

*Composition and/or Literature: The End(s) of Education*, edited by Linda S. Bergmann and Edith M. Baker. Urbana: NCTE, 2006. 248 pp.

Reviewed by Melody Heffner, Georgia State University

Part of the Refiguring English Studies series, Bergmann and Baker's collection updates the discussion in Winifred Bryan Horner's 1983 book *Composition and Literature: Bridging the Gap*. After more than 20 years, however, the editors have chosen to re-orient the discussion by incorporating tales of both divisiveness and inclusion in the traditional English departments where most rhetoric and composition programs are housed.

Divided into three sections, the collection provides a wide range of approaches to the problems faced by the field of composition, but the book offers little to the "literary studies" academic seeking to engage these issues alongside compositionists. The authors claim their goal is to "extend faculty discussions about literature and composition," but there seems to be little genuine curiosity about how a literary studies academic might feel about these same issues (xiii). This problem wouldn't be so striking if that goal and the Call for Papers weren't both so far-reaching. The editors state that they received "twice as many papers and proposals as we could include," yet no article in the book was written by a literary scholar (xiii). According to Mary T. Segall, whose essay closes the book, students are the "missing voices" in the conversation, but one could also argue that the exclusion of literary scholars constitutes another group of missing voices, since the book aims to address issues that arise between literary and composition scholars.

After the introductory chapter by editor Linda Bergmann, the collection opens with the section "Institutional Contexts." Aiming to place current problems into a wider historical and institutional context, these essays include discussions of power differentials between composition and literary studies, the debate about what composition courses should accomplish, historical and social analyses of the "divorce" of writing from literary study, and a rather pessimistic assessment of the English profession's "schizophrenia" (54). However, one of the most relevant issues addressed in this section is the long-standing opposition between poetics and rhetoric.

The emphasis on poetics versus rhetoric grounds the analyses presented in section 1 because it serves as an important reminder to both literary studies and composition academics that our debates have a history dating back to the time of the ancient Greeks. Several writers delve into Aristotle's division of poetics and rhetoric, as well as his dismissal of poetics as a mode of writing because of its failure to engage citizens in productive democratic discourse.

Thus, the editors chose an apt essay by Dominic DelliCarpini to open the collection. His work questions the trend of service-learning in composition courses in order to bring up the issue of writing as civic engagement. He cites statistics showing increases in student volunteerism, even as student involvement with political issues dwindles. This discussion opens the first section by directly addressing the goals of composition teachers, with DelliCarpini explaining the teaching of writing as a way to engage students politically by using writing to encourage critical thinking about civic and political issues.

Following Delli Carpini, Edward Kearns claims that English academics of all stripes suffer from professional schizophrenia, in which our multitude of aims are outstripping our abilities to fully address our students' needs, or even to clearly define what those needs are. Drawing on traditional notions of aesthetics and the role of the writing teacher, Kearns' essay perhaps oversimplifies the challenges faced by compositionists in different types of educational institutions. He does, however, make one clear statement that all scholars engaged with any form of English studies should take to heart: we should both respect and evaluate the work of both student and professional writers. He points out that English is the only academic department that consistently devalues working artists and those who teach them, and he asks that we look to other humanities departments, such as Art and Music, where student development and teaching are not dismissed as he feels they are in English departments.

Eve Wiederhold closes this section by responding to claims about the "ruined university." She analyzes Bill Reading's *The University in Ruins*, showing how his work fails to take into account the work of James Berlin. Once again, critical composition scholarship has been overlooked, much to the detriment of everyone involved, since Berlin's aim was to point out connections between the approaches of Cultural Studies and Classical Rhetoric.

This final argument of section 1 thus supports the editors' statement that they don't advocate for either separation of composition from English departments or for their continued integration. As Timothy Doherty's essay illustrates, there are significant problems when composition splits off from English departments, and his narrative outlines a number of institutional constraints that can make this separation detrimental for composition departments seeking to strike out on their own in a university system that requires clear-cut goals and outcomes.

In section 2, "Departmental Cultures," Barry Maid provides an alternate vision of the differences between rhetoric and composition and literary studies. Where Kearns saw the work of artists in art and music departments being valued, Maid sees practitioners equally disenfranchised in foreign language, math, and political science departments. Maid suggests that writing

is an applied discipline, and this argument perhaps lies at the heart of every essay in this collection. Although composition scholars may or may not agree on this point, they all realize that many of their literary colleagues consider the teaching of writing an applied or practical discipline that is not relevant to advanced literary study. For this reason, Maid ends his discussion by asserting that compositionists need to abandon their “psychological ties” to English departments (107).

The notion of writing as an applied discipline relates to an issue also addressed by Kearns—the degree of scientific knowledge that an English department can claim. Early compositionists, such as Janet Emig and Flower and Hayes, took a social-scientific approach in their studies of basic writers, while compositionists like Kearns still view writing as an art form that can’t be scientifically explained any more than art or music can (although this point could be debated as well.) After this striking assertion, John Heyda and Dennis Ciesielski present other arguments. Heyda narrates his struggles to create an English 112 course that will motivate his students to become critical thinkers and involved citizens. Struggling with the discrepancy between his literature colleagues’ disdain for the course’s innovation and his own passion to change it, he gives an insightful critique from the inside of an English department as he wrestles with the relevance, politics, and economics of composition courses. Then, where Heyda has exposed boundaries and divisions, Dennis Ciesielski argues for “whole” English professors who are well-versed in both literary and composition theory. This well-rounded conception of the English professor may seem idealistic, but Ciesielski does succeed in pointing out the bizarre fact that graduate students in literature teach the bulk of composition courses (for which they have little training), while compositionists are barred from teaching literature courses because those areas are not their specialty. Ciesielski does all English professors a favor by holding these facts up to the light. The frustrations of literature students teaching composition courses has long been discussed, but the opposite situation, the fact that compositionists might like to teach literature classes once in a while, seems to be a relatively unaddressed concern.

In section 3, Fischer, Reiss, and Young argue that writing teachers should accommodate technology and its accompanying genre changes. With computer-mediated communication, students both expect and require new forms and conventions for their writing. In arguing for “multiple literacies,” these scholars continue the ongoing dialogue about the definitions of writing and of literature. Next, editor Edith M. Baker takes on almost all of the debates in the collection as she argues that literature in the composition classroom can accomplish both the civic aims of compositionists and the language-sensitivity practices that literature scholars value so highly. She supports the writing

teacher's aim of involving students with multiple genres and texts, but she also argues that Literature can encompass these genres.

Finally, in the last essay in the collection, Mary T. Segall addresses student responses to the teaching of literature in the composition classroom. With an analysis of student responses to a questionnaire, she shows that there is no universal answer to the question, as students go to college for a variety of different reasons, all of which contribute to their interest in or understanding of literature.

The afterword to the collection provides one possible solution to the disconnect between literature and composition: focusing on the reading process (rather than on literature) as we have focused on the writing process (rather than the final product of student writing). This idea fits neatly into literary arguments for reading as interpretation and into composition's arguments for focusing on student writing processes. By extending our "process, not product" theory to reading, Patricia Harkin ends the collection with a possible meeting ground for literary theorists and rhetoric and composition scholars.

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*Rhetorical Agendas: Political, Ethical, Spiritual*, edited by Patricia Bizzell. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. 375 pp.

Reviewed by Joyce Adams, Brigham Young University

In *Rhetorical Agendas: Political, Ethical, Spiritual*, Patricia Bizzell has compiled the presentations given at the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) conference held in 2004. This assemblage of writings illustrates some of the current rhetorical trends in composition. This book contributes to serious, scholarly discussions on the use of rhetoric in diverse settings. The value of the book lies in its convenient aggregation for those interested in the diversity of rhetorical agendas.

Bizzell, as President for the Rhetoric Society of America 2004-2005, sent out a Call for Proposals to encourage submissions of papers on the political, ethical, and spiritual elements of rhetorical agency. For Bizzell, in the papers that were received, patterns emerged which she grouped as "History," "Theory," "Pedagogy," "Publics," and "Gender." The papers in each section are not mutually exclusive to that section; for example, there is no separate section for spiritual because Bizzell felt that every section treats religious discourses in one way or another.