

discourse. After this substantial attention to invention as arrangement, Horner follows the *Ad Herennium* by keeping quite brief (about twenty pages) the section explicitly devoted to arrangement.

At times, Horner's attempts to propose correspondences between classical rhetoric and modern writing seem imprecise or forced. For instance, in a chapter in the section on invention, she presents description and narration as modern forms of "inartistic proof," after explaining that, for Aristotle, artistic proof comes from "outside sources." Thus, because description and narration record outside events, they are modern species of inartistic proof. It is probably more accurate to define Aristotle's inartistic proof as evidence unmediated by rhetorical strategy. It follows that description and narration are certainly not inartistic; as Horner says, description is "controlled by the writer's overall purpose," with details selected and arranged deliberately.

*Rhetoric in the Classical Tradition* is a very conservative book, both in its conception of classical rhetoric and its inattention to innovations in composition theory and pedagogy. Professor Horner gives substantial and long-standing advice on narrowed topics, thesis statements, topic sentences, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and logical fallacies in the chapters on invention; she adapts the seven-part Roman arrangement to the essay in the section on arrangement; and she gives definitions and examples of eleven tropes and six schemes in the section on style. Also, she summarizes library basics in the section on memory (proposing that libraries and databases are modern memory banks); and she illustrates standard formats for academic writing in the section on presentation.

In short, Horner's concentration on Roman technical rhetoric (setting aside less systematic and more philosophical classical rhetorics) corresponds with her focus on the technical elements of college writing—elements whose dominance continues to be questioned by those for whom discourse is an epistemic process rather than an assemblage of relatively fixed parts.

***The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field***, Stephen M. North (Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton, 1987, 403 pages).

Reviewed by Karen I. Spear, University of South Florida at St. Petersburg

Shortly after it was published, Stephen North's *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* came up in conversation with a candidate for a rhetoric and composition position at my university. The candidate, fresh out of graduate school, commented that the book would be a lot better if it didn't have such a strong thesis. I played it cool but wondered whether thesis writing had become passé and I had simply missed the revolution. Since then, the book

has been lambasted for its smart-aleck tone, applauded for its scope and ambition, and recommended for every graduate student in the field. *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* is not a book that readers feel neutral about. Since the work has already been widely reviewed, I'll do less summarizing in favor of more exploration of its impact on readers.

The purpose of North's text is twofold: to describe the modes of inquiry that characterize composition studies, and to account for their emergence since the literacy crisis that was declared in the early 1960s. To describe the nature of inquiry in composition, North identifies three major "methodological communities"—scholars, researchers, and practitioners—which he further divides into various subcultures, whose labels make their interests fairly self-evident. Historians, philosophers, and critics make up the community of scholars; experimentalists, clinicians, formalists, and ethnographers compose the research community. The third community, the practitioners, make up the field's "indigenous population," whose claims to knowledge, North argues, have been rejected and whose members have been relegated to the ghetto of the classroom as a consequence of compositionists' scramble to achieve professional respectability.

North describes the chief concerns and assumptions of each of these subcultures and then analyzes the success of each community according to the criteria he establishes for each. There are obvious pitfalls in this approach, rendering the book subject to the criticisms that beset any classification system, from literary genres to flora and fauna: why call a tomato a fruit when we use it as a vegetable? If *The Sound and the Fury* is a novel, why not *Dubliners*? Categories are always constructs that are treated as if they really exist. North places his own work among the critics, but from his travels through the various methodological communities he also identifies himself as a participant-observer whose visits into unfamiliar cultures yield up new understandings of his own experience. He writes, "Having conceived of these various communities as constituting the 'society' of Composition, and of each method—each mode of inquiry—as the subculture of one or another of them, I have tried here to make sense of what I have seen and done in my ten years of 'living among' the people of Composition: language and rituals, histories and mythologies, ontologies and epistemologies" (4).

Probably because he is aware of the inherent artificiality of his approach, North strengthens his hand by painstakingly delineating the "rules" for each form of inquiry. He identifies representative studies and analyzes the success and failings of each one—not, it seems to me, in a spirit of fault-finding, even though I'm sure many readers were relieved when their own work escaped North's scrutiny, but more to set a standard, perhaps unattainable, of what pure research in that particular mode should look like. North's overriding contention is that today's composition studies have turned up an impressive accumulation of knowledge that is nevertheless imperiled by a lack of coherence and methodological integrity. His discussion becomes turgid at

times because of its predictability: the background for the specific approach, the nature of its knowledge, an outline of the steps such inquiry follows, and a discussion of each step using selected studies.

However tiresome the discussion occasionally becomes, though, I admire North's careful speculation, even when I sometimes disagree with his analysis. It seems to me that the book invites that kind of participatory reading. Steve North is a presence throughout the book, from the conversational tone and occasional quirkiness of his writing to his personal search for meaning in the field. He departs from the safe, scholarly tradition of detached, dispassionate neutrality to invite readers into his conversation about the meaning and value of our field. The spirited responses that North has evoked seem to me to have all the good qualities of our best seminars. Further, by personalizing each community as flesh and blood investigators, the book takes on some of the characteristics of a soap opera—or a morality play. In a graduate seminar last winter, my class waited in suspense to see the virtues and vices of each of the characters exposed. My students were sure the ethnographers would turn out to be the good guys, since North saved them for last. But their emergence simply as the least flawed puts them closer to characters in *L.A. Law* than those in *Dallas*.

The second purpose of the book explains this dark vision. The book is as much about the politics of composition as it is about its epistemology. North characterizes the growth of contemporary composition as a land rush into virgin territory with the traditional displacement of those who were there first, in this case the classroom teachers: "The whole thrust of the academic reform movement was to remove authority over knowledge from the hands of those whose main source of such authority was their practice" (21). North argues that the new settlers succeeded in disenfranchising the native population by assigning them the status of technicians and their knowledge to the stature of lore, dependent largely on the folksy traditions of ritual and oral transmission for dissemination.

Beyond the book's careful study of the currently respectable means of generating knowledge, it is also a plea for the restoration of practice as a means of inquiry and lore as a viable source of knowledge. Practitioners, North argues, "have been responsible for Composition holding together as long as it has. . . . What is required here, however, as the basis for a transformed Composition, is a full recognition of and appreciation for lore: an understanding of what it is and how it works such that other kinds of knowledge can *usefully* interact with it" (371). North's prognostications strike a responsive chord with practitioners who—rightly, I think—understand the enduring importance of serious composition pedagogy to education. So many reviews of North's book have been written by those of us who are part of the landrush that I thought it would be useful to hear from the other camp. Here, a junior high English teacher sums up her reading of the book:

What has become achingly clear to me as a Practitioner is the force of the assault on the teaching profession that has come from both inside and outside of the classroom. “To the victors . . .” is an apt subtitle for Chapter 11, implying that the victory will go to the swiftest movers in the writing wars. However, reflecting on the quote in its broader historical context, I find it perhaps even more incisive than North imagined. For the Romans at Carthage, the “spoils” were the ruins of war: the ransacked city with its burned out buildings and savaged populace, the salted fields where no living thing would grow for generations to come, the bitter rewards of conquest. Is this the fate composition faces? Will we teachers of writing continue to allow ourselves to be brutalized by the conquering hoards? Will we permit our spirits to be poisoned until we are no longer productive? How much longer can we watch while what we have worked hard to build is torn out from under us?

Although a good deal of her anger is directed toward North’s portrayal of practitioners, this teacher also recognizes that North is really just the messenger. For readers in this community, the inter-tribal squabbles among the various researchers and scholars matter less than the future of a field that teachers see assaulted by shrinking public school budgets, overcrowded classrooms, and ill-conceived curricula. Although the book has many merits, its real contribution rests in its challenge to find ways for composition theory and practice to work together, because only by resolving the differences that keep the field fragmented will composition sustain itself in the face of the next educational crisis.

***Composition Research: Empirical Designs***, Janice M. Lauer and J. William Asher (New York: Oxford UP, 1988, 302 pages).

Reviewed by Carol Berkenkotter, Michigan Technological University

As members of a young and hybrid field, we need to be as epistemologically ecumenical as possible. This means being aware of our blind spots, especially if we don’t fully understand the “model of knowing” of our colleagues. In order to identify and begin to solve many of the pressing problems that confront learners from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds at all levels of our school system, it’s necessary to learn what we can from specialists in a variety of fields—and this includes colleagues in the social sciences, especially educational research. For this reason (among many others), I believe that Janice Lauer and J. William Asher’s *Composition Research: Empirical Designs* is long overdue.

The publication of *Composition Research* coincides with what seems to be a genuine effort among many composition scholars and researchers to

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