has in it the idea of colorlessness and darkness, and suggests the sound and visualization of wormwood. "Leafmeal" telescopes seasons into one image—from leaf to crumbled fertilizer (Allen 20). "Words form the thread on which we string our experiences. Without them we should live spasmodically and intermittently" (Huxley 12).
As children we chanted the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." We would always say this when someone was calling us names, and we most certainly believed it. However, nothing we ever said as children could be farther from the truth. Sticks and stones may cause serious bumps or bruises, but there is no physical abuse which is as damaging to the human spirit as thoughtless and cruel words. Words are fundamental building blocks. Increasing the ability to write exact impressions requires building vocabulary. The person who carefully invests time and energy amassing the treasure of a rich vocabulary exceeds the wealth of a billionaire. That person can convey to another person or group of persons a more precise impression of her or his thoughts and experiences than someone less rich in words and the knowledge of their use, thus relaying a created meaning through a particular skill fundamental to craftsmanship.

A great enough writer seems to be born with knowledge. But he really is not; he has only been born with the ability to learn in a quicker ratio to the passage of time than other men and without conscious application, and with an intelligence to accept or reject what is already presented as knowledge. (Hemingway 301)
There are many techniques which can be used to increase the intensity and quantity of perceptions of things around a writer. I will consider three of these:

* Stimulate the loss of one or more senses for a brief time.
* Attempt to look at experiences through another’s eye.
* Temporarily relinquish some of your prejudices and stereotypes.

Most of us have all the tools for perceiving the world around us: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. However, the loss of one of these senses may cause compensation by the others. If a blind person has no other physical impairments, that person may have a much more developed sense of hearing or touch than those who are not blind. A deaf person may have to compensate for this handicap by depending more heavily on sight. Try to imagine how much more acute a particular sense would become if a person was suddenly forced to glean information just from the surroundings, or solely from one of the senses.

What, for example, would the perception be of a particular location, such as a classroom, from the perspective of a blind person over time? He might develop a very keen sense of surrounding voices and the directions from which the voices came. Each voice would seem even more
uniquely distinct. Each set of footsteps would sound unlike any other. He would have a stronger awareness of distinct smells, and an increased sensitivity to perfumes, tobacco, and other odors. A more fully developed sense of texture of the floor and surrounding furniture, and an increased awareness of the size and shape of objects would surface. Participating in just such an experiment and making note of previously overlooked impressions could prove valuable. An observer/writer aggressively attempting to compensate with one sense for the loss of another can record observable gains or losses. Discovering otherwise neglected perceptions or points of view increases the capacity for understanding through an enriching experience which might be denied a particular observer/writer in a usual environment. These enriching experiences produce, through specific verbalization, form for thought, providing the setting, opportunity, and medium to create meaning.

A second way to extend the range of observation is to imagine or assume several different roles in a variety of situations. For example, imagine attending a forum where former President, Ronald Reagan, will speak. First, consider the variety of available perspectives such as sitting at a distance surrounded by a large crowd of reporters and visiting dignitaries.
Now shift the perspective. Accepting the role of a television camera operator, listen to the director and keep the camera focused on the most pertinent action, particularly Mr. Reagan, when a group of hecklers begins to shout him down. Pan around to capture the disturbance on film when the director mentions a renowned figure on the platform; pan the camera back to that individual, and then back to the ex-President. The entire preoccupation of the camera operator is the subject matter to which the director demands focus.

Now consider a third perspective, that of an individual whose purpose is to heckle or harass the speaker. Again there is a large crowd, the television personnel, and the platform. However, the focus is now on the speaker, not any of these peripherals. The heckler waits, specifically for the speaker, the person who will be the recipient of the disturbing remarks. The agitator is probably conscious of the number of police and secret servicemen who may become physical deterrents to the proposed annoyance.

Finally, examine a fourth perspective, that of a politically active student. This is the student’s first opportunity to see a celebrated politician. Alert to the sights and sounds of the crowd, but the dominating impression from this point of view is the ex-President’s actual speech, rather than the reactions of those in the
audience. The security officials do not present a threat, and the hecklers irritate the student, perhaps, more than others in attendance.

Adopting a variety of positions, physically, mentally, or emotionally in a given situation, provides perspective allowing creative concepts a substantial environment in which to take root and be nurtured.

A third way to learn to respond more fully to experience is to challenge stereotypes, stereotypes which freeze responses to certain types of people and situations, preventing the writer from considering new responses or different alternatives.

For example, it may be natural to respond to a janitor or maintenance person as dull-witted, coarse, and uneducated, unable to perform a skill or accept any other occupation when, in fact, that person may be a retired missionary, world traveled, and able to relay many fascinating experiences, drawing from a wide range of interests and hobbies. Avoiding these types of assumptions makes the writer cogently aware of a fuller range of possibilities.

Wasn’t much of the anger of the blacks of the 1960’s directed at the indifference with which they were treated for so long? Our society, prodded by the angry protests of eloquent blacks and shocked by
rioting in the streets of our major cities, suddenly discovered that twenty million U.S. citizens had been there all along, suffering abuse, neglect and indifference while the rest of us went our merry ways, projecting our own comfortable futures. But, as the blacks repeatedly reminded us, they were there all the time. (Stewart 40)

Shedding stereotypes helps writers to discover what has been there all the time. The benefits will be many more perspectives and many more clusters of impressions, providing platforms on which to practice or rehearse the craft which enables the writer to harness her or his creative ability.

Learning to find meaning by shifting situational perspective should be a central focus of our teaching. As teachers, we encourage students by using socially motivated ideas, students will seek expression in the most appropriate, creative texts which might be constructed. Written language allows the writer/craftsman to capture thoughts, structure these thoughts, and creatively present them in a fresh way through careful use of specific naming, selective vocabulary, and keen perceptions, allowing the reader to look at and possess what he would normally look through.
CHAPTER 3

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS PROCESS

The conventional wisdom of rhetoricians, linguists, psycholinguists and cognitive psychologists is that language is a means of communication. Of course it is, but in the composing process what we chiefly need is a way of thinking about the sources of and the shaping of that we communicate. Language is fundamentally and primordially our means of making meaning. Language provides the forms which mediate knowing, the forms by means of which we make meaning, the forms which find forms. (Berthoff 69)

It may seem ironic that anyone in higher education would bother to question the usefulness of conscious and reflective thought. Yet, if we do question and discover a source of insight, creativity, and mental energies which lie in nonrational and unconscious processes, where is the necessity, or even the value of conscious thought? In the subsequent chapter this question is addressed which seems especially relevant to the study of writing since writing is both a creative, expressive act which often takes place in the unconscious, and must be forced to surface as the output of an individual’s skills of language production, another aspect of skilled craftsmanship.

In one sense, consciousness is an optional feature of thinking, a level of heightened awareness at which writers
Writers must, however, pay a price for taking thought. As the level of conscious awareness increases, the writer’s limited attention is diverted from the production of content and is increasingly turned to the creation of particular goals and plans, and to the recursive acts of reflecting, organizing, and revising. Let us explore further the role of conscious processing. As William James asserts,

> The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work. (James 140-41)

The automated processes we develop with experience are fast; they operate parallel with one another. They are not limited by short term memory, demanding very little conscious effort or control. These processes account for "the difference between knowing how to spell a word and having to sound it out or to remember the rule 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'" (Flower, "Taking Thought" 186).

In the development of knowledge, cognitive action based on automatic, unconscious acquisition gradually yields to conscious control. "Metacognition," (Brown 115) or awareness of and conscious control of one’s own cognitive processes, is a late developing and slowly won power that is related to reading and problem solving skills. In the
spelling example, conscious awareness is what allows the writer to know he or she doesn’t, in fact, know the correct spelling, and must deliberately consider some alternative, or to try to remember a rule or a Latin root that might help.

Conscious thought can also be seen as unauthentic play over the surface of deeper, unconscious processes, inaccessible to the rational mind. In some ways this idea has clouded the issue considerably, since it often assumes that conscious thought is only rational thought and tends to define imagination and inspiration as unconscious processes. This is really a value judgment given the form of a definition. Unconscious thought is characterized as deep, profound, and creative, while conscious thought is shallow, limited, and noncreative. This definition does not explain the moment-to-moment, effort and struggling activity of normal thinking and writing.

Referring again to the Coleridge work, "Kubla Kahn," his later revealed extensive drafts disclose Coleridge as the thinker rather than the conduit. His craftsmanship-enhanced creativity seems even more impressive when we glimpse its underlying process, even though this process may have transpired without the thinker’s cognizant awareness.

Conscious thought represents a certain level of awareness at which a process can be carried out on levels
from automated, conscious attention, on up to those guided by meta-awareness. In understanding the role of consciousness in writing, it is important first to acknowledge the advantage of nonconscious processes and the importance of the mental activity of which we are not aware. Conscious processes are only a part of the performance, yet they appear to play a very important role in the process of experts, for whom we might suppose they would be less necessary. Conscious thinking works at various levels of awareness, each of which has unique advantages and limitations. I will consider tacit processes, automated processes, active awareness, and reflective awareness.

Some processes, including searching the memory, perception, motor control, and even some value judgments appear to be largely or completely tacit; that is implicit, understood without being consciously acknowledged. Speaking a native language is another thought process which seemingly requires no conscious or tacit thought. We usually consciously and voluntarily choose to speak while we are unconscious of the subliminal mental activity necessary to generate that speech. Much of a writer’s language production process also operates tacitly. Until the writer moves unconscious thought from the mind onto the page in written form, creating meaning does not become a conscious
act, a craftsman’s act. Once conscious, the creation is subject to the rules and disciplines of that craftsmanship.

Some processes begin consciously, but with experience slowly drop out of awareness, which means they have become automated. We expect to see fluent production and limited conscious attention in the performance of anyone doing an easy or a well-learned task. When writers have developed craftsmanship to this level, their attention can be concentrated almost entirely on maintaining the flow of content. The writer is no longer devoting conscious energy to spelling, grammar, punctuation, routine structure, and other mechanics.

The simple knowledge-telling strategy of young writers allows them to maintain both flow and coherence with only minimal demands on their attention and in turn to devote all of their resources to the problems of finding and expressing new content. (Scarkamalia, Bereiter 307)

In general, automated processes are the rewards of learning. They let the writer learn to do more with less effort and less attention.

When a writer is engaged in fast, fluent production, his active awareness is occupied with content information and the language of the particular discourse. Creativity in the art of composing is guided by automated processes, but
if a cognitive difficulty or automated processes are unavailable, the work of composition shifts to conscious attentions where the skills of craftsmanship can be drawn upon. Here the writer’s attention is no longer focused exclusively on the generation of content, but is engaged in the process of drawing inferences, setting goals, planning, analyzing, and evaluating the text produced so far, as well as diagnosing the current problem. All this very complex activity can go on with rapid efficacy even though the writer may only dimly remember all these decisions after the piece has been completed.

The most direct evidence for such active conscious processing comes from thinking-aloud protocols, which are a widely used tool in process-tracking research in cognitive psychology. Subjects who are thinking through a problem—such as planning a chess move, doing a decision-making task, or writing an essay—are asked to think aloud as they work. They are not asked to comment on the process, but to simply verbalize the content of their conscious thought as they work. Transcripts of these thinking-aloud protocols have given us a new, if naturally incomplete, window on the rich activity of the writing process. They show writers to be actively engaged not only in generating ideas and text but in goal setting, planning, evaluating, and in monitoring and guiding their own process. However, protocols also show
that much of this active awareness is surprisingly fleeting. People appear to do a good deal more conscious consideration than they remember having done after the fact, or at best, are only minimally aware" (Flower "Taking Thought," 186).

It may be that this type of thinking only requires an instant of the writer's conscious attention, or the thinker may only be marginally aware of the decision he is making. Once a step toward the goal has been attained, the writer may clear his mind of it and forget about the necessary energy and attention it took to make such a decision. It is important to distinguish the rich array of thinking processes that go on in a writer's active awareness during composing, from the far more limited and synthesized accounts found in people's retrospective reports.

Unconscious and conscious thought seem to hold equal significance for the composer involved in the highly recursive stages of the writing process. While insight may bolt upon the writer's consciousness, tacit and automated processes play a strong role in drafting, organizing, and giving form to meaning, while active and reflective awareness take free reign, allowing the writer to concretely commit through pen and ink, thought to paper, demonstrating the creative ability to manipulate fresh perspectives, give substance to imagination, and grasp new associations, guided by a diligent adherence to control.
CHAPTER 4
A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Many people who say, "I just cannot get into writing" mean either that they want to write or that they would enjoy writing, but for one reason or another, they simply cannot write to their own satisfaction. In most cases, the main reason people are not able to write as well as they would like to is, understandably, because they have written very little. In addition, they have had very little writing instruction, or they have paid no heed to the instruction they have had. Consequently, these people do not have a clear perspective on how to write. As a result, writing for them is an awkward, uncertain, dissatisfying experience. Generally, most people just need guidance, hours of practice, and a few affirming and successful writing experiences to make writing a more comfortable activity.

David Bartholomy (29) has developed a three-part solution to this very old yet current problem: 1) free writing; 2) journal writing; and 3) public writing.

An interesting and beneficial type of writing is free writing. This type of writing is labeled free writing because, at the most effective level, the writer is not thinking about the physical or technical aspects of writing; his thoughts are only on what is forming in the mind and written on the page. All the writer does is transcribe, as fast as possible, whatever passes through the mind.
Free writing breaks down barriers to writing. It can establish a mood for writing by forcing everything out of the mind which might interfere, giving the writer the feeling of actually communicating on paper, causing writing to be a more natural act. The result of free writing can be both startling and interesting. The faster you write, and the less distracted you are, the more likely you are to break through to your subconscious, allowing ideas, images, memories, and feelings to flow freely. As these ideas take written form on a page, they remain physical and concrete, a ready reference for the writer to return to as he strives to transform ideas from the ethereal and nebulous into concrete communication.

Here are some rules for free writing: 1) the mind should be clear; 2) start suddenly when the mind is off guard, being sure not to start with a thought already in the mind; 3) write as fast as possible; the faster the writing, the more thoughts can be captured as the writer goes beyond conscious thought to truly free writing; 4) if the mind seems blank, the writer should not stop writing; 5) the writer should not consider mechanics, structure, or clarity; the writer should simply write whatever comes to mind.

Journal writing takes the writer a step further toward public writing than free writing does. Journalizing is done for an audience, even though the audience is just the writer
himself. The writer will, therefore, attempt to make sense. At the same time, though, because the audience is himself, the composer feels free to say what he really wants to say, in the way he wants to say it. Thus, journal writing helps to dismantle any inhibitions the writer might have about communication through writing, increasing his confidence in his ability to write effectively.

There are times when imitation can be helpful. This type of writing can be easily incorporated into a writer's journal. Imitation of other writer's style can help the craftsman to develop a unique style. Understand, however, that the focus of the intention should be on the writer's own style. Imitation is valuable only for practice and skill development. It should be a means to an end, not to be confused with the end itself, which is creative originality. After a time, the writer should not continue to imitate, or continue to write simply about material already heard or seen. The writer must begin to write only about those things which are first-hand, personal, life experiences. This principle of non-imitative writing is obviously not going to apply to research and report writing. However, the confidence a writer develops doing original writing can only improve the ability to write about what the writer has read in applicable situations.
After taking advantage of the fore-stated skill-enhancing tools a composer can turn writing plans toward publication. The following suggested writings are opportunities to use all of the writing skills the writer possesses. They should be written as for publication in a suitable magazine or newspaper. The potential publisher writer must consider audience, style, and purpose:

* Profile an interesting person you know.
* Support an assertion through argument.
* Report a dramatic event.
* Analyze and evaluate a social, political, or economic circumstance.
* Critique a work of art.

These are just a few suggestions to which the writer can apply style and perspective. Allow uniqueness to surface. Natural style should emerge while communication and developing clarity through enriched vocabulary, minimizing vagaries and concentrating on detail, while carefully balancing form and content.

Writing clarifies the sense of self. All writers do not write with equal skill, but all writers who practice their craft become more sensitive to the language and its effective usage. No matter how much television or how many films a writer views, the kinds of associations produced by these kinds of experiences remain marginal, accidental, and
incidental; they will not be as effective as the experience of writing, discovering voice, or creating that bridge to an audience. That is an entirely unique experience for which there is no substitute.

Once the tools, tricks, and secrets of the trade become second nature, you lose the attention to technique which has served as a margin of safety. Suddenly you are naked, exposed to the dangerous process of bringing writing into existence; that period between the time you know exactly what you do because you are doing an exercise and the time when you can trust your instinct and critical judgment enough that you don’t feel totally at risk.

(Mueller 46)
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Students entering college have great difficulty with all phases of writing, including gauging the needs of their readers, meeting minimum prose editing demands, and most important, coming up with something intelligent to say. We, as a nation, are in a writing crisis. Consequently, composition instruction has taken on greater importance. A result of that importance is that composition is slowly becoming recognized as a distinct discipline with its own aims and methods.

Among those aims and methods is communicating the ability to balance form with content, instead of elevating either what is said or how it is said to a position of exclusive respect, exacerbating the age-old tension between them. Obviously, a writer must strive toward harmony between what is said and the way it is said. To elevate either form or content at the expense of the other is to insure a lopsided, failed rhetoric. Diverging from mechanical conventions is dysfunctional, not creative. Adhering to them requires students to learn precise, rule-governed behavior which, though contributing to good writing, does not constitute it. The parallel remains constant as we have examined the issues of creativity and craftsmanship, each of which increases in value as each is tapped and developed in congruence.
Far too often students find themselves rehearsing the same, deadly, dull prose essays, for little purpose other than to offer something to a teacher for evaluation, with little investment of thought or feeling. They write essays knowing they are simply telling the instructor what the instructor already knows, with the full knowledge that such things are written and valued in academic environs as part of a grade exchange economy. Some students develop skill with such exercises; some do not. All of these students know that such writing is something which goes on in English classes and in very few other places. We, as teachers, must help students discover the techniques necessary to gain control over the type of writing which can effectively help them to create meaning in their lives.

Students need to develop their creative use of writing not simply for educational correctness, although this aspect is valuable, but also because of the powerful role writing plays in making meaning, and in discovering and giving voice to important ideas. Writing can liberate personal meaning by playing a heuristic role.

How can I know what I mean until I see what I have said? This representation of writing is conventionally in service of a pedagogy whose primary aim is to enable students to draw out through the conventions of craftsmanship something that is inside them: insight,
vision, ideas, connections, and wisdom. It is essential that we demonstrate to students the importance of transforming these concepts from creative ideas without form into meaning. Often this accomplishment can be facilitated through the discipline of craftsmanship.

Ann E. Berthoff states,

Nothing is needed more urgently in the current reassessment of what we think we have been doing in teaching composition than a critical inquiry into this concept of the simultaneity of thinking and writing, of the role of departure for that inquiry because it reminds us that composing is both creative and critical and that it is an act of mind, it doesn't just happen; it is conscious. (Berthoff, The Making of Meaning 63)

A writer is not always someone who has something creative to say, but someone who has found a process, a craft that will bring about new things he would not have thought of without starting to say them. That is, a writer not only draws on a reservoir; but also engages in an activity that brings him to a whole succession of unforeseen stories, poems, essays, plays, and philosophies. Creative conceptualization remains vague at best, or untapped at worst, for those without the tools, devices and strategies craftsmanship provides. Demonstrate regulated skills to the
young writer, rendering a means for that writer to give form to thought.

As an instructor, I emphasize structure. Students will not develop practicable methods for writing which can be taken out of the classroom unless they have a solid grounding in structure. Writer/teacher, Kelly Cherry, tells us,

I’ve never encountered a textbook that properly lays out structure of the short story so that epiphany can be technically determined. An epiphany is nothing but a resolution that has been set to coincide with the climax, (Burge 211) demonstrating the interdependency between skill and enlightenment within the writing process.

Climaxes can be heightened or muted according to whether you lengthen or shorten the moment of crisis that precedes them. A successful writer uses such strategies as paragraphing to effect a specific purpose; paragraphing is a crucial device for heightening drama. If students learn to use this strategy along with other writing devices, they can begin to make huge jumps or leaps because they now have ways of analyzing their own material. This does not mean, and I do not suggest to any student that a writer should always approach writing through strategy and formula alone. However, when a writer produces initial drafts, allows an
incubation period, and then returns to the piece for revision, it is extremely useful to have structural strategies in mind to effect the intended purpose.

It is crucial to stress the process of drafting, critiquing, and revision. If these stages are confused and a writer does close revision while he is working in the drafting stage, he inhibits himself and faces a dysfunction such as writer's block. On the other hand, if the writer treats revision as a draft stage, he will be unable to do the necessary close editing. A certain perspective of the material is appropriate to each stage.

I believe that talent or craftsmanship can be taught, generally by the self to the self. It also seems perfectly possible to extract and analyze that process and transfer to a pedagogical situation where the teaching is being done between the selves a teacher self and a student self. (Burge 213)

Understanding the processes of such stages in writing as drafting, critiquing, and revising capacitates such self-teaching.

Cherry further states that genius is not simply greater ability, but the two are very different attributes. Craftsmanship is learning what the creative process is through drafting, critiquing, and revision. Craftsmanship also entails learning to have the courage to use writing
process devices and strategies, to fail occasionally in those uses for a period of time, to tolerate those failures, and to continue to use them for a longer period of time until mastery can be attained. This is a process that a student or writer can apply to himself whether or not he is blessed with creative genius.

Cherry then tells us that creativity is a state a writer reaches when he comprehends the nature of personal understanding. Craftsmanship is the understanding of the creative process, whether we apply it to writing or whether we apply it to mathematics. It becomes different in certain applications, devices, and details, but the process is probably the same. Creativity is comprehending not only that process, but also the relation the individual mind and its uniqueness bears to that process. Once a writer learns this he will then continue to study and learn the nature of understanding according to the processes of his individual mind. A writer can analyze the way his mind works in relation to that process, and the write begins to work with himself rather than against himself, which is most important to the writer and to his realization of personal creativity.

Each writer must learn his own mind.

When we learn how our own mind works, we begin to work with ourselves. This can be taught. Almost none of us are going to become geniuses. This is
not because genius cannot be taught. It is because it is very hard work to become a genius and most people do not want to be geniuses. Most of us do not want to make the necessary sacrifices and go through the necessary pain to gain this end.

(Burge 217)

This is, of course, a very strong statement subject to refutation, but nonetheless makes an interesting suggestion. Of course, genius is not a choice, but neither is good writing always a result of giftedness.

Releasing creative ability may not be contingent only on an intelligence quotient or a mysterious, incalculable ability, or hemisphericity. It may have as much to do with the ability to observe personal ability or lack of ability.

According to Greek mythology, Athena, the goddess of knowledge and truth came fully formed from the head of Zeus (Axelrod, Cooper 15). As a metaphor for writing, it makes the process seem painless and swift, with a final product that emerges complete and without flaw. Yet, all experienced writers know that reality differs markedly from mythology. Unfortunately, effective writing most often not a gift from the muse but the result of labor that can be long and even painful. Writing is a complex intellectual, emotional, and creative process. It requires analyzing and synthesizing a diversity of knowledge, understanding human
psychology so as to anticipate readers' responses, and forging new sentences with unique meanings from the stockpile of words and conventions. It means sometimes having faith in what you have said and how you have said it, and sometimes regarding your writing skeptically.
WORKS CITED


Carrol, Lewis. Through the Looking Glass.


48


