De Quincey, rhetoric "maintains a tension between convention and invention, mechanic and organic, closure and wonder, and one becomes a rhetorical animal through the process of intellectual play" (118). He also finds in De Quincey a concern for the communal and the community, although I do not find his case here convincing, given De Quincey's obvious Romantic preoccupation with the self. In the Afterword, Covino calls on Derrida, Feyerabend (the philosopher of science), and Geertz (the cultural anthropologist) in support of his argument for a rhetoric open to the play of perspectives as the appropriate response to the polysemic nature of knowledge and experience. He closes the text by recommending that writing teachers encourage a rhetoric of "speculation and exploration" (129) in their classrooms, a discourse of open rather than closed forms, and a practice marked by "thoughtful uncertainty" in which "we consistently locate and relocate ourselves in play" (130).

The Art of Wondering is a remarkable project, an effort to refashion the rhetorical tradition in a way that situates a rhetoric of multiple perspectives and uninhibited play in a rich variety of historical texts. In so doing, it is not always as polyvalent and playful as it itself recommends, preferring coherence and closure to wonder and openness (compare, for example, Victor Vitanza's response to a similar problematic in his recent essays). And it might also have touched upon the discontinuities, differences, and elaborations of the figures considered as well as their common core. It does, however, make a powerful case for a rereading of the rhetorical canon and a reconception of the received rhetorical traditions. It further locates, in unexpected places, speculation that points to the possibilities of a reconceived modern rhetoric and rhetorical pedagogy. Thus, despite its occasional flaws and false turns, it is a book we cannot now do without, and one that I cannot recommend too highly.


Reviewed by Timothy R. Donovan, Northeastern University

Initially, I was wary of Consensus and Dissent, if only because the dichotomous title sounds like so many of the rhetorical readers that come across one's desk, each one promising to stir some debate in the classroom and to put seriousness into student writing. But eventually I warmed to this book, though there is more consensus in it than dissent. What the title characterizes is merely the last seventy-five years, during which time there has been plenty of serious debate as to what English should be, both within and without the "profession," "field," "subject," "discipline" (choose one). In this era of paradigm shifts and alternative literacies, Consensus and Dissent is yet another effort in the latest round of redefinition. We may yet succeed, but Marjorie Farmer, the editor of this collection of essays from NCTE, knows we haven't yet done so and, perhaps, are unlikely to very soon. Her title thus acknowledges and, to some degree, celebrates that fact.

It is, however, the subtitle, "Teaching English Past, Present, and Future," that gets directly to its purpose. The seventeen contributors to Consensus and Dissent in one way or another grapple with the question, "How do we come to be teaching what, and as, we are now teaching?" The prevailing approach to this question is historical: the concept behind the volume is that of a "yearbook." And though that term suggests an annual retrospective, publication of this book coincided with NCTE's Diamond Jubilee in 1986. As a result, the essays focus on recurring themes, though generally of more recent vintage. This volume, then, is a rendering of what you might have seen and heard had you been an English teacher since, say, the legendary Dartmouth Seminar of 1966 or even the "Why Johnny Can't Write" issue of Newsweek in 1975.
In reflecting this era, *Consensus and Dissent* provides quite a menu of issues, though we are dependent on each individual author's manner of preparing and serving them to us—hence, the strengths, and perhaps the weaknesses, of this volume. Because of the contributors' experience and erudition, the reader gets a good deal more than a Gradgrindian recitation of English facts on file. Issues of the greatest interest to us over the years are discussed here from a well-honed perspective. Be warned, however, that these are really essays about "consensus" and about "dissent." There is just not a lot of intellectual (or even political) altercation per se that's firsthand here. But collectively, the contributors do provide an excellent overview, the big picture, as it were, although the yearbook concept seems a somewhat narrow frame. This is a rather slim volume (about 150 pages) for jubilee coverage of our large, diverse, and sometimes rowdy class; and, as with high school seniors, it invites argument about who or what got slighted in the yearbook.

The yearbook includes an opening section of essays devoted to the matter of content, or what we teach. These essays address four broad areas: language, reading/literature, written composition, and oral communication. The contributors (Harold Allen, Rudine Sims, Paul Bryant, and Donald Rubin) range widely over such topics as grammar, usage, language training, TESOL, sexist language, doublespeak, and teacher research, as well as reading-writing connections, censorship, rhetorical theory, writing across the curriculum, interpersonal communication, and standard English. This lengthy but not exhaustive catalogue may itself suggest why it is so difficult to achieve consensus about the proper role of English studies in the academy.

The essays in the middle section of the book, "Conditions: Contexts for Teaching," develop an agenda and become more pointed: Ouida Clapp argues for more harmony in the English curriculum; Theodore Hipple calls for reform in the training of English teachers; Allan Glatthorn (with Catherine Hatala and Beatrice Moore) asserts the importance of the classroom teacher in conducting research; Rex Brown encourages teachers to participate more in developing testing procedures; P.A. Ramsey considers the effect of standardized tests on minorities; and Charles Subor examines the role of books in our high-tech, multi-media society. (He predicts that there will be a role.)

The final two essays explore ways in which teachers (and their professional organizations) can become agents of change. Miriam Chaplin examines some of the political issues that have concerned teachers since 1960—issues such as unionization, equal access, and teacher accountability. James Squire concludes with his "Imperatives of the Future," which include redefining literacy, increasing access to education, stressing higher thought processes in the classroom, using technology to strengthen reading and writing, and improving textbooks and teaching conditions.

Despite the wide-ranging nature of *Consensus and Dissent*, there are several interwoven motifs. One is a new respect for the classroom teacher as someone who can, or should, engage in professional dialogue, either by validating research or by contributing to it. Another is an appreciation for the enormous changes and influence generated by the teaching of writing in the last twenty years. Yet another suggests that if there is a common enemy, it probably remains the bureaucracy—federal, state, and local—that would mandate goals, materials, and testing in self-interested and unsophisticated ways.

Of course, NCTE, too, is a bureaucracy, a fact not lost on Stephen Tschudi, who comments in the concluding roundtable of NCTE presidents: "It is a humanistic bureaucracy, as opposed to a materialistic one, but it is a bureaucracy nonetheless. My greatest worry for the Council is that it will evolve into a kind of paper organization, continually passing rules, regulations, recommendations, and resolutions which have no impact on the teaching lives of its members." As a collection of paper(s), *Consensus and Dissent* is deeply humanistic in all the right ways; but as for its overall voice and tone, one might also find this a rather bureaucratic book. After reading it, I felt as if I had just attended an NCTE conference, with its sessions, chairs, co-chairs, presenters, recorders, respondents, comments from the audience, and so on. The book is like a conference on paper, with a foreword, preface, introduction, chapters, roundtable, executive report, afterword, acknowledgments, and biographies. It seems as if everyone must get on the
dais. But then again, a yearbook should represent many voices, and seventy-five years is a long time.

*Consensus and Dissent* may have no direct "impact on the teaching lives" of its readers in the sense of providing practical techniques for implementation. This is not how it is intended, though. NCTE offers here a broad approach to the English classroom, and, by implication at least, this approach should make an impact on the profession. This book may appeal to specialists, generalists, and beginners, and it may be especially valuable to curriculum leaders reviewing their programs in light of recent research claims while forging consensus and managing dissent locally.

The role of English in American education is a jigsaw puzzle being filled in at schools, colleges, libraries, and conferences in various ways. With *Consensus and Dissent*, NCTE continues at its seventy-five year mark to help us put the pieces together.


Reviewed by Theresa Enos, University of Arizona

In this extension of his 1984 monograph, *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*, James Berlin traces our century's rhetorical lineage by classifying writing instruction into epistemological theories. His terms for these theoretical strands—*objective*, *subjective*, *transactional*—seem analogous to the elements of the communications triangle—subject, writer, audience. Just as we must consider all three elements to achieve a balanced rhetorical stance in our discourse, so we must bring epistemological strands together to achieve a completeness in the theories underlying our teaching. This inclusive rhetoric is epistemic rhetoric, the communications triangle transformed into a sort of double helix made up of "superior" strands from objective, subjective, and transactional theories, self-contained within the matrix of language.

Berlin begins forming his rhetorical double helix by tracing and building a taxonomy of objective, subjective, and transactional epistemological approaches in education, first surveying nineteenth-century writing instruction, next covering 1900 to 1960 in twenty-year blocks, then discussing major rhetorical approaches between 1960 and 1975, and last exploring current practices.

*Objective* theories locate the real in the material world. Analogous to the "subject" element of the communications triangle, "objective" theories subsume writer and audience under an objective or referential presentation of the subject. First, Berlin traces current-traditional writing instruction, based on Scottish Common Sense Realism and its emphasis not only on correctness but on the inductive process of drawing inferences from data. Current-traditional rhetoric in this century was first appropriated by Harvard; built into its curriculum was a requirement for training students to develop their writing skills by formalistic, drill-for-skill exercises and short modes-of-discourse themes. Supposedly, this approach implanted in students good language habits. By 1940, nearly all college writing programs were following Harvard's current-traditional approach, a positivistic epistemology based on a teacher-centered pedagogy. (The course was built upon lectures, handbooks, and, later, the research paper.)

Berlin also traces other objective theories, showing how a similar epistemology underlies all of them: (1) The *behaviorist theory*, and its empirical focus which led to a distinction between product and process and valorization of the authentic voice (some will want to argue with Berlin's "authentic voice" lineage); (2) the *semanticist theory*, and its message that language does not discover medium but is a medium of communication; and (3) the *linguistic theory*, and its focus on the structure of language as the course