Works Cited


Composition’s Honored Articles: A Reflection on the Braddock and Kinneavy Award Winners

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Here’s a pop quiz: which of the following five passages come from articles that won *JAC*’s Kinneavy Award and which come from those that won *College Composition and Communication*’s Braddock Award?

1. By rejecting the metaphysical concept of a single, stable, and universally available (if partially obscured) meaning, one foregrounds the labor of composition and so makes conscious the effort to manipulate and control, to participate, in other words, in the conversation. While we lose the innocent commitment to discovering the truth behind a given collection of words, we gain an active ability to consciously influence the collection.
2. What we want to work out in this essay is a way of understanding and teaching argument that prepares students to participate in serious deliberations on issues that face all of us every day.

3. This reader must be as competent in the creation of hypertext as in its recreation, or we see no true phenomenological change, only an expanded version of print reading; after all, the reader who is only free to follow paths created by others, regardless of how multiple those choices are, still has little ultimate authority over the text, except as s/he recreates it.

4. Scholars reproduce this colonizing ideology when we maintain a distance from people. In search of an area of interest, we look to stake our claim over a topic, or in Powell’s words, “define a piece of ‘unoccupied’ scholarly territory . . . which will become our own scholarly homestead.” If the scholarly territory happens to be occupied by other scholarly endeavors, our job demands that we show how these original scholars fail to use their territory well, thereby giving us manifest justification for removing their theories from the territory through expansion, co-option, or complete dismissal.

5. The political reason we need something more complex than poststructural or postmodern critiques of the subject concerns the ways such arguments “travel.” Criticisms of a representation of substitution—of “authentic voice” literature that makes claims to speak for others—from within non-dominant groups line up disturbingly with the derision of a right-wing dogmatist like Dinesh D’Souza, who uses the evidence of Rigoberta Menchú Tum’s differences from the Indians she represents as an excuse to dismiss her as a “seemingly authentic Third World source.”

If style, tone, content, and research methods led you to identify quotations 1, 3 and 5 as coming from *JAC* and 2 and 4 as coming from *CCC*, congratulations: you are already familiar with the contrasting discursive forums represented by the two journals. Contrasts between them are highlighted in two recent anthologies of award-winning articles. *On Writing Research: The Braddock Essays, 1975–1998*, edited by Lisa Ede, reprints the twenty-six articles that won the Braddock Award for the best work of the year in *CCC*, and *The Kinneavy Papers: Theory and the Study of Discourse*, edited by Lynn Worsham, Sidney Dobrin and Gary Olson, reprints the eleven articles that won the James L. Kinneavy Award for the most outstanding work in *JAC*, as well as six articles that won honorable mention.

Ede presents the Braddock Award winners in chronological order, thus providing a twenty-five-year sweep of outstanding scholarship. In
addition, each winner has also provided a brief contemporary comment about the article (with close friends writing for the two deceased winners, Braddock himself and Jim Corder). In contrast, Worsham, Dobrin, and Olson create four topical groupings: "Pedagogical Theory" (four articles), "Philosophical Issues" (four articles), "Cultural Studies and Composition" (four articles), and a miscellaneous section titled "Special Issues in Composition" (five articles). The two structures serve different and appropriate purposes. The sweep of the Braddock Awards does give something of a "portrait of an emerging field," to borrow Steve North's subtitle. The JAC articles would be unlikely to show much change in the eleven years of the Kinneavy Award's existence, especially since in that short time JAC has had editors with shared allegiances. I do have one complaint about structure. The Kinneavy Papers is the only anthology I have ever encountered that does not list the original bibliographical information of its contents. If you want to know when George Pullman published "Rhetoric and Hermeneutics: Composition, Invention, and Literature," the source of my first test quotation, or whether it was the actual award winner or an honorable mention, you won't find that information in the volume—a relatively minor, but bothersome and inexplicable omission. (The information is easily available: JAC publishes the entire list of winners in the back of each issue.)

After describing the overall shape of a collection, a book reviewer typically feels obliged to single out several entries for praise, damning others by silence or even direct criticism. But that approach would be fatuous when confronting forty-three articles selected by committees and editors as the finest work done over the years. Suffice it to say that these are strong articles and strong collections that are sure to challenge and enlighten readers. So this review consists mainly of "reflections"—my reflections upon reading the articles, the articles as reflections of the journals of origin, and the volumes as reflections of our field and its discontents.

Two Collections, Two Visions
Admittedly, I chose my opening "typical" passages with some care, but they are no less typical for that. Although the works normally published in JAC and those normally published in CCC both represent the larger body of composition studies scholarship, the two sets constitute virtually nonoverlapping discourse forums. We can distinguish the two by voice, by content and ideology, and by privileged methods of making knowledge. The Kinneavy Award winners are unremittingly theoretical, while
the Braddock winners tend to concern theorized praxis. Furthermore, *JAC* publishes primarily what Steve North would call "hermeneutic" or "philosophical" scholarship, in which arguments are built by interpreting prior texts, by the tropes of authority, logical implication, definition, refutation, and comparison—a mode of argument I would describe as theoretico-quasi-deduction. It is rare to find in *JAC* anything "empirical," by which I mean a work based on case study, ethnography, or historical "data." *CCC* also publishes hermeneutic/philosophical work on occasion, but more common are data-based studies; and in *CCC*, even the hermeneutic/philosophical articles generally spell out classroom implications. I don't think it is going too far to say that an article that could win either of these awards could not have won the other—and, in fact, no scholar has won both awards.

**The Braddock Winners:**

**Chronicle of an Emerging Field of Practice**

Ede provides an extensive introduction, looking at the last fifty years of composition history, the origins of the Braddock Award, and how the winners reflect (sometimes) changes in the field. But she also cautions that "though judged exemplary at particular moments in time, the Braddock Award essays do not chart a univocal evolutionary narrative of scholarly progress or any other univocal narrative" (4). And she notes that "an essay that won the award in the 1990s might literally have been unpublishable in the 1970s, and vice versa" (4). In fact, some of the early Braddock winners seem quaint today, artifacts of another scholarly age, now of only historical interest. For instance, in "In Search of a Philosophical Context for Teaching Composition" (1977), Glenn Matott inveighs against the expressionist menace, which he attributes to the impact of Sartre and Rogers. He urges us instead to follow Martin Buber.

Granted, the narrative isn't univocal. Nevertheless, the Braddock winners reflect certain broad and widely noted developments in the field, as well as some current epistemological controversies. The field's shifting values, I suggest, largely explain why winners from one era would probably not be published in another (but editors' length restrictions, as Ede notes, are also a factor). Whether the shifts represent unmitigated "progress" is no doubt open for debate.

In broad strokes, the Braddock winners can be read as representing the field in three ages: first in a pre-process, formalist age; then in a quasi-scientific period focused on the *processes* of writing and teaching; then, more recently, in a social and political turn that manifests itself both in
case study methodology and in cross-cultural or cultural studies content. But, as Ede says, such a convenient set of narrative categories isn’t unitary. This third age includes “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change,” a social and political tract by Ellen Cushman (1997) and the source of my fourth representative quotation. No surprise there. Yet, following this article, as one of the joint winners for 1998, is a relatively traditional article about classrooms and composition, “Moments of Argument: Agonistic Inquiry and Confrontational Cooperation” by Dennis Lynch, Diana George, and Marilyn Cooper (the source of my second quotation). Also in this last section is the 1995 winner, Cheryl Glenn’s historical study, “Sex, Lies, and Manuscript: Refiguring Aspasia in the History of Rhetoric”—an article that is avant garde in its feminist concerns, yet traditional in historical methods.

In her introduction, Ede reads the first five Braddock winners as saying “something like this: there’s a lot of work to be done in the field, we need to do that work now, and in doing that work we can’t rely on the mishmash of understandings that we have heretofore entertained about the teaching of writing” (16). In theme, though not in method, these early articles, those I have called “pre-process” and formalist, are entirely consistent with the views of the award’s namesake, Richard Braddock. Braddock was a thoroughgoing empiricist whose work would today probably be denounced as “positivist” or even “scientistic.” He is best known as the primary author and guiding spirit of the highly critical NCTE monograph Research in Written Composition (coauthored with Richard Lloyd-Jones and Lowell Schoer, 1963), which like the early articles also took the field’s research to task, saying that it approximated alchemy. In an Afterword to the current collection, Lloyd-Jones says that Braddock’s only theory was “that people should not argue ahead of their evidence” (41). And evidence for Braddock meant facts, data, reliable information. He was given the first award posthumously for his statistical/stylistic study, “The Frequency and Placement of Topic Sentences in Expository Prose” (1974 in Research in the Teaching of English), in which he empirically refuted the traditional handbook assertion that most paragraphs begin with a topic sentence.

As an emblematic article from the pre-process era of composition, consider Frank D’Angelo’s “The Search for Intelligible Structure in the Teaching of Composition,” one of the two 1977 award winners. I recall using this influential article, with its impressive tree diagram, both in preparing new teaching assistants and in conducting summer Writing Projects, and it has appeared in several anthologies. In it D’Angelo writes
that "one of the most important reasons for our inability to teach composition adequately is that we have failed to identify the most significant principles and concepts in the field which will make intelligible everything we do"; to make up for that deficiency, he proposes a tree diagram (confidently titled "The Structure of Composition") with two main subbranches, "Principles of Discourse" and "Forms of Discourse," each with several subdivisions (52). D'Angelo's principles and forms all describe written products. In his invited commentary reflecting on the article, D'Angelo now writes, "Much has happened in the teaching of writing and literature since 1976 that suggests that our earlier emphasis on structure and sequence may have been misguided and naive" (59).

Probably the best of the middle age of composition representatives are the two articles won by Linda Flower: "Detection, Diagnosis, and the Strategies of Revision" (1987) and "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning" (1989). Both are coauthored, the first with John Hayes, Linda Carey, Karen Schriver, and James Stratman, while Christina Haas was lead author of the second. Each piece is heavily empirical, making use of Flower's hallmark protocol analysis and including technical diagrams to clarify visually the theoretical conclusions being drawn about student revision and student reading. In an attempt to be exhaustive and scientific, the revision article is the longest Braddock winner by far (thirty-six pages). The next longest is twenty-seven pages and was the second coauthored Braddock winner: "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy" (1985) by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford. Coauthorship became standard as nine of the last fifteen Braddock winners (through 1998) had multiple authors. No Kinneavy winner has been coauthored. Other representative texts of the time include David Bartholomae's "The Study of Error" (1981), which combines the results of empirical work by reading researchers with a study of student texts (the first Braddock article to use student writing), and Robert Connors' historical study of textbooks, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse" (1982). Like the Bartholomae and Connors articles, several others became famous, including Nancy Sommers' "Responding to Student Writing" (1983) and Ede and Lunsford's article on audience.

As far as this collection is concerned, I mark the beginning of contemporary research—and of the current controversy over methodology—with Glynda Hull and Mike Rose's "This Wooden Shack Place: The Logic of an Unconventional Reading" (1991). A close analysis of a
single student’s classroom performance in interpreting a single poem, it is the first case study to win the award. In a unique turn, Hull and Rose (along with Kay Losey Fraser and Marisa Castellano) won again the following year for “Remediation as Social Construct: Perspectives from an Analysis of Classroom Discourse,” a lengthy ethnographic study of a single teacher’s basic writing class, again focusing primarily on a single student and how this teacher characterizes her, based on the student’s limited oral contributions to the class. Case study and ethnography had received their imprimatur.

If we look only at the last four articles in the collection, we find the relatively traditional discussion by Lynch, George, and Cooper of some ways to reconceive argumentation (co-winner, 1998), but also a discussion of teaching English composition at three African universities: “Importing Composition: Teaching and Researching Academic Writing Beyond North America,” by Mary Muchiri, Nshindi Mulamba, Greg Myers, and Deoscorous Ndolo (1996). Then comes Ellen Cushman’s personal manifesto based on her ethnographic research about literacy in a lower class, primarily African American neighborhood (“The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change”). Following that comes “Dispositions toward Language: Teacher Constructs of Knowledge and the Ann Arbor Black English Case” by Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner (1998 co-winner). So three of the last four winners illustrate the field’s political turn, the concern for marginalized groups, joined with qualitative research methods. We seem to believe we have pretty much figured out the discursive practices of “ordinary” (that is, middle-class, white, non-Basic) students and how to teach them. We no longer give our highest awards to research on such topics; they lack political panache.

Moreover, we are no longer concerned with such empirical research standards as validity and reliability (which Braddock had faulted the field for ignoring), but are much more likely to value strongly voiced syntheses of prior research and theory, joined with phenomenological reports based on classroom observations. So in the contest between quantitative and qualitative empirical research, the recent Braddock winners reflect the victory of qualitative research. The decline of quantitative research is one of the distinctive features of our field. It shows up even in the contents of our most empirical journal: Braddock’s brainchild, Research in the Teaching of English.

While I doubt that Braddock would be pleased by some of the work now honored in his name, especially classroom ethnography and case studies, I enjoy reading both. They have the innate appeal of narrative,
and they satisfy the pedagogical gossipmonger lurking inside all good teachers. Yet, after reading them I still ask myself, “What have I now learned? What knowledge have I gained? Can any inference at all be justly drawn from this material?” I suspect Braddock might share my response. It isn’t that current researchers advocate arguing ahead of their evidence; we now disagree even about what constitutes “evidence,” about how much of it is needed (if any), about whether research is supposed to argue for generalizations, and even about what it might mean to “argue” from your evidence—not to mention the disagreement about whether “objectivity” or “reliability” are possible or even desirable. It is an understatement to say that we have a much broader concept of what “research” includes than Braddock did. Some might say, instead, that we are deep in epistemological murk. And it thickens when we turn to the second collection.

The Kinneavy Collection: Theory Triumphant?

James Kinneavy never won a Braddock award, but his wide-ranging and synthetic research might well have qualified him for it, especially “The Basic Aims of Discourse,” which appeared in College Composition and Communication in 1969, before the Braddock awards existed. In their introduction to the collected JAC winners, the editors naturally invoke Kinneavy, who “left us more capable of ‘doing theory’” (xviii). True. I maintain, however, that Kinneavy’s work was not the sort likely to win the award that bears his name. Certainly, Kinneavy trafficked in “theory,” and certainly he worked to import ideas from other disciplines, as the JAC editors advocate. But whether it be his best-known volume A Theory of Discourse: The Aims of Discourse, or his work on kairos, or even his own JAC article, “The Process of Writing: A Philosophical Base in Hermeneutics,” Kinneavy himself wrote with a restrained reasonableness that contrasts with the radical, sometimes biting tone that seems preferred in the JAC award winners. Moreover, Kinneavy shared Braddock’s admiration of the scientific and his concern with the reliability and validity of research.

If the Braddock winners concern theory-based praxis, it’s fair to say that the Kinneavy winners are “about” theory. The subtitle of the collection is Theory and the Study of Discourse. The Introduction is a manifesto describing JAC as the journal in rhetoric and composition “most often associated with ‘theory’” (xvii). It is also a call to arms to defend “theoretical discourse” in composition against a backlash that includes a “reassertion of expressivism . . . and an equally vigorous
reassertion of teaching over and against scholarship as the true ‘mission’ of rhetoric and composition studies” (xviii). Am I the only person who finds it ironic that taking teaching as our mission is a “backlash,” a backlash that should be resisted?

Even the citation patterns are revealing. In the JAC collection, Derrida is cited in the editors’ introduction and in six of the seventeen articles (to zero of the Braddock articles), and Foucault appears in seven articles (to three of twenty-six Braddock winners). Cixous and Irigaray are cited in the Kinneavy collection (twice each) but are never mentioned in the Braddock group. Such a citation pattern was not always the case, however. When JAC began, it was much more pragmatic and pedagogical. It was first intended to be merely the newsletter of the newly formed Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition (ATAC), but its first editor, Tim Lally, thought a journal would be more appropriate, and so he set about establishing an editorial board and designing a system of refereeing. The fledgling journal suffered, however, from a combination of grandiose refereeing practices, lack of funding, and shortage of personnel. Originally, in the spirit of thorough scholarship and collaboration, each manuscript was to be circulated seriatim to the thirteen members of the editorial board, on which I served; each would attach his or her comments and send the article on—an obvious recipe for disaster. Lally’s efforts to be both managing editor and editor, with no load reduction, are represented first by a pair of pitifully thin, stapled issues of thirty-six and ninety pages, with cheap blue covers, published in 1980. Succeeding volumes failed to appear on time, and by 1986 both the journal and ATAC were moribund. Gary Olson, who succeeded Lally as editor, credits Kinneavy himself with stepping in to chair what might have been the final meeting of ATAC at the 1987 CCC convention, and with leading a re-creation of the organization (“James Kinneavy and the Struggle over Composition.” JAC 19 [1999]: 536–39).

Olson, the second editor, became the journal’s savior, quite literally raising it from the dead and permanently setting his intellectual stamp on it. As he describes the journal’s work, it “stood for and encouraged rigorous theoretical scholarship that was interdisciplinary and that therefore resisted the intellectually protectionist, inward-looking tendencies of many in the field” (537). Perhaps “resistance” is the key term to describe a sameness of spirit in the Kinneavy winners despite their interdisciplinarity and topical breadth. Scrimmage lines are drawn, and confrontation is the order of the day. And perhaps that same intellectual
stamp explains why the sort of shifting concerns one can detect in the chronological sequence of the Braddock Award winners show up less in the Kinneavy winners, even when one reorders them from the groupings the editors have created. (Of course, the time covered by the Kinneavy Award is little more than one decade.) The first award, in 1988, went to Reed Way Dasenbrock for "Becoming Aware of the Myth of Presence," in which Dasenbrock uses Derrida's theory of logocentrism to explain some problems in student writing (without citing any student work). That same year, William Covino received an honorable mention for "Defining Advanced Composition: Contributions from the History of Rhetoric." Even though Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero provide the groundwork for Covino's article, the article manages to define "advanced composition" as "the open intellectual play of multiple perspectives" (370). Either article would be at home in *JAC* today.

Topically the more recent articles do reflect contemporary concerns with "the social" and with marginal groups, while continuing to use the hermeneutic methodology typical of *JAC*. The four articles grouped under Cultural Studies, for instance, come from 1993 and 1997, and the most recent (1998) winner in the collection is Susan Jarratt's "Beside Ourselves: Rhetoric and Representation in Postcolonial Feminist Writing" (the source of my fifth opening quotation). Given the commitment to theory and the ideological and methodological consistency of the Kinneavy winners, the broad topical categories into which the editors have placed the essays are fairly arbitrary. Virtually all the articles grouped under Cultural Studies could easily be grouped under Philosophical Issues; several of the articles grouped under Special Issues could be under Pedagogical Theory or Cultural Theory. Dasenbrock's application of Derrida to composition, as well as David Smit's "Hall of Mirrors: Anti-Foundationalist Theory and the Teaching of Writing" (1995), could be part of Pedagogical Theory, though both are classified under Philosophical Issues.

Note that the heading is "pedagogical theory," not "pedagogy." No Kinneavy Award winner is actually about how one teaches or ought to teach composition. In this "pedagogical" set of articles, for instance, Richard Miller in "What Does It Mean to Learn?: William Bennett, the Educational Testing Service, and a Praxis of the Sublime" (1996) manages to link Advanced Placement testing to both Foucault and William Bennett, while invoking Dickens, Longinus, Freud, and Leonardo da Vinci in order to critique a "pedagogy of obedience" and to recommend instead a "praxis of the sublime." Using witty and quite persuasive
scenarios, Jasper Neel argues that literature scholars arrogantly assume they are the center of the discipline and thus are qualified to take on, when necessary, such menial tasks as the teaching of technical writing. Each article is a tour de force. In the same section, Patricia Sullivan presents findings about how writing was treated in graduate literary seminars she studied (a rare empirical study, but while it is certainly about "pedagogy" it is not what we normally think of as "composition pedagogy"), and Nancy Welch discusses a summer literacy project for public school teachers that was valuable for providing "potential spaces."

It is perhaps worth noting that twenty-five percent of the Kinneavy Award articles can be grouped under Cultural Studies. JAC is the only one of our major journals, to my knowledge, that seems to have accepted fully the theories of James Berlin and others that the major purpose of teaching college composition should be to alert students to the ways in which dominant discourses oppress them and to have them practice cultural critique in their papers.

The confrontational tone and the commitment to theoretical controversy probably show up most in the articles grouped under Philosophical Issues. In a widely synthetic critique of composition's use of social constructionist theory, Joseph Petraglia points out that composition scholars generally conflate epistemic and ontological issues. He quotes Earl Croasmun and Richard Cherwitz (speech scholars) who say, "A general theory of what should be granted the status of knowledge precedes the consideration of any specific ontological statement. . . . It makes no sense to suggest that we know something about the world unless we first determine what it means to 'know'" (100). Petraglia adds that "Lack of a clear distinction between 'reality' and 'knowledge' is what many writers have discerned as social construction's most fundamental error" ("Interrupting the Conversation: The Constructionist Dialogue in Composition," the 1991 honorable mention). Similarly, David Smit in "Hall of Mirrors: Anti-Foundationalist Theory and the Teaching of Writing" (the 1995 winner) takes composition to task partly because scholars in rhetoric and composition are "overwhelmingly anti-foundationalist" even though the relevance of anti-foundationalism to the teaching of writing "has never been very clear" (134, 135). Moreover, he elaborates "a number of major difficulties" with the theory, including the idea that "sooner or later we will have to again bring back the success or failure of our instruction as a major part of the arguments in favor of various pedagogies in our discipline," yet since no concept of "a truth" can be drawn from an anti-foundational epistemology, Smit asks, "What
kind of evidence would we accept that a particular pedagogy was successful?" (140, 148, 150). This question takes us back to Braddock and the debate over research methods, an issue of both epistemology and ethics, and it raises again the question of the "mission" of composition studies.

As I read the essays in the Kinneavy Award volume grouped under Philosophical Issues and some of the more recent ones in the Braddock volume, I was reminded of how much we compositionists love to forage, to borrow central ideas from other disciplines and to discuss their implications and applications for composition. We have borrowed widely from philosophy (Rorty, for example), from psychology (theories of reading, of memory, of Rogetian counseling, of cognitive and moral development), from education (Dewey, Freire, Giroux), from cultural studies (Stuart Hall), from literary studies (Derrida, Fish), from speech communication, and from women's studies. And, we have, I suggest, borrowed rather indiscriminately. We have generally accepted Kuhnian theory, even though many scientists and philosophers of science reject it. We have adopted the Toulmin model of argument, at least in our major textbooks, even though logicians roundly reject it. We have pretty commonly adopted the Perry theory of cognitive and moral development during the college years, even though it was based on a study of a limited group of traditional-age, white, upper-class males who attended Harvard. And, as Smit argues, perhaps we have too readily bought into and extended postmodern anti-foundationalism.

The Kinneavy collection editors are justly proud of the "productive cross-disciplinary dialogue" to be found in both the journal and the collection. But I was also reminded of a tongue-in-cheek hypothesis I once developed for graduate students about the scholarship of allusion. It's fairly easy to impress the rest of us by importing a couple of ideas and selected jargon from a scholar in another field, a scholar whom we as readers perhaps have never heard of and certainly don't know enough about to challenge. For instance, Nancy Welch in "Worlds in the Making: The Literacy Project as Potential Space" (1996 Kinneavy honorable mention) discusses a summer project for high school teachers and uses the framework of "potential spaces," a concept from child psychologist D.W. Winnicott, as well as "feminist revisions of his work" (68). A "potential space" is "one in which participants are able to consider and examine their external realities from a one-step distance" (68). And John Trimbur uses Stuart Hall's theory of "articulation" in interpreting Mike Rose's Lives on the Boundary. Now, I have no reason to doubt Welch or Trimbur, but
since I don’t know the work of either Winnicott or Hall, I am likely to be easily impressed.

Reading these two collections leads me to worry that we have come much closer to the sort of methodological intolerance that Steve North feared would destroy our field. Ironically, we love non-quantitative research—whether hermeneutic, ethnographic, or case study—despite its epistemic limitations. But we have become rigidly anti-quantitative, at least in these journals. And in JAC, even qualitative empiricism is suspect. In addition, we have perhaps become too enamored of our own erudition and politics, with our power of allusion, to pay sufficient attention to the classroom practices that many of us continue to believe ought to anchor our enterprise.

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