

Introduction

Some time after the newly fascinating discipline of rhetoric and composition studies began to emerge in the 1970s and early 1980s, it seemed to undergo dizzying changes. Enshrined in a mantra—"Teach process, not product"—process pedagogy initially appeared quite revolutionary and far superior to the current-traditional paradigm. But while enthusiasm for expressivism remained high in some quarters, Andrea Lunsford, Lisa Ede, and others began insisting that writing is collaborative. Advanced by John Hayes and Linda Flower, cognitive approaches to understanding the composing process gained popularity before interests turned elsewhere. Sharon Crowley and Victor Vitanza began pondering and interpreting the works of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and other European and American postmodernists. Cheryl Glenn, C. Jan Swearingen, and other feminists interrogated and challenged patriarchal dimensions of classical rhetoric, the current-traditional paradigm, and process pedagogy alike. James Berlin explained the importance of economic strata in defining Americans' minds and lives. Studies of the intertwining strands of race, class, and gender further enriched and complicated the discipline. Certainly, rhetoric and composition studies is now—and perhaps has always been—a complex field characterized by agreements and tensions, as bodies of thought crash, merge, and shift like the tectonic plates of the earth's surface.

The editors and contributors to this volume seek to illuminate and complicate many of the tensions in the field and thereby to contribute to postprocess pedagogy and post-postmodernist rhetoric. If we succeed, we will also honor the late Jim Corder, whose body of work reconciles opposites, provides a sustained search for ethos, offers a prophet's call for the commodiousness of language and voice, and attempts to answer the ubiquitous question of why people listen to some but not others.

Although this collection of original essays is not meant to be in the genre of *Festschriften*, it is offered in the spirit of Corder and his work. The issues he wrestled with are just as relevant today—perhaps more so after the innumerable issues arising out of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Throughout the process of brainstorming, proposing, writing, editing, and compiling this book, the editors and contributors have spotlighted issues that they think are as relevant now as they were in the past and that they hope will be generative for the future.

Like Corder, contributors venture into uncatalogued places. Focusing on what they deem his most useful ideas, they explore his uncategorizable mix of West Texas expressivism, rhetorical theory, and process and postprocess composition theory. Among other topics, they examine his adaptation of French phenomenology and existentialist

psychology; his subversion of the binary of argumentation and expressivism; his highly expansive redefinitions of conceptions in Aristotelian and Ciceronian rhetoric; the possibility that his rhetoric is radical and feminist; his undermining of all taxonomic divisions of discourse; his intense wrestling with European postmodernism; his commitment to comity and call for commodious language; and his explication and practice of gentle, dialogic persuasion.

In Part I, Historical Context—Rhetoric and Composition Studies, Janice Lauer in “The Spaciousness of Rhetoric” contextualizes and highlights the emergence of a fledgling discipline during the 1970s. She analyzes major concerns that arose at rhetoric and composition conferences—several of which she helped spearhead—and notes key publications.

Then in Part II, Theory-Building and Critiquing Corderian Rhetoric, James S. Baumlín, who coauthored four essays with Corder, in “Toward a Corderian Theory of Rhetoric,” identifies a “Corderian rhetoric” that evolves from a heroic phase to a tragic phase. Baumlín maintains that Corder bases his rhetoric on existentialist psychology and French phenomenology while extending Georges Gusdorf’s language theory to writing. Baumlín regards Corder’s heroic phase as a vernacular “West Texas elaboration upon French phenomenology” and his tragic phase as a “questioning and critique of the same.” Baumlín argues that despite the influence of Gusdorf, Corder’s “multiple rhetorics, adequation of rhetoric and psychology, and . . . theory of generative ethos” evince noteworthy originality. Baumlín further holds that Corderian rhetoric can contribute to the reexamination of social constructivism, which continues to dominate contemporary composition theory but which “has more or less completed itself and stands in need of correction.”

Keith D. Miller in “Jim Corder’s Radical, Feminist Rhetoric” contends that without saying so, Corder generates a systematic argument by indirection that undermines standard forms of academic persuasion. According to Miller, Corder enacts a strong but implicit logic that yokes anecdotes from rural West Texas to analyses of eighteenth-century British poetry to arguments about the theory and practice of teaching writing. Usually refusing to hand answers to readers, Corder prefers to invite them to join him in puzzling over problems. In doing so, he enacts what Miller calls “a radical, pioneering, subversive, and feminist rhetoric.” W. Ross Winterowd in “The Uses of Rhetoric” analyzes the importance of Corder’s *Uses of Rhetoric* and the reasons that it failed to reach the readers it deserved. Winterowd finds Corder “in a double bind, writing for an audience that needed basic education, but advancing an argument foreign to that audience’s values and beyond what a reader with only the ‘basics’ could follow.” Contemplating Corder’s irascible oeuvre that folds classical rhetoric into expressivist discourse, Wendy Bishop in “Preaching What He Practices: Jim Corder’s Irascible and Articulate Oeuvre” responds to and interprets several of his more significant essays, including “Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love,” “Notes on a Rhetoric of Regret,” and “At Last Report I Was Still Here.”

She notices his rather insistent use of classical schemes and tropes in essays that appear decidedly more informal than they are. Pat C. Hoy II, in "A Writer's Haunting Presence," gently probes and explores Corder's *Chronicle of a Small Town*, *Hunting Lieutenant Chadbourne*, and (especially) *Yonder*. Hoy quietly champions these texts, both as nonfiction and as rhetoric. By contrast, in "Finding Jim's Voice: A Problem in Ethos and Personal Identity," George E. Yoos weighs *Yonder* and finds it lacking the authenticity that Corder obviously sought. Not only does *Yonder* fail as a memoir, Yoos argues, it also stands as an epistemic failure and a moral failure. Unhappy with Corder's literary inclinations, Yoos also complains that unfortunately, Corder's scholarly career yields "the net effect of introducing tacitly literary standards and not cognitive standards into our perception of good writing."

In Part III, Parallels, Extensions, and Applications, contributors investigate and interrogate various trajectories, vectors, possibilities, and extensions of Corder's rhetoric. Responding to the recent wave of incivility in both private and public spaces, Theresa Enos in "A Call for Comity" considers observations and theories about comity from figures as diverse as Aristotle, Thucydides, Erasmus, Machiavelli, and Samuel Johnson. She considers Corder's advocacy of gentle persuasion while also engaging the rhetorical conceptions of Richard Weaver, Kenneth Burke, Jürgen Habermas, Stephen Carter, Deborah Tannen, and Richard Enos. Richard E. Young in "Toward an Adequate Pedagogy for Rhetorical Argumentation: A Case Study in Invention" tells about a recent class he taught in which he asked students to consider a case study involving the ethical issue of suicide. Concluding that the course failed, Young analyzes the failure and wonders about possibilities for transforming the course so that rhetoric becomes investigation as students reject dialogue-as-debate from fixed positions in favor of dialogue-as-discussion. Exploring the process of resolving conflicts, Richard Lloyd-Jones in "Rhetoric and Conflict Resolution" reflects on his wife's sixteen years of experience in the Iowa legislature and her role in founding the Iowa Peace Institute, which develops techniques for settling disputes and assists squabbling governmental bodies. He explores and reconceives the role of rhetoric in conflict resolution. Elizabeth Ervin in "Rhetoricians at War and Peace" explores rhetoric as an alternative to war—as has often been claimed—or whether war is simply an extreme expression of rhetoric. She considers Corder's and Wayne Booth's accounts of their stints in the US military and Lad Tobin's narrative about evading military service during the Vietnam War. She contemplates the relation between these scholars' discussions of their combat inexperience and their conceptions of rhetoric.

In Part IV, Theoretical, Pedagogical, and Institutional Issues, contributors offer future direction for some current issues. Defending expressivist rhetoric in "Bringing Over Yonder Over Here: A Personal Look at Expressivist Rhetoric as Ideological Action," Tilly Warnock explores her evolving conception of her childhood in Georgia and links

her process of conceptualizing her early years to a consideration of rhetorical theory—a move, she claims, that Corder authorizes her to make. In “A More Spacious Model of Writing and Literacy,” Peter Elbow explores some of the greatly varied, widely practiced forms of nonacademic, nonprofessional writing that scholars usually overlook, undervalue, and undertheorize. He offers a number of observations about these forms, observations that he modestly calls “fragments.” John Warnock in “Weaving a Way Home: Composing a Personal Geography” considers the precarious, ill-defined position of geographical nonfiction and rhetoric in the university. Drawing on years of experience (and pondering a chapter in *Yonder*), he probes scholars’ resistance to personal and regional rhetorics and argues that the academy should instead prize such discourses. Douglas Hesse in “Who Owns Creative Nonfiction?” ponders the institutional vagaries involved in teaching and administering courses in “creative nonfiction,” which enjoys what he calls an uneasy relationship with the academy and which might belong either to rhetoric and composition studies or to creative writing. Hesse ponders which administrative domain is better suited to design and staff such classes and investigates writing curricula that seek to propagate inclusive rhetorics.

The contributors to this volume, in the spirit of Jim Corder’s unfinished work, absorb, probe, stretch, redefine, and interrogate classical, modern, and postmodern rhetorics—and challenge their limitations. It is our hope that the essays can bolster our attempts—and generate new attempts—to develop postprocess composition theories and pedagogies and post-postmodern rhetorics.

We now turn to the work of Jim Corder, which he always conceived as “unfinished.” In 1958, after completing his PhD at the University of Oklahoma, Corder began teaching at Texas Christian University, where he remained on the faculty for more than three decades. During the 1970s he joined a band of mutually supportive scholars in the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). The most obvious and most significant contribution of these professors—many of whom enjoyed highly productive careers over several decades—was to develop rhetoric and composition into an important, rapidly emerging field.

Corder helped build the discipline by publishing scores of essays, including many in *College English*, *College Composition and Communication*, and other major journals. He wrote one academic book, *Uses of Rhetoric*, and authored and edited numerous textbooks. A popular figure at CCCC gatherings, especially during the 1980s, he appeared on panels with such luminaries as Jim Berlin, Wayne Booth, Joseph Comprone, W. Ross Winterowd, and Richard Young. Beginning in the 1970s, Corder joined Winterowd in advocating the study of nonfiction literary prose, which departments of English characteristically devalued.

Spurred by Edward Corbett’s *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, Corder became fascinated with ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric; developed a friendship with Corbett; and joined Corbett, Frank D’Angelo, James Kinneavy, Winifred Horner, and others in CCCC in

revitalizing interest in Aristotle and Cicero. Prompted by Kenneth Burke, Corder stretched classical rhetoric to cover all forms of discourse—a project he began in 1971 when he wrote *Uses of Rhetoric*. Throughout his career he generated postclassical investigations, expansions, and redefinitions of invention, structure, style, memory, ethos, and other keystone conceptions of Aristotelian and Ciceronian rhetoric. During his midcareer and later, he explored postmodern and (arguably) feminist and post-postmodern perspectives on the same durable, yet (in his hands) elastic conceptions. At times he oscillates between two positions, attempting to welcome both but sometimes finding them opposed and pressing viselike against him.

Unlike Corbett, Corder combined his interest in classical rhetoric with a desire to add an expressivist dimension to scholarly writing. Beginning in the 1970s, he fused the academic and the personal by merging theories and scholarship about rhetoric and composition studies with narratives about an obscure corner of rural West Texas where he grew up during the Great Depression. He continued to blend personal and scholarly writing (sometimes leavening his essays with self-deprecating humor) during the early and middle 1980s, when composition was often viewed as a species of social science—a conception utterly foreign to him. After becoming an administrator during the early 1980s, he wrote—sometimes philosophically, sometimes humorously—about how university officials juggle dilemmas.

Although mixing expressivist (or autobiographical) and scholarly writing was highly unusual during most of Corder's career, Mike Rose, Victor Villanueva, Wendy Bishop, and others have greatly popularized the practice, which is now, in some quarters, *de rigeur*.

In "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love" and many other essays during the 1970s and 1980s, Corder advocates and enacts a dialogic rhetoric of mutual exploration that he hopes will replace agonistic rhetoric based on inflexible, predetermined positions. Beginning in 1989, he sacrificed part of his CCCC readership while producing works that are both personal and unclassifiable. Three of these idiosyncratic volumes—"Rhetoric, Remnants, and Regrets"; "Places in the Mind"; and "Scrapbook"—remain unpublished. Four of them—*Lost in West Texas*, *Chronicle of a Small Town*, *Yonder*, and *Hunting Lieutenant Chadbourne*—appeared before his death in 1998.

Like his other works (only more so), *Lost in West Texas*, *Chronicle of a Small Town*, *Yonder*, and *Hunting Lieutenant Chadbourne* prove difficult to summarize. In them Corder engages European postmodernism (usually implicitly) as he reinscribes the history of Jayton, Texas (and his own experience), while pondering the flawed nature of memory and what he terms his "disappearing" self. He wonders whether memory is as untrustworthy as it is indispensable and whether knowing the past is both necessary and impossible.

In later essays—including "Hunting Lieutenant Chadbourne" and "Notes on a Rhetoric of Regret"—Corder continues to engage post-

modernism, which he could neither swallow nor escape but which, in "At Last Report I Was Still Here," he eventually appears to circumvent.

Despite Corder's many national publications, his writing has never been seriously assessed. No one has wondered in print whether "Corderian issues" and "Corderian rhetoric(s)" exist or what Corder's work might contribute to feminist rhetoric, postprocess pedagogy, or post-postmodern epistemology. While all the chapters in this book are unfinished and fragmentary, we hope that they can initiate such an assessment.

Keith D. Miller
Arizona State University

Theresa Enos
University of Arizona