behavioral paradigm is his continued use of the language of Lamarckian evolution in the 1922 essay "English Composition as a Mode of Behavior" cited by Bizzell and Herzberg.

It is a matter of some importance that although Bain used the term *faculties*, he was not a faculty psychologist, and that although Scott used the term *behavior*, he was not a behaviorist. Now, I for one would be fascinated to read an essay arguing that Freudian ideology first became a force in composition and rhetoric at the turn of the century, but the proof has to be worked out in detail, then presented in a journal article where it can be quarreled with, before it can be asserted authoritatively in a canonical text. As a self-confessed bootstrapper in a discipline that is only now beginning to define its parameters, I urgently need to be able to rely on the authoritative-ness of the information I put in front of my students. Regrettably, an error of this sort becomes a question of trust.

Despite these quibbles, however, let me be clear in saying that Bizzell and Herzberg have undertaken and carried through an enormous job for which they need to be heartily congratulated and thanked. Somebody needed to do it. Modifications and corrections are called for, but if I may quote Louise Smith's cover comment, "The profession needs this anthology."


Reviewed by C.H. Knoblauch, SUNY at Albany

Susan Miller has orchestrated a rich interplay of themes from discourses that needed, sooner or later, to come together if the field of composition—alive as it may be with ideological counterpoint—was not to die regardless from intellectual boredom. Against the backdrop of Walter Ong's theories of oral and literate culture, Miller's argument brings poststructuralist literary theory—its ideas of absence, the death of the author, and the primacy of text—to the service of composition studies, with its concern for writers and the practices of writing, by proposing a "textual rhetoric" that can more adequately theorize "writing" as well as "the writer" in light of the concrete social and technological circumstances of modern intertextuality. Along the way, she critiques traditional intellectual history for its spiritualized renderings of "mind" and "idea," its myths of continuity, and its phony conversations among "great men," while espousing the methods of a materialist historicism. And she conveys in her own practice a tantalizing sample, if not the full panoply, of local detail (the frailness of Isocrates, which made him too weak
for public speaking; the number of instruments required for writing on parchment) that a materialist (hi)story distinctively relies upon for the credibility of its fictions. The argument is remarkable for its scope and compression, provocative in its posing of new directions for composition studies, and a real headache, I would imagine, for anyone preferring to live in the simpler conceptual universe of traditional readings of rhetoric.

According to Miller's story, Western rhetoric has persistently theorized discourse by appeal to the conditions of speech, where determinate individuals utter statements whose comprehensibility is stabilized within an immediate situation. Coincidentally, however, the fact of writing—the nature of its visibility at given historical moments, the palpable differences between writing and speech—repeatedly compels efforts, from ancient Greece to modern times, to explain its problematic effects in a culture that continues to cherish the memory of orality. There is much at stake in such a memory: the reassuring fantasies of fixed, univocal, and accessible meaning that theories of speaking have allowed, especially in the limited, formulaic domains of classical oratory. Writing fundamentally jeopardizes these fantasies from the start (witness Plato's nervousness in Phaedrus). What becomes increasingly apparent as literate culture spreads is the distance between writer and reader, the disturbing preeminence—and, as it were, opacity—of text, the indeterminacy of reading, the inescapable fact of "absence." Significant portions of Miller's argument are devoted to suggesting (though not exhaustively reviewing) the alternative conceptions of writing that have emerged in the West as philosophical responses to its changing technologies (stylus and stone tablet, the printing press) as well as its changing sociocultural roles: record-keeping, copying and preserving, "authoring" public and personal statements, making "new" knowledge, articulating discourses.

Miller reads, often ingeniously, a variety of historical strategies for coming to terms with textuality: Plato's ambiguous attacks on writing, Augustine's hermeneutic which privileges the sacred book, medieval and Renaissance images of the "author," Nietzsche's conscious revision of rhetoric as writing. Her point, largely, is to show how important it is for composition studies, in light of its special focus on "writing" and "the writer," to elaborate a rhetoric that can fully account for the emergence and the significations of those two concepts—a textual theory that accepts its distance from ancient orality and grapples, at last, with issues that are specific to conditions of late-twentieth-century discursivity.

Such a theory would explore the dispersions of texts that serve, and have served historically, to constitute alternative discursive communities and modes of practice, including their arrangements of power (marked by the shifting positions of writing subjects), and their diverse images of the accomplished versus the novice or the deficient "writer." This textual rhetoric would move beyond the nostalgia for "presence" that energizes
contemporary efforts to enshrine classical rhetoric as the "father" of composition studies. It accepts the condition of "absence" that is inevitable to textuality and that renders untenable such constructs as "the orator," a historical person who realizes fixed intentions by producing speech that correctly anticipates the needs of some determinate audience, and even "the author," that (masculine) creative force that engenders, and therefore owns, meaning by imposition of will upon language.

But textual rhetoric, at least in Miller's view of it, would also reclaim and centralize the concept of "the writer" (not to be confused with the "the author," who is properly dead and good riddance to "him"). The writer, a subjectivity uncertainly composed by means of the act of writing, is dependent, to be sure, upon language practices and cultural history; but the writer also maintains, in action, a self-conscious innocence about this dependency that enables "performance," a text offering the appearance of stability amidst circumstances of inescapable fluidity. The writing subject, Miller says in a delightful swerve around the bleak powerlessness implicit in much poststructuralist theory, has only "provisional" control of language but is not therefore "a mere token in a language game." Each act of writing "treats the mixed and unstable confluence of anterior intentions and purposes and posterior 'readings,' 'meanings,' or outcomes as though they could be fixed. It is a living fiction of, not an achievement of, stability" (19). This insight is the crux of Miller's argument, hence her title Rescuing the Subject, for it offers a way to sustain the concern for writers, especially student writers, that is central to composition studies while acknowledging the conceptual bankruptcy of traditional views of the writing subject.

Miller's own fiction of stability is acceptably, if not quite effortlessly, managed. By her own admission, she is more proposing an argument than making it, and I find the proposal very exciting for the freshness it promises to bring to a field grown stale with strained, latterday glosses on enthymeme or kairos and the inert, albeit prolific, details of cognitivism. At its best, her race through history contains some highly suggestive vignettes. But it sometimes also produces dashed-off and superficial portraits that reveal by accident rather than design how unreliable story-telling really is, even the fashionably materialist kind that Miller privileges here. The hasty aside on page 97, for example, where she imagines that a fledgling authorial "assurance" and "assertiveness" in Fielding's Tom Jones (1749) has dramatically matured, eleven years later, in Sterne (1760-67), makes for pretty glib history, especially when one is dealing with narrative tricksters as notorious as these two. But I don't want to nitpick (very much) because I find Rescuing the Subject, overall, to be daring, inventive, and badly needed. What is really rescued here (did Miller intend so wicked a double entendre?) is the subject of composition studies, which has largely ignored contemporary literary theory until very recently, succumbing as a consequence, I believe, to a philosophical torpor that Miller's work will help to overcome.