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Triangulating Power in the Writing Class

A THESIS

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By

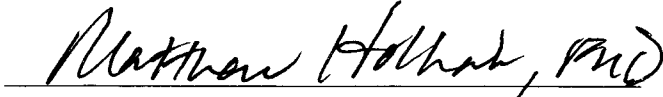**Ammon Spencer Gee**

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Abstract: Michel Foucault described the power relationship as having three elements, namely knowledge, the individual, and power, and discussed at length how they function. While many scholars have applied Foucault in a myriad of ways, little has been done to apply his ideas to composition studies. This thesis addresses the need to rethink the notion of power, using Foucault's terms, in the context of social-epistemic rhetorical theory and practice. The discussion operates with the understanding that theory is the means by which instructors are best able to connect classroom practices to course objectives and measure the success of those practices. Understood as a liberatory pedagogy, social-epistemic rhetoric shows concern for power, but focuses primarily on the individuals needed to generate knowledge. Foucault's understanding of power, which is not all negative, prompts the analysis of social-epistemic rhetoric, while providing the means to do so. With Foucault's concept of the triadic power relationship, I examine social-epistemic rhetorical theory and practice in the works of James Berlin, Ann Berthoff, and David Bartholomae. My main conclusion is that the exercise of power, by way of its relationship to the individual and knowledge, is an integral part of the proper functioning of the social-epistemic class. This means that social-epistemic rhetoric can account for the triad with some modification of the theory itself and that compositionists must change how they think of and discuss this theory. Both teacher and student have the responsibility at certain times to exercise power in order to achieve the goals of social-epistemic rhetoric. While grading and evaluation are part of any instructor's responsibility, I do not address these issues specifically, understanding them to be instances where the instructor necessarily exercises power.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Much discussion has taken place on the pages of journals and books since James

Berlin, known for his writing on the topic of social-epistemic rhetoric, made his attempt

to define this rhetoric some twenty years ago. Other compositionists have raised concerns,

regarding the role of the instructor in this kind of class, that center around questions of

power as they relate to the relationship between teacher and students. It seems that the

result of this concern was the development of a key feature of social-epistemic rhetoric:

that it de-centers or redistributes the instructor's authority in the classroom. This notion

no doubt stems, at least in part, from Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy that became

popular in the 1970's.

Freire questioned notions of power through his concern with questions of

knowledge and where it comes from. Rather than simply adhering to common teaching

practices that assumed the students to be passive receivers of knowledge, Freire

encouraged a method that asked students to draw upon their own knowledge sets to

participate in class discussions. Freire questioned the notion that the dominant knowledge

was either right or the only one worth knowing and favored a more generative approach

that recognized the importance of the individuals and the need for communication in the

classroom. What Freire did was suggest a relationship that involves individuals,

knowledge and power, though he does not address these three elements individually or

explicitly. Introducing questions of power and knowledge into the situation suggests a

triadic relationship between power, knowledge, and the individual.

Berlin and other compositionists writing about social-epistemic rhetoric

acknowledge power, knowledge, and the individual and even discuss them, though

usually just in pairs. For example, the main concern in social-epistemic rhetoric is the relationship between knowledge and the individuals who generate it, which is a binary relationship. However, in a classroom there is an instructor, who for a variety of reasons, represents power (and knowledge) and introduces that power as the third element in the relationship. To discuss only students in the activity of making knowledge tends to overlook the presence and influence of the teacher on the relationship between the students and knowledge they make. Furthermore, social-epistemic rhetoric tends to present itself as a liberatory pedagogy, one wherein power is de-centered.

In general, current discussions of social-epistemic rhetoric are troubled by a misunderstanding of what power is and how it functions. These discussions seem to operate under the assumption that, as Maxine Hairston put it, "the real political truth about classrooms is that the teacher has all the power; she sets the agenda, she controls the discussion, and she gives the grades. She also knows more and can argue more skillfully" ("Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing" 485). If power in the classroom rested solely on these things, then Hairston's claim might be true. However as with the question of de-centralizing power, this issue is more complex.

As I see it, social-epistemic rhetoric can and does succeed in de-centering power in a composition class, but the issue is not as simple as the scholarly discussion on the subject might lead us to believe. It brings with it some assumptions about power, knowledge, and the individual that are simply insufficient to account for the deep connections these three share. The purpose here is not to criticize directly the rhetoric itself or the individuals who write about it. The purpose is to revise our understanding of the theory in order to form a more complete view of it, recognizing how each part

functions in the relationship. While each of these elements has been written and spoken about at length individually this thesis will analyze social-epistemic rhetorical theory and practice in order to reformulate social-epistemic rhetoric in a way that addresses and accounts for power, the individual, and knowledge.

In Section I, I use Michel Foucault's terms and his descriptions of the relationship between power, the individual and knowledge, to provide a very clear understanding of these three elements (power, knowledge, and individual) and how they function in relation to one another. Foucault proposes that power is first and foremost not a thing and cannot be possessed. It does not remain stationary, but circulates on a complex web of human interaction, one that social-epistemic rhetoric also depends on. He indicates that power is exercised by and on individuals as well as explaining that it acts as both a mediating and generative force of knowledge. Foucault also points out that power is effective to the degree that it is able to mask itself and surveil the individuals over which power is exercised. In response, individuals resist power when it is exercised over them.

With these terms and descriptions, I propose in this section a triangular diagram that I believe accounts for triadic relationship between power, the individual, and knowledge as well as Foucault's explanations of surveillance, resistance, and discourse. This diagram of the power relationship represents both spatially and visually how the elements function in relation to one another. For example, power is at the top of the triangle in order to represent its function as a mediating force between knowledge and the individual.

While Foucault's discussion shows power to be an exercise of prohibition, a recently published translation of a lecture he gave in Brazil in the 1970's indicates that

Foucault thought that a clearly negative conception of power was insufficient. It is the idea that power is not something purely negative, or even a "necessary evil," that informs my discussion in the sections that follow.

Section II uses the power diagram to break social-epistemic rhetoric down into its constituent parts for much closer examination. As the power relationship involves knowledge, power, and the individual, it is here that I will show how, in general, social-epistemic rhetoric accounts for these three elements. While the relationship between the individual and knowledge may already be apparent, based solely on what the rhetoric is called, I will situate those elements in terms of the diagram and make explicit social-epistemic notions of power. In this way, I provide a more complete view of social-epistemic rhetorical theory than Berlin and others have described it.

Though using the diagram to deconstruct the theory long enough to see how it works, there is one minor adjustment to terminology that I will take up in Inter-Section A. The discrepancy lies in how social-epistemic knowledge gets discussed and what the term refers to in the social-epistemic view. I argue that a better way to describe knowledge is to place it as part of a cyclical process that begins with bits of information, progresses to the generation of meaning and solidifies into generally agreed-upon knowledge. I note that while this might seem to be the end of the process, the knowledge produced is still subject to debate and revision, which is in keeping with social-epistemic rhetoric.

In Section III, I again take up the discussion of social-epistemic rhetorical theory and move it into the concrete realm of the classroom. To do so, I draw upon the textbooks of two individuals identified by Berlin as having social-epistemic features: David Bartholomae and Ann Berthoff. Though both have published extensively in books and

journals intended for their peers, I instead consider and examine their composition textbooks. It is these publications that account for the typical classroom relationship by addressing and including students and teachers alike. Berthoff and Bartholomae both show concern about power, the individual students and the relationship of these two to knowledge. This concern is evident in the kinds of activities each author proposes as part of the course. What Berthoff and Bartholomae help illustrate is the instances where students and instructors exercise power as a way to facilitate the learning process. As Foucault suggested, power circulates, and in a composition classroom, it means that at times the instructor will be required to exercise it.

The instructor's responsibility for evaluation and grading is an example of where the instructor must exercise power. While this makes up a large part of the instructor's responsibility as the instructor, I do not take up the discussion of grading specifically. I believe that issues of grading and evaluation are implied as I discuss the instances where the instructor necessarily exercises power. These practices fall into the same category as writing the syllabus and assignment sheets, choosing readings, and prompting class discussion.

Berthoff and Bartholomae both show social-epistemic features, however, one aspect of both textbooks is the use of imitation as a pedagogical practice. Inter-Section B addresses concerns regarding the seeming disparity between the core tenets of social-epistemic rhetoric and the use of imitation as part of the teaching of writing. I argue that there are instances where the instructor must exercise power in order to encourage learning, and imitation is just such an instance. It does not rob students of the ability to exercise power nor does it steal away from them some fuzzy and ill-defined notion of

identity. Imitation is a practice with a long history, and while it has its own set of concerns, it is an effective method for teaching writing because rather than attempt to explain in purely theoretical terms how writing is and is not effective, imitation assumes the presence of concrete examples with features worthy of emulation that students can learn from.

In Section IV, I then reconstruct the separate features of social-epistemic rhetoric in a way that recognizes the importance of each element to the functioning of the whole. I draw upon Kenneth Burke's parlor metaphor as a way to conceptualize social-epistemic rhetoric in its triadic configuration. I use the metaphor because I do not intend to shut out any further discussion on this topic. As a device open to interpretation and discussion, the metaphor encourages further debate, thus mirroring the metaphor itself. In this section I argue that the metaphor adequately accounts for social-epistemic rhetoric understood in terms of the power diagram.

To more fully illustrate the utility of the parlor metaphor as it describes the view of social-epistemic rhetoric I have proposed, I describe one of my own classroom activities in social-epistemic terms and relate my experiences with it in Section V. While it is but one activity, the strategies employed to analyze it prove useful for other class activities as well. By scrutinizing classroom practices in terms of the theory that informs it, the instructor is thus in a position to determine both the effectiveness of the activity by itself, but also in the context of the practices that make up and entire course. Thereby, composition instructors using social-epistemic rhetoric have a means to exercise power in ways that benefit students and encourage their learning.

   I conclude with a few words from Ann Berthoff who believes it is by having a clear understanding of the theory that instructors can create the kinds of courses that make sense to students. The classroom activities build upon one another and strive to achieve the same goal. Without this kind of unifying theory, Berthoff explains, instructors are left with a recipe box of activities that have neither rhyme nor reason, are good for little more than filling up the class period, and provide no way for the instructor to judge their effectiveness or success in the classroom.

Section I: Foucault & The Diagram of the Power Relationship

Foucault insists that power not be spoken of or described as a thing. The word "power" is a noun and so by definition is a person, place, thing, or idea. While the limitations of language require that we speak of power as a thing, Foucault does his best to get away from that "thing-ness" in favor of a functional definition of the term. He describes what it does and how it works rather than simply providing a definition of what it is. The closest Foucault ever comes to giving such a definition is when he states that "power is essentially that which represses" (*Power/Knowledge* 89-90), which is still a description of function: power represses or controls. Important to the understanding of the function of power is to note what power represses, how power represses it, and where the repression takes place. Together, the answer to these questions opens up the scope of Foucault's notion of power into something as wide-ranging as it is complex.

It is important to note that though Foucault described power as something that represses or that "says "you must not"" ("The Meshes of Power" 154), he understood the purely negative view to be "a totally insufficient conception of power" ("The Meshes of Power" 154). He suggested that a technology of power would move the analysis away from the representation of power to "the real functioning of power" ("The Meshes of Power" 156). To that end, I will emphasize in this section Foucault's description of how power functions as it relates to knowledge and individuals.

According to Foucault, power resists being a thing. Take for example a common "thing" like a book. A book is still a book whether or not someone is reading or using it. Sitting on the shelf in the basement of a library or having the spine worn out from daily page-turning, the object itself is still a book. It can be stationary and forgotten and still be

a book. It can be read, highlighted, marked, and worn out and still be a book. A book does not rely upon its usage for its existence. Foucault argues that, unlike the book, power must be active to exist, that "it only exists in action" (*Power/Knowledge* 89). Power is not power unless it is used and used for something. One simply does not have power as one would own a book; it "is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised" (*Power/Knowledge* 89). Using the word "exercised" to describe power is important to how Foucault thinks about power. We can consider other ways the term is used in normal conversation. For example, we can say we exercise the body by engaging in physical activity. Exercise implies action. Exercising one's physical body only happens in the action of exercise. One must be doing something.

Returning to the example of the book for just a moment, a book can and often does have an owner, someone who possesses that title. I can say "I own this book" or "this book is mine" and by that I indicate to whomever might be listening that the book belongs to me and will remain in my possession until such time as it is sold, given away, or taken. While it is often said in everyday speech that someone has power, Foucault argues that power is not something to be owned, principally because ownership implies a lack of movement. A book in my possession stays in my possession. Power that is exercised, Foucault asserts, does not belong to any one person, rather it "is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manoevres, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it a network of relations constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess" (*Discipline & Punish* 26).

By thinking of power as something that is exercised in a "network of relations," Foucault begins to hint at what would appear to be the most significant aspect of power, the answer to the question of where repression takes place. Power is a social activity, requiring the presence of individuals for power to both exist and function. It must be exercised in a social sphere or else it cannot exist at all. Though power is exercised in this social setting, "one doesn't have here a power which is wholly in the hands of one person who can exercise it alone and totally over the others. It's a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised" (*Power/Knowledge* 156). The "network of relations" is here transformed into a machine, of which all are a part. Describing power as a machine implies more still about how it functions. A machine is a complex mechanism, a system that has both order and purpose, or as Foucault states it, "power means relations, a more-or-less organised, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations" (*Power/Knowledge* 198). Cluster, network, and machine are all words that describe both grouping and organization and when individuals are inserted into the equation, they adequately describe a social sphere.

Foucault goes on to assert that power has to be understood "as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization" (*History of Sexuality* 92). It implies two important aspects of power. First, as has already been mentioned, power has to have a social sphere in order to operate. Removing power from the social setting empties power of its meaning and makes its exercise impossible. Conversely, social settings imply power relations. Foucault argues that there is no relation between two or more people that is not in some way a relation of power. That relation comes by way of some sort of imbalance in the

relationship. For example, between a parent and child, the imbalance, or at least one of the factors that make these two individuals unequal, is that the parent has knowledge and experience the child has not yet gained. This inequality places the parent in a position to exercise power over the child. However, as already stated, power is not monolithic; it resists ownership. Thus, the parent does not *have* power but rather exercises power over the child. If Foucault is correct, the same is true for each and every social relation: power continues to resist ownership in favor of exercise.

The lack of ownership over power makes possible another characteristic of its functioning. Power is not only exercised, but it is something "which circulates . . . never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation" (*Power/Knowledge* 98). Here again the image of the net is reiterated. Interestingly, the circulation of power in a network is much like the circulation of information on a computer network, like for instance the internet, where individual terminals are locations where information is accessed, transmitted, or even transformed. Foucault comments further that "not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (*Power/Knowledge* 98). Foucault would seem to be contradicting himself here by first asserting that power itself circulates and then stating that individuals circulate between the threads of power, implying power is stationary as individuals circulate. However, if the comparison to the computer network holds, individuals can circulate between access

points while power circulates throughout a network that would appear to be stationary in the sense that it is always present, not that it never changes or improves.

If power circulates on the network and individuals are points of transmission in that network, then the network itself must be human relations that, while they are in a state of constant flux, are as ever-present as the power that circulates in them. Foucault says that "between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between every one who knows and every one who does not, there exist relations of power" (*Power/Knowledge* 187). Even if power were left out of this discussion, the fact would remain that relations exist between individuals in society with one another. In these human relations, power circulates and is exercised. Individuals also circulate, moving through and between relations with other individuals. Amidst all these relations, each individual in the network is both acting and being acted upon, both exercising and being subject to the exercise of power.

Up until this point, the of discussion power has been fairly isolated so as to attempt to define what it is. That definition has been largely theoretical. Only, that approach can only go so far before the definition of power needs to be joined by an examination of how power functions in the social context it relies upon for its existence. Understood by itself, power is a repressive force that circulates on a network and is resistant to being understood as a thing that can be possessed. It is a social activity requiring the presence of individuals for its exercise. In a social setting where it actually operates and functions, power has a relationship with individuals that is characterized by a mechanism of surveillance and an opposing force of resistance, and with knowledge,

characterized by a system of legitimation. Part of the exercise of power, then, is a careful mediation between the individual and knowledge.

Surveillance is the mechanism by which power measures its effectiveness. Those who exercise power must be able not only to see the individuals subject to power, but also the effects power has on those individuals. To accomplish the task, surveillance requires some measure of secrecy in order to be effective. Individuals exercising power must be able to see other individuals as well as the effects power has on them. They need "an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce the effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible" (*Discipline & Punish* 170-171). This act of watching is no less a social activity than the exercise of power itself. Of this Foucault says that "although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations" (*Discipline & Punish* 176). It seems obvious, but no less important, to say that one individual has to have another to watch for the act to be understood as surveillance, and thus surveillance is a social act.

Despite its presence and circulation in the social sphere, power is not overt. Rather, Foucault argues that "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. . . For it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse; it is indispensable to its operation" (*History of Sexuality* 86). In order for power to function more effectively, it must be able to cover up its functioning so as to present those over whom power is exercised an image of freedom from repression. In other words, if an individual or group of individuals believes they do something by their own choice rather than as a result of

the exercise of power, then power has successfully masked itself and thus is all the more influential.

The surveillance of individuals together with the efforts of power to cover itself up act much like the one-way mirror often seen in interrogation rooms in scores of prime time television shows. Individuals in the room see only their own reflection in the glass. Those on the other side of the mirror see and hear all that takes place in the room. Theirs is the position of power, of watching and listening, of surveillance. They see without being seen and hear without being heard and so are able to exercise power. That the mirror is there in the first place is itself a manifestation of the exercise of power, hiding those who exercise it. Though those who exercise power are masked, the mirror itself comes to represent that power. Those in the interrogation room know there is someone on the other side of the glass watching and listening. While someone in the room cannot see or hear what takes place on the other side of the glass, he or she nevertheless can be confident that power is being exercised in some way, even if unseen.

Though Foucault does not define it as such, resistance tends to be the force that opposes power. Foucault states that "this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who "do not have it"; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them" (*Discipline and Punish* 27), indicating that wherever power is exercised, it will be accompanied by resistance in some form, independent of whether or not that resistance is sufficient to overcome the power it opposes. Likewise, each point of exercise of power is also a point of resistance, and "just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through

apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual entities" (*History of Sexuality* 96), which implies that resistance has many of the same characteristics of power, though opposed to power itself. The oppositional relationship between power and resistance makes possible the assumption that as power increases its effectiveness, it does so by decreasing resistance. Similarly, when resistance increases, it does so by reducing the effectiveness of power.

The degree to which individuals are able to resist the exercise of power is dependent upon their ability to see power being exercised. To get around resistance, the exercise of power must attempt the secrecy of the one-way mirror to be unseen and unchallenged. Resistance attempts to look back through the glass to see where and how power is exercised by whom. Though Foucault maintains that where there is the exercise of power, there is resistance to it, he does not indicate that resistance is in any way proportionate to the exercise of power. While they exist together, they do not exist in equal measure. Resistance will not always be sufficient to overcome the exercise, influence, or effects of power. The inequality of resistance to power is part of the reason the exercise of power is effective in the first place.

The necessity of resistance makes more sense when the degree to which power attempts to control the individual is made clear. Foucault indicates that the exercise of power seeks to control the individual on the level of behavior and, more strikingly, on the level of identity. The exercise of power attempts to control what the individual does and who he or she is, producing the surrender or at least weakening of the notions of choice and self. Foucault says that this aspect of power "reaches into the very grain of

individuals, touches their bodies, and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning process and everyday lives" (*Power/Knowledge* 39), placing the control over everyday behaviors outside the grasp of the individual. More than that, though, power attempts to go further and effect change in the very identity of the individual. Foucault uses the example of punishment to illustrate this point: "If one imposes a penalty on somebody this is not in order to punish what he has done, but to transform what he is" (*Power/Knowledge* 47). The danger to the autonomy of the individual is clear. While Foucault does not explain the threat to the individual, it seems equally obvious why individuals perceive modification to their behavior and identities as dangerous: to make changes to either one would appear to be nothing less than stripping away the characteristics of the individual that allow him or her to make sense of and relate to his or her environment.

Despite the constant opposition and resistance to it, power attempts to control knowledge, the individual, and the individual's access to knowledge, mediating the relationship between the individual and knowledge, never quite allowing the individual direct access to knowledge. It is often said that knowledge is power. While these two aren't synonymous in Foucault's view, their relationship is nonetheless very close. The relationship of knowledge to power is much like that of resistance to power: where there is one, there also is the other. In Foucault's words, "It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, [and] it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (*Power/Knowledge* 52). Knowledge here can refer to at least two different ideas, the first of which understands knowledge to be something of an awareness of one's actions. This would mean that the exercise of power is a conscious social activity. One

must know he or she exercises power for the act to be an exercise of power. This further implies that the exercise of power is not accidental, but intentional. Foucault makes this clear by stating "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (*History of Sexuality* 95). In other words, when we exercise power, we do so knowingly, independent of whether or not we think or talk of the act as an exercise of power. Such exercise has purpose as well as desired outcomes.

The conception of knowledge that Foucault is more explicit about is knowledge as information that is accepted as truth. For example, knowledge in a particular field of study or discipline, such as medical science or biology, has associated with it a field of knowledge that is accepted as truth. Foucault says that "power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (*Discipline & Punish* 27). This is not to say that these truths are not questioned and tested repeatedly, rather each field has a corpus of knowledge that is generally accepted as true. That this corpus is questioned is evidence of Foucault's earlier assertion that where there is power, there is resistance. However, questioning the knowledge of a field is not resistance to that knowledge itself but rather to the power knowledge engenders. Knowledge as such is not a force to be resisted the way that power is. Rather, when knowledge is questioned, it is actually its legitimacy and the exercise of power that pronounces legitimacy that are under scrutiny. For example, when a scientist questions the Big Bang theory, he or she questions its designation as legitimized knowledge and the exercise of power that granted that designation. The scientist resists not the knowledge itself, but the exercise of power that mediates between him and the

knowledge in question. He seeks to look back through the one-way mirror to see the exercise of power, how it is exercised and who exercises it. The scientist's resistance to the exercise of power can result in a temporary rupture in the mediation between individuals and knowledge or his resistance will not be sufficient to overcome the exercise of power. In either case, it is the exercise of power he resists.

Power, then, has a hand in the creation or production of knowledge. As Foucault puts it, it is the "exercise of power itself [that] creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information" (*Power/Knowledge* 51) and does so through a process of legitimation. As part of the mediation between knowledge and the individual, power designates what is legitimate knowledge and what is not, dictating what is true and what is false, after which it controls who has access to that truth and what is allowed to be said about it. Foucault indicates that

> truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by multiple forms of
> constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its
> regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth; that is, the types of
> discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms
> and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements,
> the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures
> accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those charged with
> saying what counts as true. (*Power/Knowledge* 131)

Power's medium of transmission is discourse, through which it attempts all its social functions: control of the individual, control of knowledge, and mediation of the relationship between the two.

The notion of discourse is in some ways a manifestation of the exercise of power and its ability to shape and control knowledge and individuals. Discourse only includes knowledge that has been legitimized. Referring to sexuality, Foucault indicates that "as if in order to gain mastery over [sexuality] in reality, it had been first necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present" (*History of Sexuality* 17). The exercise of power that Foucault speaks of here is readily applicable to other instances as well. If we replace the reference to sexuality with a reference to a general notion of knowledge or truth, the way power is exercised remains the same. The effort to control knowledge happens at the level of language and is "not a plain and simple imposition of silence" (*History of Sexuality* 27) though silencing delegitimized voices or knowledges is very much a part of the endeavor.

On the other hand, power uses discourse as a means to control the individual as well, enclosing "them in a web of discourses which sometimes address them, sometimes speak about them, or impose canonical bits of knowledge on them, or use them as a basis for constructing a science that is beyond their grasp" (*History of Sexuality* 30). Power, then, uses discourse to construct the one-way mirror between itself and the individual as well as curtail the access to knowledge allowed the individual.

Discourse, as a medium, is not only available to power, but also to the individual and to knowledge, meaning there is a discourse of power, another of knowledge, and another of the individual. The discourse of power entails the mechanisms of legitimation and surveillance. The discourse of the individual is manifest in his or her resistance to power. The discourse of a field of knowledge is shaped by struggle between power and

the individual's resistance. As Foucault states, "it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the process and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up. That determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (*Discipline & Punish* 28). While power attempts to shape a discourse of knowledge for its own ends, the discourse of the individual resists power's efforts. The field of knowledge, then, is determined by this ongoing struggle. By virtue of its status as the medium available to power, knowledge, and the individual, discourse "transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power" (*History of Sexuality* 101). Power's control over discourse, like its hold on the individual and knowledge, is therefore tentative, shifting and moving around the complex web of human relations.

The exploration of Foucault's notion of power produces a few key elements: power, the individual, knowledge, and discourse. These four items, when diagrammed, resemble in some ways the rhetorical triangle shown in figure 1.
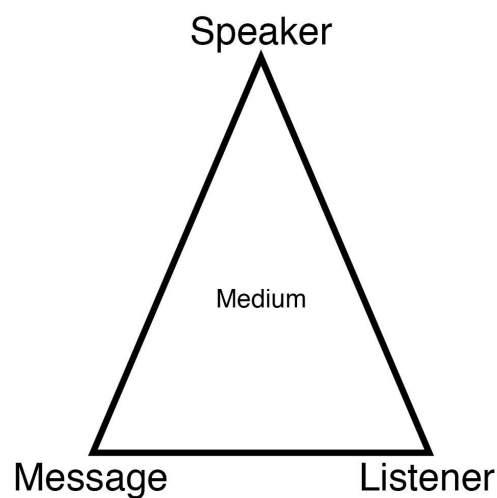
Figure 1

Replacing the terms in the rhetorical triangle with the key components of the power

relationship produces the diagram shown in figure 2. Power assumes the position of the

speaker, the individual takes the position of the listener, knowledge is in place of the

message and discourse replaces medium.

Power

Discourse

Knowledge   Individual
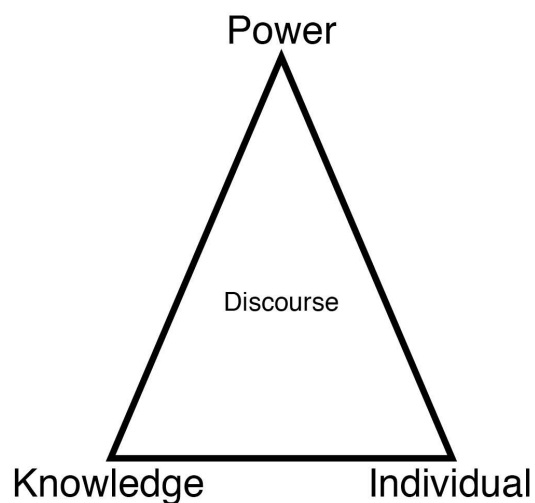
Figure 2

Presumably, this one-way flow of knowledge is precisely how power would like for this

relationship to be. However, it seems that plugging these terms into the rhetorical triangle

simply does not account for the complexities of the relationships that exist between

knowledge, power, and the individual.

I propose instead a visualization more like that shown in figure 3. As power

attempts to control both knowledge and the individual, as well as mediate between them,

it necessarily must occupy the place at the top of the triangle. This positioning accounts

for power's efforts to be a controlling force with the spatial metaphor implied by saying

power has control *over* the individual and knowledge. Also, by placing power at the top,

its role as mediator between knowledge and the individual is accounted for.

Power

Discourse

Knowledge   **Individual**
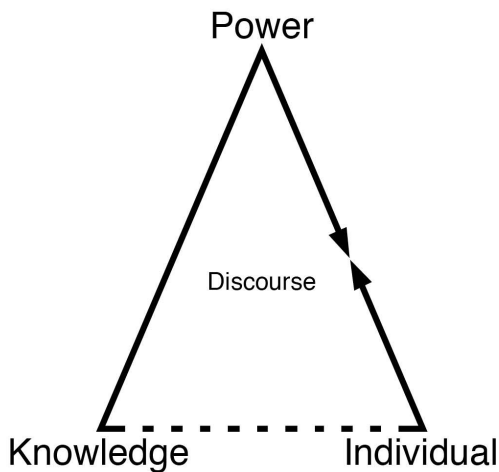
Figure 3

The line connecting power to knowledge is intentionally solid not to indicate an

unquestioned relationship between the two, but to emphasize the fact that knowledge is

not an agent unto itself. It does not act. It is affected in various ways, but does nothing of

its own volition. It is rather at the mercy of the struggle between the exercise of power

and the individual. The line connecting power to the individual is broken by the two

arrows placed in opposition to one another. Power's arrow represents the mechanisms

employed to control the individual. The individual's arrow represents the resistance that

characterizes every power relationship. The part of the triangle that connects knowledge

and the individual is dotted to signify the mediation that power attempts to make between

the two. At times, power limits or prohibits the individual's access to knowledge, while at

other times the individual is met with no such restriction. Discourse is situated inside the

triangle for the same reason that "medium" is inside the rhetorical triangle. It is the

surface on which the relationship plays out, where they all become visible.

The triangle, while managing to diagram a very complex relationship, is still somewhat restricted simply because it is a diagram. It is a flat and unchanging representation of something that is neither. The diagram itself is simple, while the relationship it attempts to represent is precisely the opposite. The arrows, as well as the dotted line, suggest movement and fluctuation rather than show it. Had this diagram involved movement, I might have made the arrows shift, one growing longer as the other shortens. The white spaces of the dotted line might have gotten shorter as the arrow from power got shorter and gotten larger as power's arrow lengthened. Nevertheless, the diagram is not meant to be monolithic. It is not intended to account for every possible variation. The strength of the diagram is in its flexibility. Its power lies in its suggestion, leaving open the possibility of further interpretation and deeper meanings and understandings of the relationship it attempts to represent.

The diagram also allows for another, more important characteristic. It is portable. It is not bound to one single field of knowledge, thereby making the transition from field to field fairly simple. Less a practice of translation of terminology, putting the diagram to use as a way to explain the relationships in a field of knowledge means determining how that field regards each point of the triangle, asking how the field understands knowledge, how it understands the individual in relation to knowledge and what role the exercise of power plays in that relationship. By allowing the diagram some accuracy or positing its accuracy in explaining the relationship, it also functions to critique the ways each field of knowledge understands the connections between knowledge, individuals, and power.

Section II: Social Epistemic Notions of Knowledge, Power & the Individual

For current methods of writing instruction, answering the question of how power, knowledge and the individual are understood is important as these are questions that arise in each pedagogical approach. While instructional practices in composition are as splintered as any other field, one of the most influential theories of the last twenty-five years is the social-epistemic approach, which has its own distinct notions of power, knowledge, and the individual. Of these, how knowledge is understood is important to understanding the other two. James Berlin has provided the best descriptions of what social-epistemic rhetoric is and how its proponents understand the three points of the triangle. Berlin, along with Kenneth Bruffee, Patricia Bizzell, Ann Berthoff, and David Bartholomae, almost always discuss only two points at a time. Either they discuss power and the student or knowledge and the student. It is here that Foucault becomes particularly valuable: putting all three elements into dialog with one another to understand how all three of them interact with one another. What Foucault reveals is the fact that power, knowledge, and the individual are deeply intertwined and to discuss one of these is to see it in its relationship to the other two, thereby forming a more complete view of social-epistemic rhetoric.

The social-epistemic view of knowledge is complex and requires the term itself to be unpacked before anything else. Likewise, how the word "knowledge" is defined is vital to understanding how it is conceptualized and, in turn, related to the individual and power. Berlin, like Foucault, puts the terms "knowledge" and "truth" together, making them virtually interchangeable. In *Rhetoric & Reality*, Berlin says that "knowledge is dialectical" (166) and in "Contemporary Composition" he states "truth is dynamic and

dialectical" (264) illustrating one instance of the conflation of these terms. Berlin uses "truth" and "knowledge" in place of one another mistakenly, I believe. For my purposes, "knowledge" is the term that best fits what I have in mind because what is actually true or not is not so much the issue as what is and can be known, which includes the notion that knowledge can and does evolve and grow. My avoidance of conflating the two words stems from the fact that any discussion of truth and what constitutes truth not only falls outside the focus of this project, but also slips quickly into a series of unanswerable questions that are simply not useful to the discussion. However, the conflation reveals something interesting about how knowledge is understood. If a corpus of knowledge is generally accepted as true, that corpus of knowledge is a collection of truths for those who accept it as such. The definition of knowledge in the social-epistemic view is not so easily defined. Rather than present something like a dictionary definition of the term, Berlin presents the characteristics of knowledge that offer insight into its conceptual framework.

Social-epistemic notions of knowledge are so completely intertwined with the perception of the individual that it proves difficult to discuss one without also discussing the other. Indeed, knowledge depends upon the presence of individuals for its being and support. To discuss the deep connection between knowledge and the individual is in some respects an exploration of the origins of knowledge itself. These origins are, just as knowledge, inextricably bound to the individual. Describing the characteristics of knowledge, then, requires the inclusion of the conditions necessary for its emergence.

The most important characteristic of knowledge for social-epistemic rhetoricians, and from which all its other characteristics emerge, is that "knowledge, after all is an

historically bound social fabrication" (Berlin "Rhetoric & Ideology" 731) that is a result of "a process involving the interaction of opposing elements" ("Contemporary Composition" 264). Berlin explains that these elements "are the very ones that make up the communication process: interlocutor, audience, reality, language" (*Rhetoric & Reality* 166) and are not opposing in the sense that they are opposite from one another. Rather, they oppose one another in the sense that they each represent a different position or view. As a social fabrication, knowledge and truth must have a social sphere with individuals in it in order to exist at all. Or, in other words, truth and knowledge exist in the minds of people who communicate with each other in social groups. Knowledge is embodied in and generated by the process of communication. Without the process of communication and the elements of that process present, there simply can be no knowledge. Berlin is careful to note that "the way [these elements] interact to constitute knowledge is not a matter of preexistent relationships waiting to be discovered. The way they interact with each other in forming knowledge emerges instead in acts of communication" (*Rhetoric & Reality* 166). Production of knowledge is then literally an act of production or fabrication. Knowledge is formulated, communicated, and either accepted or rejected; rejection prompts reformulation and further communication. The result of conceptualizing knowledge as a social fabrication is the emergence of the ideas that knowledge evolves and changes and that it is neither ready-made nor located some in unproblematic place.

If the notion of formulating and reformulating knowledge sounds cyclical, that is no accident. The concept of knowledge that Berlin works with is one that is malleable which makes the formulation and reformulation of knowledge possible even necessary. He states that "truth is dynamic and dialectical" ("Contemporary Composition" 257)

reinforcing the idea that knowledge needs people and communication to exist. Knowledge is therefore subject to change in the sense that individuals in communication with each other can make changes to knowledge as needed. Truth and knowledge are continually reevaluated, each time under slightly different conditions, their status as truths reassessed.

Placing knowledge and truth upon this network of conditions is rather like building them upon constantly shifting sand. As these conditions move and change, the knowledge dependent upon them must adapt to what is sometimes an entirely new set of conditions. For this reason, knowledge and truth cannot present themselves as preexistent to these conditions. Berlin notes that "knowledge is not simply a static entity available for retrieval" ("Contemporary Composition" 264). Knowledge is not simply "there" (wherever "there" is) to be plucked or even discovered. In the social-epistemic view, knowledge simply does not come prepackaged from somewhere outside the conditions necessary to formulate it and then immediately accepted. In thinking of knowledge as something that is fabricated, the possibility that knowledge could come from somewhere other than the interaction of opposing elements and the myriad of conditions that support them is ridiculous. To admit such a possibility would be to deny the basis of the social-epistemic position: knowledge is fabricated in the act of communication.

To illustrate, the image of a tree falling, viewed by an individual, can be described by that individual using the sentence, "The tree fell." By describing the event of the tree falling in this way, the individual implies that he or she believes the sentence to be an accurate description of the event and that the event, as described, actually happened. The statement, "the tree fell" implies the sentence, "I believe it is true that the tree fell."

Positing the presence of the last part of the communication triangle, the listener, having

seen the same image, can agree with the statement or initiate its reformulation with

further discussion. "The message," Berlin says, "arises out of the interaction of the writer,

language, reality, and the audience. Truths are operative only within a given universe of

discourse, and the universe is shaped by all of these elements, including audience"

("Contemporary Composition" 267). The listener and the speaker in the rhetorical

triangle switch positions, back and forth, several times during the process of the

formulation and reformulation of knowledge, an action that mirrors the movement

between a word and the object it refers to on the semiotic triangle that Berthoff borrowed

from Ogden and Richards (who borrowed it from C. S. Peirce). Rather than having an

idea that mediates this movement, the movement itself serves to revise and update the

idea held in the mind of each person participating in the communication.

With knowledge and truth situated upon such a rapidly shifting foundation, it

seems to go without saying that it cannot be localized in one or more places. Localization

suggests an absence of movement, and also the absence of a capacity for change.

Localized knowledge takes on the characteristics of an eternal and unchanging archive.

Knowledge is placed there and left unquestioned. However, to locate knowledge in this

way would be to assume that the dialectical process Berlin says produces and shapes

knowledge is pure fiction. All the communicative efforts of every individual in the world

will not be able to produce knowledge because communication is not where knowledge

originates. In order for knowledge to be socially constructed, it simply cannot be "an

eternal and invariable phenomenon located in some uncomplicated repository" ("Rhetoric

& Ideology" 731), suggesting also that knowledge cannot (or at least should not) be contained by anything other than the community responsible for its fabrication.

The social-epistemic view, based on its requirements for the emergence of knowledge, makes some assumptions about the individuals required for that knowledge. First, the individual is part of one or more communities; Second, as part of those communities the individual takes part in the active formation and revision of knowledge. Being part of a community does not assume that the individual must always be around other people. The individual does not necessarily need to be in the physical presence of other individuals all the time. Or, in other words, the individual does not cease to be a part of the community at the moment that she leaves the presence of that group. The borders of the group are far more elastic and permeable. Individuals come and go, passing in, out, and through various communities, each of which "is built around language peculiar to itself so that membership in the group is determined by the ability to use language according to the prescribed method" (Berlin 167). Rather than defining the group by physical location, which would oppose the social-epistemic view anyway, each group is defined instead by set of socially fabricated language patterns that embodies and generates the corpus of knowledge peculiar to that group. By extension then, "knowledge does not exist apart from language" (Berlin 166).

As users of language and communicators, individuals are participants in both the production and revision of knowledge, and are "regarded as active agents who shape the world in which they live, calling on language to structure new social arrangements" (Berlin 176). While the active participation might bring to mind a situation something like a town hall meeting where discussants get together for the sole purpose of examining

some piece of knowledge, the social-epistemic view might take a much more relaxed approach, regarding any engagement in the process of communication, casual or otherwise, to be participation in the production of knowledge. Communication need not have as its subject the review or production of knowledge, yet that is still the result because, as Berlin notes, "the contact of minds affects knowledge" (*Rhetoric & Reality* 165). As language is the medium, the means of transmission and production, it is the way through which the minds of individuals have contact. Thus, any contact of minds, any communication between two or more people, for communication requires at least that many, has some influence on knowledge by causing what appear to be subtle changes in the way the participating individuals think about the topic of discussion.

For example, two friends have a chance meeting on a city bus. During the ride, they discuss a recent film they have both seen. One of them liked the film, the other did not. As these two minds come together in communication with the film as their topic of discussion, each presents his own view of the film. Insofar as each is taking the other's point of view into consideration, both parties will have small changes made to how he understands the film. The possible outcomes of discussion are innumerable, though they might begin to agree on small characteristics of the film that they had not agreed on before. Their discussion on the film might continue another time, when they revisit the topic and continue to revise their now shared knowledge of the film. Other friends might participate in the discussion, coming and going, presenting their views and contributing to the knowledge that is generated.

Notions of power in the social-epistemic view tend to be somewhat slippery and more difficult to pin down because power in the social-epistemic view, in keeping with

Foucault's functional definition, is characterized by how it is used. The teaching of writing, Berlin says, "is to argue for a version of reality, and the best way of knowing and communicating it" ("Contemporary Composition" 256) and in so doing, instructors are "tacitly teaching a version of reality and the student's place and mode of operation in it" ("Contemporary Composition" 257) which makes the teaching of writing, even using a social-epistemic approach, an exercise of power. Students are taught a particular way of understanding the world, their place in it, and the best way to communicate. Thus, the teaching of writing is an exercise of power, attempting to get students to see the world as well as operate and communicate in it in prescribed ways. This exercise of power manifests in a couple of different ways. Problems of theory versus practice aside, at least two functions of power appear to be compatible with the social-epistemic view. On one side, the exercise of power is used to familiarize students with the language that characterizes a particular social community. On the other, power relationships are de-emphasized so that every individual has an equal voice in the production of knowledge. Ideally, each individual respects the voice of every other individual so that it can be truly said that everyone in a community is involved in the production of knowledge for that community.

Foucault's most basic definition of power, that which represses, applies here because to argue for a way of seeing the world is to repress the others that exist. No doubt the intentions of the instructor in a social-epistemic classroom are benevolent: the instructor wants students not only to learn, but to learn how to produce and revise knowledge in the context of social communities. Through the exercise of power, rather than impeding the access to knowledge, the instructor attempts to forge a stronger

connection between students and the knowledge they scrutinize and revise. This effort is characterized by either of two approaches.

In one approach, the instructor operates under the assumption that each social community is characterized by a unique language that an individual must learn before (or as part of) participating and communicating in that community. The instructor's exercise of power then entails some kind of instruction in "how things are done" in that community, which is not to say that each community's knowledge is monolithic, but that the means of communication, its language, happens in a particular way. Knowledge is then produced in a particular way as well. The relationship of power is characterized by the kind of inequality described by Foucault. The instructor teaching the social-epistemic version of reality is presumably a member of the social community labeled "social-epistemics" and teaches students, who are unfamiliar with this community, to participate and communicate in it.

In the other approach, the exercise of power relies instead on the notion of a utopia or at least a democracy, where each voice is allowed equal say in the production and revision of knowledge and notions of power are sidelined in favor of an open democracy. The conventions of social groups are not as important, nor are the notions of power itself, in part because they are social fabrications. The key, then, is the communication and participation. The instructor in a composition classroom is responsible for making an environment where this kind of utopia can exist but otherwise is much more "hands-off". In both cases, power is subject to the same network of conditions that underpins knowledge. Power is dependent upon these very same social,

cultural, material, and other factors for its existence. As those factors shift and change, power is revised and re-envisioned.

Compositionists Kenneth Bruffee and Patricia Bizzell, who also lean toward social-epistemic rhetoric, illustrate these two manifestations of power that fit into social-epistemic pedagogy and may represent different points on a much larger spectrum. At Bruffee's end, the tendency seems to be to allow the exercise of power to be masked. At Bizzell's end, power is not allowed the same luxury but pushed forward to where it is recognized. Neither of these, in keeping with social-epistemicism, attempts to repress and control students by limiting their access to knowledge, but rather strengthens the connection. It should be noted, however, that both Bizzell's and Bruffee's approaches to teaching writing are not strictly social-epistemic. They do not embody a full representation of the social-epistemic view, with its notions of knowledge, the individual, and power. Rather, they have epistemic features that are important to the larger pedagogical approach.

Bruffee and Bizzell discuss these manifestations in an attempt to make such power relationships relevant to social-epistemic rhetoric. By doing so, they use the self-diagnostic aspect that Berlin describes in this way: "Social epistemic rhetoric is an alternative that is self-consciously aware of its ideological stand, making the very question of ideology the center of classroom activities, and in so doing providing itself a defense against preemption and a strategy for self-criticism and self-correction" ("Rhetoric & Ideology" 718). Both Bruffee and Bizzell rethink the notion of power in a way that acknowledges power as a part of the classroom dynamic as well as fitting it into the theories of knowledge and the individual that serve as the underpinnings for social-

epistemic pedagogy. Bruffee and Bizzell "want to serve the common good with the power [they] possess by virtue of [their] position as teachers, and yet [they] are deeply suspicious of any exercise of power in the classroom" (Bizzell 54).

Bruffee, himself a proponent of what he describes as collaborative learning, understands power to be, in some ways, a necessary evil, especially when found solely in the hands of the instructor. His suspicion of the exercise of power in the classroom results in the de-emphasis of the instructor as the user of power. In his response to the December 1971 issue of *College English*, he recognizes one essay in the issue as representative of a true innovation in teaching: Sidney Black's essay "Utopia as Reality." Bruffee indicates that Black's method of teaching "provides students with a poly-centralized collaborative learning community which places faculty at the edge of the action, once they have set the scene, a position from which they may respond to needs which students discover for themselves" ("The Way Out" 466). The social-epistemic feature of this model should be obvious. Students in class are in community with one another, there to participate and collaborate in the learning experience. The instructor only sets the scene and then offers assistance when students need it. The exercise of power is to set up the environment where the collaboration will happen, where students will be acting agents in the production and revision of knowledge.

The marginalization of the instructor is in large part representative of the marginalization of power, which in some ways could be interpreted as an effective masking of the exercise of power. If Foucault is correct, the effectiveness of power grows to the extent that it is able to hide itself. However, Bruffee seems to want to mask power as a way to reduce its influence. In order for students to exercise power in the classroom,

the instructor must have his or her power reduced, masked so as not to exercise in such a heavy-handed way the power granted by the institution. Bruffee's motivations are no doubt benevolent: his purpose is to create an environment where students learn effectively. The exercises of power by the instructor in Bruffee's scenario are smaller and less recognized, but the argument could be made (and Foucault would probably agree) that they are more efficient because of it. The creation of this learning environment is effective because power wielded by the instructor is covered up. Though that power is not completely hidden from students, it is marginalized to the extent that students perceive it as less important than what they as students do in the classroom.

Bizzell, on the other hand, makes no such attempt to marginalize power, but is no less suspicious of it. Her response entails "a three-part anatomy of power" ("Power, Authority, and Critical Pedagogy" 56) which is as follows:

> One sort of power might be imagined as exercised by A over B, regardless of B's consent or best interests. . .A second sort of power might be imagined as exercised by A over B only with B's consent, which is given only if B is convinced that doing as A suggests will serve B's best interests. . .[and finally] authority is exercised by A over B instrumentally in the sense that sometimes B must do what A requires without seeing how B's best interests will be served thereby, but A can exercise such authority over B only if B initially grants it to A. (56-57)

Bizzell names these three parts of power *coercion*, *persuasion*, and *authority*, respectively. It is the last form of power that fits into social-epistemic pedagogy and which Bizzell finds most agreeable. As part of social-epistemic pedagogy, the instructor

is in a position to familiarize students with a particular version of reality once those students are convinced it is in their best interest to learn this particular version of reality with its relationships and best means of communication. It implies a sort of negotiation wherein the instructor is not the sole exerciser of power. Instead power, as Foucault suspected, circulates, passing back and forth from instructor to students and from student to student. Bizzell's approach to power recognizes the presence of resistance. She assumes that students will resist, necessitating the negotiation that will result in students understanding that what the instructor does in terms of exercising power is so that the students will actually learn something in the class. She also assumes, correctly I believe, that the exercise of power in this manner is a necessary part of the functioning of the class.

As Foucault insisted and as is evident in social-epistemic rhetoric, power is intimately bound up with notions of knowledge. The discussion of knowledge is equally a discussion of power. Understanding the social-epistemic view of knowledge means understanding where it comes from, how it is generated and shaped, and who does the generating and shaping, which in themselves are all questions of power. Who does the generating and shaping and how they go about doing it are instances where power is, because it must be, exercised. Knowledge, then, is generated by the exercise of power, or rather many individual exercises of power by individuals interacting in community with one another.

This interaction of individuals happens through discourse. It is the medium through which the exercise of power, resistance to power, and generation of knowledge are possible. While discourse is not itself language, it is the system that shapes language,

in terms of both usage and content, to fit the needs of the community in which it functions. It is the system of communication that directs what is communicated and how it is communicated. Discourse allows for the description of power, knowledge and the individual and an articulation of their relationship. While the power relationship depends upon the presence of individuals to function, it also relies upon discourse for the necessary interaction to take place. For without a means of communication and the rules to direct it, a discourse, the entire relationship crumbles, leaving individuals perhaps together but unable to understand one another.

The nature of discourse for social-epistemic rhetoric is not unlike that described by Foucault. It needs individuals in discourse communities in order to function. The generation of knowledge is impossible without some sort of communication, and by extension discourse. It is of course possible for individuals to forge a new discourse as part of the generation of knowledge. Discourse is built as individuals come to points of agreement regarding the way language is used and what is a legitimate part of the discourse and the corpus of knowledge associated with that burgeoning community.

Inter-Section A: Critiques and Connections

The deep concern that social-epistemic rhetoric has for both knowledge and power results in some interesting inconsistencies that do not necessarily present insurmountable obstacles. In fact, they promote further exploration of the relationship between power and knowledge, yielding what prove to be interesting outcomes and implications for social-epistemic rhetoric.

The first of these obstacles is a linguistic problem: The terms used to explain how knowledge comes into being are at odds with how the social-epistemic view explains this phenomenon. The words *make*, *fabricate*, *construct*, *produce* and *create* all get used to describe knowledge, though they are used to imply that the production of knowledge is carried out by individuals simply acting in community with one another. Nothing more is required than the interaction itself. It is as if knowledge, by way of this process of production, just materializes, like turning on a machine and producing an object by doing nothing more than letting the machine run. However, each one of the words used to describe this event carries an additional connotation: that the object produced is made out of something. When an object is produced, made, or fabricated in a factory, that object is made out of other materials. A facility that prints and binds books does not spontaneously create books out of nothing. Rather, the plant receives shipments of all the materials necessary to produce books such as paper, ink, the cover designs, and manuscript. From those materials books are printed and bound. The words used to describe the emergence of knowledge all rely on the same notion of the preexistence of constituent materials. There simply is no word in English that is free from this connotation because we have no way to conceptualize the spontaneous, something-out-of-nothing, emergence of an object

whose tangibility is largely irrelevant. Without such a concept we are left to what we do have: a concept of something being made out of something else. In the case of knowledge, socially constructed or fabricated knowledge is constructed or fabricated out of something else. What goes into the production of knowledge comes from somewhere.

The second inconsistency is pedagogical. As in the case of Bruffee and Bizzell, who display only *features* of social-epistemic rhetoric, it is impossible to have anything more than pieces of the approach that would warrant the social-epistemic label. Strict adherence to all the tenets of social-epistemic rhetoric, particularly the notions of power and knowledge, produces paradox. If strict adherence means the exclusion of other rhetorics, that would mean that social-epistemic rhetoric exists apart from all other rhetorics, yet an important aspect in the social-epistemic view of knowledge is to put opposing elements together and see what emerges. In other words, an instructor cannot say "I only use social-epistemic rhetoric and no others in my classroom" and not be caught in a paradox. Social-epistemic rhetoric, by definition, flourishes in the presence of opposing views or other rhetorics. As a result, the corpus of knowledge associated with social-epistemic rhetoric shifts and changes with the influence of other pedagogical approaches. Thus, completely embracing a social-epistemic approach denies the essence of the approach itself.

Such is the importance of the opposing views of Bruffee and Bizzell, who have social-epistemic features, yet bear similarities to other rhetorics as well. In their case, the view of power presented by each is in keeping with the idea of the social-epistemic approach. However, they have interpreted power in very different ways. Bruffee draws on the notion of the importance of the participation of each individual in the community.

He is suspicious of the power relationship because of what he sees as a tendency for the instructor to transmit ready-formed knowledge to the students who then store it. In an effort to get away from that tendency, Bruffee puts the instructor to the side of the main action in the classroom, which is the communication among students that results in the production of knowledge. On the other hand, Bizzell relies instead on the notion that a social-epistemic classroom would be aware of power relationships and interrogate them as part of classroom activity to revise and re-envision them, necessarily the same treatment given to knowledge itself because the two are supported by the very same network of conditions. Students and instructor enter into a dialogue where a sort of negotiation takes place without dismissing the importance of the knowledge that the students and the instructor bring into the discussion.

Berlin notes that knowledge is made from the opposing elements of the rhetorical triangle, but this does little to account for what those elements, namely the individuals involved in the communication, bring with them into the triangle. By itself, the statement would tend to assume first that anything generated by putting these elements together is knowledge. The problem with this assumption is that something generated in the social group, whether it is correct or not, would be granted the status of knowledge, which carries with it a particular truth value. For example, a group of students could come to the conclusion that it is acceptable to act upon the notion that learning the correct use of a comma or apostrophe is not important. We can go no further in the example without asking who decides if this conclusion is right or wrong. The answer is this: the students involved in the group have decided the conclusion is right. That they have done so makes the second assumption of Berlin's statement particularly problematic, that the

elements come into the triangle as essentially clean slates so that what gets produced in the classroom is free from all outside influence. However, students and teachers alike both come into the classroom with knowledge that will inevitably influence all aspects of the process of generating knowledge. Yet, knowledge is not the only thing students and instructors bring with them. They also bring a capability of exercising power that plays a large part in making knowledge.

When Foucault thought of the exercise of power, he had in mind everything from the large, very visible exercises of power, such as that of a sovereign over his people, to the very small and subtle exercises of power. More often, though, it was the instances where power was exercised in small ways that Foucault was concerned with because part of the effectiveness of power is its subtlety. In the social-epistemic classroom, there are likewise large and small exercises of power, yet it is the small ones that prove to be more important to this pedagogical approach. Small exercises of power manifest in ways such as one student politely disagreeing with another student, or perhaps asking a question about another student's comments. The simple prompting of discussion with a sentence or two or a question can be an instance where power is exercised by either student or instructor in a small way. Initiating the reformulation of knowledge is itself an exercise of power and need not come from the instructor only. The social-epistemic approach would prefer that it not come from the instructor much at all. Instead, students initiate and carry on the formation and reformulation of knowledge themselves, which is how Bruffee is thinking of power. Yet, at some point, the instructor must intervene, such as to ask another question to revitalize a lulled discussion or to suggest something students had not yet discussed, but that is relevant to the topic, which is how Bizzell thinks of the exercise

of power. Both operate in the bounds that Foucault hypothesized: that power circulates. In the classroom, it goes from teacher to student and student to student, as all have the capability to exercise power. Perhaps not equally, but the capacity for it is nonetheless present.

Recognizing that students and instructor both bring with them certain knowledge sets and the capacity for the exercise of power into the classroom begins to reconcile the problem of the emergence of knowledge and the words used to describe it as well as the pedagogical inconsistency. Making this realization means that the knowledge fabricated in the classroom draws upon the influence of other knowledges, of both student and instructor, constructed before entering the classroom. To think that knowledge constructed in the classroom is free of outside influence (social-epistemicism seems particularly concerned with that of the institution as exercised by the instructor) is just as problematic as the instructor who insists upon the strict adherence to social-epistemic rhetoric to the exclusion of all other rhetorics. It simply cannot be done. As the words indicate, knowledge in a community is made out of something.

What I believe constitutes knowledge is both what individuals bring into the social situation and what is initially produced in that situation. Individuals in the social-epistemic setting first generate meaning. The making of meaning involves taking those bits of information and placing them into a particular order, a process that takes place in the use of language. In turn, these meanings, influenced by meanings constructed in other social groups, are tested against one another to arrive at knowledge. The act of testing meanings to arrive at knowledge is itself a system of legitimation that necessarily requires meaning, the elements of the rhetorical triangle, and power exercised in small

ways during the process. Knowledge is made up of both the meaning and the audit of meaning to the point that the social group that has produced this meaning arrives at some sort of consensus, which is not to say that the arrival at knowledge is any indicator that it is thenceforth untouchable. Meaning also has its constituent parts. Prior to the meaning generated or brought to any given social group, there are building blocks of meaning, things that when collected and interpreted produce meaning. These are, as Ann Berthoff says, "images, half-truths, remembrances, syntactic fragments. . .the mysterious and unformed" (70). It is a literal blur of little bits of information that Berthoff aptly calls chaos.

As the building blocks of meaning, these little bits of information have a deep and abiding relationship with language and the individuals who use it. Language, as a complex system of ordering, allows its users to pull bits of information out of Berthoff's chaos, put them into an order, interpret them, assign them a truth value, express them, and eventually audit that expression through social and communicative interaction. It is a system that makes possible both the expression of meaning and the interaction necessary for the production of knowledge. The act of putting those pieces of information into an order is equally a process of inclusion and exclusion. In using a word to represent an object, we indicate that the object is the name we give it and that it is not a name we haven't given it. For example, to refer to a book as "book," we indicate to the community that the book is not a mirror, a car, or a microscope, neither does it fit into the same category as these other names. The concept of "book" is made up of all the bits of information that in the act of using language, individuals collect and put into order. Positing a unique language to each community, there must also be associated with each

group a common process of collecting, ordering, and interpreting the information that

constitute the knowledge that results, a process that like knowledge itself, is under

constant scrutiny and revision.

Whether or not each bit of information pulled out of the blur of images to make

knowledge has a truth value is largely irrelevant because language assigns a truth value to

a grouping of information rather than each individual bit (assuming each one can be

discerned apart from the others it is grouped with). For example, if I described an image

of a fallen tree using the sentence "the tree fell," in normal, everyday communication, I

would be communicating the same thing as if I had said, "it is true that the tree fell." Both

sentences are made up of a set of ordered bits of information and have been designated as

true through expressing in language the image of the tree falling. The notion of "tree" is a

collection of concepts that are ordered an expressed in that word. The same is true for the

word "falling" as it relies on notions of gravity, and spatial orientation (up versus down).

The constituent concepts, when put into language, are ordered and interpreted bits of

information as well.

Perceiving knowledge to have this basis does not depart from the essential tenets

of social-epistemic rhetoric. Since knowledge is decided by the community, the fact that

the individual bits of information lack a truth value becomes extremely important because

it is only when they are collected into language that they have a truth designation, one

that is dependent upon many different factors and that is assigned by the individuals

using language. The truth value of knowledge made up of these meanings (and in turn,

bits of information) is never established as eternally unchanging, but rather subject to a

constant and continuing revision and reformulation process, which can only be carried out by two or more individuals in communication with one another.

The hard, fast belief in something-from-nothing social fabrication tends to deny the possibility of Berthoff's chaos, from which I have argued come the pieces of information used to make meaning and then knowledge. At the risk of sounding reductive and dismissive, I believe the result of such a rejection leads the discussion quickly down the slippery slope to questions over whether or not we can really know anything at all, even in community with each other. It is a short leap to questions of identity, such as if it is possible to form one's own identity oneself or if that is a social fabrication as well, which questions do not serve the purposes of composition, even when the classroom is guided by the social-epistemic approach. Positing the existence of these bits of information and the process from chaos to meaning to knowledge makes the words used to describe how communities arrive at legitimized knowledge consistent with the process itself and accounts for what individuals bring with them into the community.

Section III: Berthoff, Bartholomae, and the Application of Theory

As with the discussion of Foucault's notion of power, the theoretical examination of social-epistemic rhetoric only goes so far before it is necessary to situate it in the composition classroom. Here we are able to see how a social-epistemic rhetoric functions. In some respects, the classroom is the crucible for pedagogical approaches, exposing features of the approach that might otherwise remain unknown. Gilles Deleuze indicated in a conversation with Foucault that "practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory is a relay from one practice to another" ("Intellectuals and Power" 206) indicating a sort of feedback loop that tests a theory in a practical and actual setting. Placing social-epistemic rhetoric in the classroom focuses the discussion on the relationships located in it (specifically those of power, the individual, and knowledge) and emphasizes what happens in a classroom that uses features of social-epistemic rhetoric.

Ann Berthoff and David Bartholomae, situated on the same spectrum as Bizzell and Bruffee, are linked by their social-epistemic features even though their concern for the power relationship manifests in decidedly different ways. Berthoff tends to marginalize the instructor, attempting to shift the important exercises of power into the hands of the students. Bartholomae instead operates under the assumption that the instructor is the means by which students learn the discourse of a community to which they are new. Both Berthoff's and Bartholomae's approaches to power are important to consider, especially if they are thought of as opposing elements from which meaning can be generated. In keeping with the social-epistemic understanding of knowledge in the

community, placing Berthoff beside Bartholomae allows to emerge something new that is useful for both the discussion and application of social-epistemic rhetorical theory.

I have made the choice to use Berthoff's and Bartholomae's textbooks more than their other writings because these are the texts intended for students to read in the composition classroom. This is not to deny the importance of either's other published works or the explanations of their approaches that are contained therein. The inclusion of the students is important to this discussion as they make up a part of the power relationship already described. Rather than focus on writings directed to peers, such as Berthoff's *The Making of Meaning* or Bartholomae's *Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts*, it is the writing directed to students that best represents and accounts for the relationship in an actual classroom. To that end, I will use Berthoff's book *Forming, Thinking, Writing* and Bartholomae and Petrosky's book *Ways of Reading*. Both textbooks are particularly revealing in that they show rather than tell how both teachers and students can navigate the power relationship in a way that makes for what each author views as an effective learning environment, one that engages students in the project of social-epistemic rhetoric: fabricating meaning, and knowledge ultimately, through the participation in a discourse.

I will point out that these two textbooks are different in the sense that one is a rhetoric and the other is a reader. While this may prompt possible objections to this project, for my purposes, this difference is not enough to render moot the discussion that follows. Though the textbooks differ in kind, they both attempt to teach composition students to write. They simply approach this task in different ways. It is this difference that becomes extremely important to understanding how each book deals with the power relationship explored in the preceding sections. It is also the difference that is necessary

to perform the function of meaning making. Each textbook embodies and represents a particular pedagogical approach to writing instruction, revealing but two of many ways compositionists think of and deal with the classroom power relationship.

In *Forming, Thinking, Writing*, Berthoff has a particular understanding of the three points of the power diagram that is reflected in how the text addresses the students. Of those three key elements, it is the individual, the student, who is most important to this text. As a result, Berthoff first and foremost attempts to de-emphasize the instructor's usual place of privilege and power by instead empowering the student. Her aim is not to deny the instructor has any power at all anymore, but to shift the focus away from the instructor, or for that matter from anyone else who might attempt to tell the student what to learn. Her emphasis is on each individual student.

She accomplishes this by instilling in the students a sense of confidence she seems to believe they do not have upon entering the writing classroom. "Whatever you really learn," Berthoff says, "you teach yourself. If you learn only what you're told, then you're only keeping in mind, for a longer or shorter interval, what was put there by somebody else" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 2), implying that the "somebody else" is the instructor in the classroom setting. By emphasizing each student's part in the learning process, Berthoff shifts the responsibility to exercise power to the student, and hints at small-scale, individual meaning making that is part of the larger context of social-epistemic rhetoric evident in *Ways of Reading*. Interestingly, Berthoff implies something else by wording this sentence as she did. She says "if you learn *only* what you're told" (emphasis added), which could mean that a student learning what he or she is told is part of the educational process. Whether Berthoff meant this or not is nevertheless secondary

to a student's process of discovery: that "what you learn is what you discover—and you learn to discover by questioning" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 2).

The focus on the individual student addresses the link between the individual and power, a relationship characterized by surveillance and resistance. The relationship of surveillance and resistance is marginalized, though the presence of the instructor in the room still suggests surveillance, however subtle. Berthoff gets around resistance by emphasizing what students already know and what they can learn themselves. Referring to the writing exercises in the book as "Assisted Invitations" is part of getting around resistance. Of these exercises, Berthoff explains, "all exercises and suggestions for composing practice are accompanied by explanations and analyses: you're *invited* to form and think and write; you're offered *assistance*" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 2). Berthoff here attempts to, as Berlin states, convince students of a particular reality, one in which the power relationship of teacher over student is set aside in favor of the student exercising power with little intervention on the part of the instructor.

Berthoff's assisted invitations do not, however, negate the presence of the instructor or the power normally associated with that position. It is not as if Berthoff believes that the instructor is permanently removed and the students are left to their own devices. The assisted invitation is an instance where power is exercised while masked to cover up its own workings. To be specific, the first assisted invitation in *Forming, Thinking, Writing* requires students to first read a passage from "Kimon Nikolaides' The Natural Way to Draw, which has been called the best "how-to" book ever written about anything" (7). Making the assignment in the first place is an exercise of power on the part of the instructor. Anticipating student resistance to the idea of drawing as part of a

writing class, Berthoff points out that "the key terms in this paragraph on drawing are also the key terms in the writing course" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 9), which indicates to students the usefulness of the activity. Here Berthoff asserts her status as someone who knows something about writing that could be worthwhile to students in the process of learning how to write. She follows the invitation with examples from past students who have responded to the same assignment. It is as if Berthoff says to her students, "try this out. It has worked for other students, and it may work well to teach you something about writing too."

For Berthoff, the act of writing or composing is the location of control and exercise of power for each student. It is cast as a very solitary activity, one in which the student plays the part of both author and audience. She indicates that

> In all its phases, composing is conversation you're having with yourself – or selves, since, when you're writing, you consciously play the roles of speaker, audience, and critic all at once. You do the talking; then you do the answering; and you listen in to the dialogue between the speaker and the respondent. When you're making meaning in sentences, gathering sentences to compose paragraphs and paragraphs to construct arguments, you're doing the same kind of thing you do when you carry on a conversation. (23)

The use of the second person in Berthoff's book is intentional and it reveals something of how each student is to think of himself or herself. Berthoff does not attempt to address a classroom full of students, or if she does, it is as individuals. Her text addresses each student individually and directly because she sees the writing process as something

students must work through themselves. That means questioning and discovering their own process without the instructor supplying something like a formula for successful writing. This strategy reiterates the shift in focus away from the instructor. A perhaps unintentional effect is the isolation of the individual student from other individual students. Yet it would appear to accomplish what it is that Berthoff has in mind: each and every student has something important and meaningful to say, a fact that may not be obvious to the student.

That Berthoff does not situate students in the context of the classroom could be part of her encouragement of individual discovery through questioning, which appears to require the absence of outside influence, whether from the instructor or other students. In this respect, Berthoff seems to leave out the "social" part of social-epistemic rhetoric. Yet she assumes the presence of others by acknowledging each student's individual background populated with other individuals who have all influenced the student in some way. In a sense, then, she has de-emphasized this aspect in much the same way she did with the instructor's exercise of power. Instead, she insists that students need to learn to negotiate this context the same way they learn everything else: teach themselves.

The act of discovery and questioning puts the exercise of power into the hands of the student because it is, in Foucault's terms, an exercise of power. Berthoff advocates the idea that the power exercised by the student is both meaningful and important. The student discovers by questioning, in turn generating the meanings that coalesce into knowledge. What Berthoff attempts to do is convince students of this reality: what they, the students, do when they exercise power is an important and necessary part of the writing process. The alternative would be something akin to Freire's banking method,

where the instructor's "task is to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 71) and students simply remember what someone else, presumably the instructor, told them. The process of discovery is lost. In Berthoff's classroom, students exercising power to question and discover is vital to the aims and goals of the course itself.

As Berthoff encourages this kind of exercise of power through the writing process, she reminds students that her textbook will "never insist that you put together a definition, a system of classes, a narrative or an argument, according to any formula other than your own. It will ask you to develop your own formulas, but of course, you have been defining, classifying, narrating, arguing for, and with, yourself for years now" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 21). In keeping with the idea that students teach themselves, Berthoff adds that the things they will do in the writing classroom is nothing different than the things that they already know how to do and perhaps the only change will be to commit these things to paper, in writing.

As part of giving students power over their writing process, Berthoff reduces it to a series of choices that need to be made by the student. She explains this set of decisions this way: "In learning to write, you're learning to exercise choice by recognizing and using limits [. . .], but limits are not laid down in heaven: they are subject to change according to the composer's needs. Limits are recognized, but they are also modified and adapted, discarded and reestablished" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 129). The student learns to see where writing strategies work and do not work by finding limits. In Berthoff's mind, the only way for students to first find those limits and rules is to figure them out on their own by making choices regarding what they write. However, as

Berthoff states, those limits the students find are not immutable. They shift and change according to what the composer needs, though what exactly the composer needs is somewhat vague. What Berthoff refers to is the information and understanding the student needs in order to exercise power over his or her own writing process. Making decisions is an instance where students are able to exercise power and its exercise is dependent upon many different and shifting conditions as proposed by Foucault. Students in Berthoff's classroom learn to "read" those conditions and make decisions that influence what they write. She says, "That process – which is essential to the forming of concepts – is carried on by means of stating and restating" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 129) indicating the necessity revisiting and revising concepts. This task is presumably carried out by each student individually since Berthoff makes no mention of this process of revision taking place in a classroom setting, which leaves the student to rely on the act of looking again at objects in order to see them in new ways. It is important to note that Berthoff does not refer to knowledge when discussing the formation of concepts. She tends to distance herself from the question of knowledge and instead embraces the idea of the formation of concepts and generation of meaning.

Where Berthoff's approach might fit on in relation to other social-epistemics in terms of what to do with the power relationship, hers is more closely related to Bruffee's in that they both share a strong desire to de-emphasize the instructor's role. Obviously, her approach, at least as evidenced by her textbook, does not emphasize the collaborative aspect between students. Berthoff is more closely focused on the individual student rather than a classroom of students in collaboration or even individual student collaborating one-on-one with the instructor. Her approach to the power relationship, like Bruffee's,

recognizes that both teacher and student *can* exercise power, but that it is the instances where the student does so that are more important. Wherever there is an opportunity for the student to exercise power the instructor steps aside to so that it happens. This is not to say that a classroom more akin to the one Bruffee describes could not happen in a course using Berthoff's textbook. Rather, by itself, *Forming, Thinking, Writing* addresses students in a particular way, as individuals, without attempting to address more than one student at a time. This places emphasis on those students instead of the instructor.

In Foucauldian terms, this de-emphasis of power is an instance where power attempts to mask itself. If Foucault is correct, then Berthoff's model is effective as long as students see very little of teacherly power being exercised. As power's visibility diminishes in the students' eyes, its effectiveness grows. Students will know the instructor chose the book, wrote the syllabus, and will make assignments, but if those obvious instances of the exercise of power are less important, thereby allowing the instructor complete control over students through those avenues. If students do not see the exercise of power as such, they will be less likely to respond to it with resistance. While in these terms, Berthoff's approach might sound like a one-person quest to dominate a classroom full of students, her intentions are different. Berthoff appears to recognize that, as Foucault indicated, exercises of power are met with resistance. In order to avoid time spent squabbling with students over what power and control the instructor exercises in the classroom, Berthoff's approach masks power so as to streamline the learning process. Less time spent debating the instructor's exercises of power means more time for students to be engaged in learning the writing process.

In this respect Berthoff's *Forming, Thinking, Writing* is most unlike Bartholomae and Petrosky's book *Ways of Reading*, which takes a completely different approach to the power relationship. Rather than attempt to mask power by de-emphasizing power, Bartholomae and Petrosky encourage students to think of themselves as part of a larger community, one where they are empowered to speak and be spoken to, but also that the instructor enjoys this same empowerment. The idea of empowering students is common to both *Forming, Thinking, Writing* and *Ways of Reading*. The means of accomplishing that are very different in these two examples, which is a result of how each text attempts to negotiate the power relationship.

Ways of Reading tends to understand the power relationship the way Foucault did: as something not to be de-centered because it was not ever localized in the first place. As a result it makes no attempt at actively trying to marginalize any of the people in the power relationship, teacher or students. Where *Forming, Thinking, Writing* attempted to downplay the presence of the instructor in the classroom, the fact remains that the current educational model requires an instructor to be present. Bartholomae and Petrosky do not shy away from that idea and in fact, the instructor becomes an important part of the classroom relationship. In effect, they do not allow the instructor's power to be hidden, while at the same time, that power is not any more important than that exercised by students. Their first priority, then, is to empower students by situating them in a context: a community of scholars. They say to students, "we'd like you to imagine that when you read the works we've collected here, somebody is saying something to you, and we'd like you to imagine that you are in a position to speak back, to say something of your own in

turn" (*Ways of Reading* 1). Students are to think of themselves as peers of those whose writings they will read in the book.

Bartholomae and Petrosky have made an interesting rhetorical choice in how they address students, one that reveals something of how they position themselves in relation to the students and the writings they have collected in the text. The use of "we" makes the authors acting agents, taking responsibility for an instance where they have exercised power: choosing and collecting the writings for the textbook. They use the phrase "we've collected here" instead of the phrase "collected in this book" and the subtle difference between these two phrases is indicative of how Bartholomae and Petrosky are thinking of power. As the authors/editors of the book, they have exercised power and made a choice regarding which writings to include and which to leave out. Such a decision is necessary for putting together a book like *Ways of Reading* for use in the classroom. This decision is but one of many that the instructor must make for the writing classroom to function as such.

Taking responsibility for these decisions in this way indicate that Bartholomae and Petrosky think of power as something that in some cases, such as the selections included in the book, must be exercised by the instructor, and in other cases by the student, for example when students respond to those selections, saying something of their own. When the responsibility for the exercise of power falls to the student, Bartholomae and Petrosky, like Berthoff, seem to leave students to teach themselves. Students are to "take command of complex material like the selections in this book, [however] you need not subordinate yourself to experts; you can assume the authority to provide such a reading on your own" (*Ways of Reading* 10). However, already Bartholomae and

Petrosky have revealed themselves to be much less "hands-off" than Berthoff. While some exercises of power fall under the purview of the students, the instructors nevertheless are attempting to teach students to communicate and participate in a community they may not be familiar with. In keeping with the idea that different communities of individuals have their own "language" *Ways of Reading* operates under the assumption that the academic community has its own way of communicating that students are to be exposed to and learn.

To expose students to the language of the academy, Bartholomae and Petrosky collect examples of what they understand to be academic writing into *Ways of Reading* and present those writings to students as examples of what academic writing looks like. Having students read examples of this style of writing and respond to them puts students into a position to participate in the academic community because as Bartholomae and Petrosky assert, "sharing your thoughts with others is one way to do the work of the academy. Writers and scholars rely on their friends and colleagues to help them get an angle, think about where to begin, understand what is new and interesting and what is old and dull" (*Ways of Reading* 21-22). Thus, reading and responding to the kind of academic writing in *Ways of Reading*, students learn an important aspect of the writing process as it takes place in the academy. Writing then, unlike how *Forming, Thinking, Writing* described it, is an activity that takes place in community rather than being a solitary activity where the composer is also audience and critic.

It is here that Bartholomae and Petrosky's approach is closely aligned with the vision of social-epistemic rhetoric that Berlin wrote about. The larger context in which students are situated is an important part of the processes of reading and writing as well

as the generation of meaning. This context is social, as "readers. . .seldom read a single essay in isolation, as though their only job were to arrive at some sense of what an essay has to say" (*Ways of Reading* 17). The context is also collaborative because "you can always learn from your colleagues" (*Ways of Reading* 16). Both of these aspects encourage the social interaction that allows social-epistemic rhetoric to function.

Bartholomae and Petrosky also include a set of assignment sequences at the back of the text that interestingly still address students directly, encouraging them to think of themselves as part of an academic community, which as a result empowers students in a way different than Berthoff, who favored the importance of the individual over his or her part in a larger community. Bartholomae and Petrosky indicate that

> The sequences allow you to participate in an extended academic project, one with several texts and several weeks' worth of writing. You are not just adding one essay to another (Freire + Pratt = ?) but trying out an approach to a subject by revising it, looking at new examples, hearing what someone else has to say, and beginning again to take a position of your own (726).

As a way to get students thinking about how to revise the subjects they read about as part of the sequence, the assignment sheets for each writing assignment include a series of questions meant to get students thinking about the topic they are to write about. In the first sequence, as with the others, a writing assignment is simply referred to as an "assignment." It is what it is. The instructor is giving the student an assignment to complete. The instructor exercises power to do so. As Bartholomae and Petrosky might see it, this is a place where the instructor must exercise power to put students into a

position where they stand a good chance of learning something. To complete the writing assignment, they must have already read the assigned selections. The questions listed on the assignment sheet are meant to prompt students to think about readings and ask questions of those readings, something scholars are often already accustomed to doing. The writing assignments often ask students to put two or more authors into dialog with one another. In this way, Bartholomae and Petrosky model the behaviors of scholars participating in their fields: They read, ask questions and respond. So then students in the process of appropriating academic discourse must do the same.

The instances where the instructor exercises power do not get masked. The assignment sequences are treated as a place where the instructor must necessarily exercise power. The inclusion of the assignment sequences displays a sort of transparency that allows students access to the inner workings of a writing course, and by extension, the instances in those workings where the instructor must exercise power. By supplying several different sequences, Bartholomae and Petrosky seem to encourage the possibility of students and instructor sharing power and coming to an agreement over which ones to use for the course. The collaboration Bruffee spoke of tended to exclude the instructor and focus on the collaboration between students. The collaboration suggested by *Ways of Reading* includes the instructor, which could indicate to students that they are to think of the instructor as being part of the same academic community of which they themselves are now a part. In one sense, students and instructor are on equal footing in that they are participants in a scholarly discourse, however it is understood that the instructor, having been part of this discourse for longer than the students, has experience the students simply do not have yet. In this capacity, the instructor is in a

position to collaborate with students in an effort to help them understand the language

and communication practices of the academy, which at times will require that the

instructor indicate to the student when a piece of writing does not put to use the

conventions of academic discourse, or perhaps does not use them effectively. It is in these

instances where the instructor must exercise power to not only point out in the writing

where the conventions are not used effectively, but also to help the student understand

how to use them to produce a text that better participates in the discourse it attempts to

appropriate.

In Foucault's terms, the inequality between teacher and student produces a power

relationship. By virtue of the fact that the instructor has knowledge and experience that

the students do not, there is the opportunity to exercise power. Nevertheless, the

instructor's opportunities for the exercise of power do not eclipse those of the students.

Where Berthoff sought to empower students by focusing on the importance of each

individual student, Bartholomae and Petrosky empower them by situating them in a

community wherein their voices (and the instructor's) are important to the proper

functioning of that community. Berthoff is very focused on the individual strategies that

result in the production and audit of meaning, indicating to students these strategies are

already familiar to them. While Berthoff does little to suggest a larger context, a close

look at these strategies indicates that they would prove to be equally useful in community

with other individuals. She wants students to understand the importance of their

exercising of power. Bartholomae attempts this same level of empowerment, yet does it

by placing students in the academic community where their voices, while new to the

community, have something important to contribute to the discussion as well as to the generation of the meaning and knowledge of that community.

An important underlying theme to both textbooks is the notion that there is such a thing as an exercise of power that benefits students. Convincing students of their capability to exercise power is itself an instance where the instructor exercises power. Writing the syllabus, choosing readings, and making essay assignments are likewise instances where the instructor exercises power in an effort to create situations and opportunities for learning.

Inter-Section B: Matters of Mimesis

Forming, Thinking, Writing and *Ways of Reading* both rely on a model of instruction that puts imitation to use in the classroom. As a classroom practice, imitation is evident in what Berthoff and Bartholomae expect of their students. Both textbooks encourage the imitation of behaviors or strategies for writing, but differ in how students are to imitate. Bartholomae advocates imitating academic discourse through participation in it. This means creating a situation in the classroom that resembles the academic community. Students write in response to other scholars, appropriating as they go the language of the academy. In Berthoff's method of imitation, she encourages students to imitate the behaviors of writing without situating the individual students in the context of an academic community, suggesting that the behaviors involved in the writing process blur the lines between disciplines. Berthoff also has students imitate personae that respond to prompts in different ways. She does this by providing a passage students are to read. She then asks how the person who wrote that passage might respond to a question or set of questions. In this sense, Berthoff has students mimic content as well as stylistic and behavioral moves. The imitative approaches to writing instruction evident in *Forming, Thinking, Writing* and *Ways of Reading* draw upon a long history that dates back to ancient Greece and Rome.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle indicated that humans learn by imitation, going so far as to call it an instinct that is "implanted in man from childhood" and that man "is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons" (5). Edward P. J. Corbett adds that after Isocrates "all the subsequent major classical rhetoricians—Dionysus of Halicarnassus, Longinus, Cicero, and Quintilian—

recommended the practice of imitation" (243) and notes that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the practice of imitation lasted long into the schools of the medieval and Renaissance periods. Yet despite this history, there is what Frank M. Farmer and Phillip K. Arrington call "the community's. . .rejection of imitation" ('Apologies and Accommodations' 13). The answer to why imitation is rejected as a "legitimate" pedagogical practice has much to do with the concerns over power and its exercise in the writing class, specifically the class based on social-epistemic rhetoric.

Farmer and Arrington identify the community's rejection of imitation as tacit. There is much discussion in favor of imitation, what seems like defense of or justification for the practice, but little from the opposing side of the issue. Richard Boyd's article "Imitate Me; Don't Imitate Me," while taking specific issue with Bartholomae's "Inventing the University," makes just such a rejection while raising questions regarding imitation as a classroom practice; Questions that can be posed to social-epistemic rhetoric as it has been envisioned up to this point.

Boyd sees the practice of imitation as very much an issue of power. As a representative of the academic discourse, the instructor, in Boyd's view, has and exercises all power in the relationship to students, becoming the ideal example of what they are to learn in the course. The problem, as Boyd sees it, is while this might work for a while, there comes a time when students will hit the glass ceiling that permanently separates them from the instructor. Boyd believes that when students learn the language of the academy through imitation and begin to have expertise in the discourse that rivals that of the instructor, they become a threat to the instructor and his or her position of privilege. As a result, the students are presented with what Boyd calls the "double bind"

where they are encouraged to imitate the instructor, but only to the degree that they do not pose a threat to the power they are subordinate to. In other words, students are to imitate the discourse, but only so far as their skill in using it is below that of the instructor, who is supposed to be the "expert" in the classroom. The student's subordinate status must remain. They must aspire to appropriate the discourse, without ever being able to do so to the point they could participate in it.

While the details of Boyd's critique of Bartholomae are in my estimation somewhat misguided, his central question is nonetheless an important one to ask:

> What happens to the critical perspective of these students, to their capacity to reflect on the world from the ground of their own historical and cultural situation. . .when they are told merely to "crudely mimic" the 'peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing'. . .?

Boyd's concern is that the attempt to teach students a set of behaviors or a set of writing conventions removes from them the ability to exercise power, placing them in a permanently subordinate role. In this situation, the students remain in a position where power is exercised over them, never able to exercise it themselves. However, as Foucault has indicated, power is not stationary. It is simply not the case that students can never exercise power. Boyd implies that imitation necessarily requires the complete surrender on the part of the student and that in the process, students themselves are reduced to mere imitations, doing what they have been taught to do. They are crude copies of the kind of individual who normally participates in the discourse they attempt to participate in, and for Boyd that person is often the instructor.

Boyd makes two interconnected assumptions that are all easily answered by social-epistemic rhetoric understood in terms of the power diagram. First, Boyd believes power is localized and stationary in either the students or the instructor. Second, he believes that imitation takes away the students' capability to exercise power. These assumptions, while aimed at Bartholomae's article, are applicable to the practice of imitation in general and are questions of power. As such, teasing these three assumptions apart proves a difficult task as there is much unavoidable overlap between them. The problem with these assumptions is that at their center, they approach imitation and power in an all-or-nothing sort of way, overlooking the aspects of both power and imitation that prove to be important aspects of social-epistemic rhetoric.

On its surface, the practice of imitation in a social-epistemic classroom appears to be an oxymoron. It is the one thing that is not like the others because it seems to wrest the exercise of power from the hands of the students by having them ape the habits, conventions and styles of the academy rather than participate in the generation of meaning and knowledge. It seems here that students can either exercise power or they can imitate. Boyd would have us believe that these two are mutually exclusive, that they cannot exist in the same place at the same time. However, if Foucault was correct when he indicated that power must of necessity circulate, then Boyd's assumption is simply incorrect. Power cannot be localized in the way Boyd described. It changes hands from teacher to student, from student to student, or from student to teacher. Perhaps this assumption comes from a failure to see the small exercises of power as actual instances where power is exercised, such as when a student assumes authority to make a comment, based on his or her own interpretation, about a reading. It is the recognition of the small

instances of power that allows for the notion that power circulates. If the small cases get overlooked, Boyd can argue that power can be localized. By overlooking the small instances, he can reject imitation as a useful pedagogical practice because this conceptualization does not allow students access to power.

Neither Berthoff's nor Bartholomae's understanding of the power relationship and subsequent approach to writing instruction posits the permanent location of power or that students must necessarily give up all ties to the languages of other communities in order to appropriate that of the academy. It is interesting that Boyd refers to academic discourse as a language while holding onto the idea that one must give up one in order to learn another. If academic discourse is like a language, and it is possible to be fluent in more than one language, having equal command of both, then it stands to reason that students can acquire a new discourse without the sacrifice of the one(s) they already are a part of. As with new language acquisition, the method of instruction is largely imitative, especially when learning such skills as pronunciation and conversation. This method operates with the understanding that a student must learn some of the language before attempting to speak it, an act that assumes power or control over the learned material. The student then learns more of the language through further imitation and instruction. Without the use of this method, individuals learning a new language would perhaps be able to appropriate the rules of language, but until being presented with a model and a context to practice, that knowledge of the rules is largely useless.

Berthoff and Bartholomae approach the teaching of this discourse in ways that mirror new language acquisition. They operate under the assumption that students are unfamiliar with the behaviors and conventions of writing, but bring to the class a certain

knowledge base useful to the successful functioning of the class. Students are familiarized with these practices by being asked to imitate and participate in them, since as Lisa Delpit puts it, "unless one has the leisure of a lifetime of 'immersion' to learn them, explicit presentation makes learning immeasurably easier" (*Other Peoples' Children* 26).

In a social-epistemic writing class, practices of imitation are not thoroughly divorced from power exercised by students. In order to avoid a situation where "students ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no on has ever directly informed them" (*Other Peoples' Children* 31) as well as a general knowledge set, the strategies, behaviors, and conventions of academic discourse are never presented to students as immutable. This strategy also reiterates the importance of students' ability to exercise power in an imitative, social-epistemic writing class. The very notion of an immutable truth, bit of knowledge, or meaning is incongruous with the essential tenets of social-epistemic rhetoric. Imitated or not, examples and strategies are not exempt from analysis and scrutiny. To think otherwise is to part ways with social-epistemic rhetoric itself.

In *Ways of Reading*, Bartholomae and Petrosky present students with examples of what they consider academic writing. These examples are not cast as perfect or ideal, but as writing worthy of reading and responding to. Students are encouraged to interrogate the text rather than simply agree with each author's argument. At the same time students see the aspects of the writing that they can implement in their own written work. It is not to be a wholesale adoption of the conventions, but rather an exercise where students use those conventions to see how they work. Likewise, in Berthoff's *Forming, Thinking,*

Writing students are offered strategies and behaviors for writing, but are encouraged to use those strategies as starting places for the formation of strategies that work best for each student. The strategies and behaviors that Berthoff suggests to students are meant to be questioned and reformulated rather than recognized as immutably monolithic.

At its heart, social-epistemic rhetoric is itself an imitative approach to writing instruction. It draws upon aspects of other approaches by putting itself in dialogue with them, testing their limits and extracting the characteristics that prove useful and congruent with the objectives of this kind of writing instruction. As a pedagogical approach, it asks of students to adopt (imitate) the same strategy: put themselves into dialogue with texts that are part of the discourse they are attempting to appropriate. To do so requires they exercise power in both large and small ways. In this way, one could perhaps argue that to imitate is to exercise power in the sense that one makes the decision to do so. It is the recognition of power in its capillary forms that provides the key to unlocking a deeper and more useful understanding of how power functions in a social-epistemic writing class.

Section IV: Burke's Parlor Metaphor

Foucault has been valuable to understanding how the power relationship functions. Berlin helped understand how social-epistemic rhetoric works when applied to the writing class. Berthoff and Bartholomae have provided examples and illustrations of how social-epistemic features manifest in classroom practice. The individual threads have been teased apart, to now be brought back together to answer the question regarding what it is we do when we integrate social-epistemic features into our writing classrooms. What follows is what I believe to be a starting place for how the social-epistemic writing class should be thought of so that the discussion of this approach accounts for all parts of the power relationship in the complexity of their deep connections to one another.

Where these ideas reconvene is in the often-used parlor metaphor of Kenneth Burke who in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* describes it this way:

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However,

the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And

you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (110-111)

Burke does not discuss this metaphor in terms of the power diagram, or for that matter

social-epistemic rhetoric; however, the elements of that relationship are still present.

Individuals are present in the parlor. These individuals exercise power to speak and

question the positions of other individuals. The result of the discussion, while Burke does

not specify it, is the generation of meanings from juxtaposing opposing elements in the

parlor.

The individuals in the parlor are the single most important aspect of the metaphor.

As with social-epistemic rhetoric, the metaphor depends on the presence of individuals.

Without them, the parlor would be nothing more than an empty room. These individuals

engage in the discussion, posing and opposing points of view in an effort to generate

meaning. Implied but unstated in the metaphor is the notion that the individuals in this

particular parlor have a specific means of communicating with one another. How exactly

they discuss is secondary to the fact that they communicate and in their own way exercise

power by assuming authority to speak with one another. It is the individuals who exercise

power. It is the individuals who generate meaning and accept it as knowledge. It is the

individuals who go back and interrogate that knowledge, generating new meaning

appropriate to the context and the individuals.

In a social-epistemic writing class, both students and teacher are considered

individuals and as such participate in the parlor's lively discussion. However, simply

equating the course itself with the parlor does not account for the individuals already in

the parlor and discussing before students come in. The previous discussion comes into the

writing class parlor in the form of readings students are asked to read and respond to, both in class discussion and writing assignments. The selections, usually made through an exercise of power on the part of the instructor, are put into discussion with one another. Students, when reading and perhaps rereading these selections, act out the part of the metaphor when the "you" listens for long enough to understand the idea of the conversation before making their contribution to it.

For example, in Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading*, selections from such authors as Freire and Foucault contribute to an ongoing discussion that began before students came into the parlor. This is evidenced by the assignment sequences outlined in the latter part of the text. Bartholomae and Petrosky desire students to assume the authority to speak and be spoken to. The readings from the book represent the instance where students are spoken to. Their writing assignments are instances where they speak. Bartholomae and Petrosky invoke the parlor metaphor in their short introduction to the assignment sequences. "Most of the sequences," they say, "bring together several essays from the text and ask you to imagine them as *an extended conversation*, one with several speakers. The assignments are designed to *give you a voice* in the conversation as well" (*Ways of Reading* 728, emphasis added). It is not to say here that the readings are any more permanent fixtures in the parlor than the students are. They are more akin to participants who have made their contribution to the conversation and have since exited the parlor.

By understanding the readings to be discussants who make their case and then leave the parlor, we account for an important reality of this situation: the authors of the selections in *Ways of Reading* will likely never read the student essays composed in

conversation with their selections nor be privy to the conversations that take place both in and out of the classroom. Yet, the idea of the parlor is not a necessary fiction designed to encourage the cooperation of students. Placing students into the parlor and encouraging their participation in it is not some form of play acting where they must imagine the conversation they participate in. If the readings are allowed to be discussants that have already left the parlor, students must then carry on the discussion with each other as they are all in the parlor together. In this way, students are left with the responsibility to exercise power in the discussion, speaking, opposing, and questioning both the readings and each other.

In the metaphor, power functions through the small and subtle instances where it is exercised. The "you" enters the parlor to find other people already there and already in a heated discussion. These individuals, upon assuming authority to speak and participate in the discussion, exercise power by doing so. Likewise, the "you" assumes authority after having listened to the discussion long enough to understand what it is about and speaks, presenting a position. One other comes to the aid of this speaker, supporting the case presented. Another presents an opposing view. The support, as well as the presentation of the opposition, are exercises of power. It moves the discussion forward encouraging, through the presentation of point and counterpoint, the production of meaning. This movement going back and forth is precisely the condition Berlin described as necessary to the generation of knowledge. And as Foucault indicated, knowledge cannot be produced except through the exercise of power.

Knowledge comes out of the meanings generated in the conversation taking place in the parlor. Such meanings come to be by way of the formulation and reformulation of

bits of information (Berthoff's chaos). After having been discussed and reexamined, meanings can become accepted as knowledge in that community or that parlor. Of course, the meaning generated still is not immutable. The discussion continues after the "you" has left the parlor. Discussants look and look again at the meanings and knowledge generated in the course of the discussion revisiting, revising and reformulating. While both teacher and students have an equal stake in participating in the generation of meaning, and though the instructor is only one voice among many, he or she is nevertheless placed in a curious position for a number of reasons that all have to do with the duties associated with being the instructor of the course.

Part of recognizing the element of power in the relationship means understanding that it is the instructor who prepares this parlor prior to students entering. It is the instructor who creates the situation in which the discussion will take place, adding discussants to that situation and asking students to participate in the discussion when they write and participate in class. However after having said so, it seems that the teacher-as-creator metaphor is not as accurate as it could be since it implies the same something-from-nothing process I have already critiqued. Perhaps the better term is the same one used to describe how a social-epistemic writing class arrives at knowledge: By constructing it out of meanings that are in turn constructed of unorganized bits of information. The construction of the parlor, then, entails collecting rather than creating course materials, which include readings, class activities and writing assignments. At its very least, the construction of the parlor is the building and nurturing by the instructor of the learning environment, even if some of the responsibility for the maintenance of that environment falls later to the students.

Such course design and construction are ordinarily the responsibility of instructors as directed by the institution, but this does not exempt them from debate and questioning as part of the parlor's discussion. As has been discussed already, one of the key features of social-epistemic rhetoric is questioning and discussing meaning and knowledge, which leaves nothing untouchable. In the case proposed by Bizzell, students negotiated with the instructor, trusting him or her to introduce material worth learning. This situation places students in a position to exercise power, questioning and discussing class content, but also recognizing the instructor as a valuable resource for information the class as a whole might not have immediate access to. In Ira Shor's description of his Utopias course in *When Students Have Power*, students' responsibility to exercise power starts on the very first day of class and continues for the duration of the course, discussing and negotiating class activities and assignments. Notably, Shor did choose the readings himself. However, students were able to and did voice their opinions on Shor's choice of books which kept the discussion of the course open and continual.

The class that Shor discusses in the book was not composition and for that reason, his approach to exercising and sharing power was different so as to accommodate the course. His was a content-centered course which meant that the primary focus was the discussion of the theme of the course. While his course included writing assignments, the goal of the course was not to teach writing the way a composition class would. Even so, how Shor understands the exercise of power as it relates to the parlor metaphor is applicable to social-epistemic writing instruction and the role of the instructor in that metaphor.

Shor indicates that "being in control [of the class and students] may help my self-image and my professional image, but the truth is that it guarantees nothing about student learning. In fact, the comforts of teacherly control can work against the intellectual developments of students" (*When Students Have Power* 106). It is an idea that is in line with the tenets of social-epistemic rhetoric in that "teacherly control" suggests a situation wherein the instructor is perceived to be the sole individual allowed to exercise power. This situation, Shor argues, is not one in which learning and intellectual development can take place. Instead, Shor proposes a class where the responsibility to exercise power is shared. Teacher and student alike have the duty to exercise power. In this configuration, the instructor's original role as the single authority in the classroom shifts so that the instructor becomes "repositioned in the process as a special participant, not exactly equal to the students and not exactly separate from them either" (*When Students Have Power* 154). In the parlor, the instructor is, like students, a participant in the discussion. However, at times, the instructor is called upon to exercise power and supply information to students they did not otherwise have access to.

That these situations arise is a fact Shor is very well aware of. There are simply instances when an instructor must give students information they did not have. Admitting to these situations means admitting that the instructor knows things about the course material that students do not, such as how Bartholomae and Petrosky approach writing instruction. They operate under the assumption that students come into the class lacking information that the instructor and the course will supply them, without falling back to Freire's banking model of depositing knowledge into the minds of passive students. In Shor's case, he exercised power to introduce a class activity in a situation where students

did not have access to that information. He indicates that his "intuitive addition of free writing here represents the maintenance of some pedagogical autonomy on my part, in the role of a teacher who knows some worthwhile learning methods" (*When Students Have Power* 129). In a class like composition students are learning the conventions and strategies for writing, "which [sometimes] requires teacher-provided information" (*When Students Have Power* 159). Otherwise, students would not necessarily be denied access to the information, but their appropriation of it would be much more challenging and difficult (assuming they were able to appropriate it at all). I do not intend to suggest that the task of appropriating academic discourse on one's own is an impossible task or that no student would ever learn it alone. I do, however, suggest that as Delpit put it, "explicit presentation makes learning immeasurably easier" (*Other Peoples' Children* 26) without reducing the task of learning the conventions and strategies to an exercise of memorizing and regurgitating preformed bits of information.

By understanding the instructor's role in and relationship to the metaphor, there is the risk of viewing the instructor as remaining somehow outside the metaphor. Perhaps by thinking of the construction of the parlor in the same way that a parlor in a house, or the house itself, the builders must as a matter of necessity pass outside the bounds of the room or house in order to build it. Shingles on a roof cannot be placed and secured from the inside of the house. However, it is this circulation that mirrors the circulation of power the way Foucault described it. It then is a necessary feature of the metaphor. The instructor circulates, into and out of the parlor in the process of constructing it. What does not happen, or at least should not in a social-epistemic class, is that the instructor remains outside of the parlor. This kind of circulation is implied in Burke's description of the

metaphor as the "you" comes into and then leaves the parlor while the debate continues. Burke does not suggest that the individual cannot again re-enter the parlor and again contribute to the discussion.

The teacher is still a necessary part of the class, just as much as the students and the discussion with its conditions and results. The instructor is still a participant in the discussion, independent of the likelihood that he or she has a greater understanding of it than students. This greater understanding may come as a result of having participated in this discussion for a longer time than students or perhaps from the task of gathering the materials for the course. In either case, the instructor's "greater knowledge" can and should be questioned, because he or she is *a* participant and as such does not represent a source of indisputable knowledge, despite having to operate within the guidelines established by the institution for consistent course objectives and instruction. The purpose of the parlor discussion is to question meaning and knowledge, which includes that of each individual in the class, including the instructor.

What we are left with is a modified version of Burke's parlor, one that joins the metaphor with the diagram of power, recognizing the practicalities of an actual class. The metaphor answers the question of what happens (ideally) in a social-epistemic composition class by describing the way students and instructor interact with each other to generate meaning students can then further develop and question through writing. On the other hand, the diagram of power describes how this metaphor is constructed and why it functions the way it does. It is the diagram that allows for the consideration of what happens both inside and outside of the metaphor, such as what goes into the construction of the parlor prior to students entering it. Together, the metaphor and the diagram answer

one of Berthoff's generative questions, "*How does who do what and why?*" (*Forming, Thinking, Writing* 88, emphasis original), by considering the players in the metaphor, what those players do and what their motivations and reasons are for doing what they do. As a result, we have a more complete view of social-epistemic rhetoric, one that changes the discussion of composition theory and practice by refocusing our collective attention on elements of the diagram and their relationship to one another.

Not only does this consideration change the discussion surrounding social-epistemic rhetoric in composition, but it raises the awareness of what it is we do exactly when implementing features of social-epistemic rhetoric. To introduce a particular classroom practice, having a more complete view of the rhetoric that informs that practice, instructors are in a far better position to understand what that activity is for in terms of its purposes and goals, and how the activity might impact the relationship between power, knowledge and the individual. In essence, this melding of the parlor metaphor with the diagram encourages us to think about theory and classroom practice as elements situated in a context rather than existing in a vacuum. Instances where either student or instructor exercises power is contextualized and understood to have some effect on other individuals and the effort to generate meaning.

As Shor noted,

> To encourage [students'] habits of academic analysis, I had to discipline
> my own voice so that it creates a "zone of proximal development"
> (Vygotsky 1962), that is, a zone of discourse where my questions draw out
> their analytic abilities. For dialogic process to evoke critical student
> discourse, I have to speak first in questions, and then integrate my

backloaded comments into the profile of their expressions rather than

expecting them to respond to my frontloaded lectures. (175)

Understanding that he had a responsibility to encourage student participation in the

discussion, Shor had to be very careful not to present neatly-packaged information by

lecturing to students. Shor's concern in this instance was based on his understanding of

the context, his exercise of power, and the resulting effect that power might have in the

meaning generated through student discourse. Likewise, in the composition classrooms,

instructors need this same awareness for the context in which they teach, taking into

careful consideration the elements at work in that context, and making the necessary

adjustments to allow for an effective learning environment for both the students and the

instructor.

Section V: In The Classroom

Berlin noted, correctly I believe, that any one approach to writing instruction will only show certain features of social-epistemic rhetoric. Where those features become the most visible, aside from publications in books and journals, is in classroom activities. Such activities as Berthoff's assisted invitations or Shor's After Class Group reveal, at least in part, the social-epistemic leanings of the approach and can be understood in terms of the revised theory of social-epistemic rhetoric. In my own experience as a teacher of composition and believing as I do in the merits of social-epistemic rhetoric, I have implemented some of my own classroom activities that are directly influenced by the theory as I have envisioned it. One such activity that has proven successful is sharing, though not giving, the responsibility for choosing readings with my students. In some cases, I must assert my authority as a teacher and as someone who knows something about writing. I select readings from the textbook that are meant to teach students about different aspects of the writing process. I think of these selections as foundational. Using what they know from the readings I select, students learn strategies for reading and writing that will help them as they prepare their own essays.

At some point, however, students must put those readings to work, using them to critique and analyze other texts. It is then that students share the responsibility for choosing readings. In these instances, as a class, we agree upon a particular topic. Sometimes this part of the activity can be difficult, considering that students are asked to decide as a group what the subject of discussion will be and no one wants to be responsible for suggesting a topic the rest of the class might see as uninteresting. Students are put into a position where they must cooperate and communicate with their classmates.

They are pushed out of the normal classroom atmosphere where they sit quietly in their chairs, listen, and wait to speak until spoken to. As the instructor, I sometimes have to prompt students to get them talking by asking questions rather than giving suggestions. The point is to get them to decide on a topic they are sufficiently interested in that they come to the next class willing to participate in the discussion.

Once students have decided upon a topic and we have as a class had a chance to talk about the topic as a potential subject of discussion, I make the following assignment: that by the next class period, each student is to read at least two articles on the topic and bring those articles to class. Since one of the goals of this particular composition course is to expose students to research techniques and engage them in research projects while teaching them argumentation, asking them to go find sources to contribute to the class discussion puts them into the situation where they must put their research skills to work in order to find essays or articles that comment on the topic. The result is a wide variety of articles from an equally wide variety of sources. In my experience, there has always been little overlap in the articles students bring with them to class. In a class of 24 students, there are usually only one or two articles that more than one student has read. I suspect that this stems from their own notions of individuality and the desire to bring something in that no one else has read. Whatever the motivation, having a unique article means that ideally, each student has something to contribute to the class discussion, even if it is to indicate that her or his article, from a completely different source, agrees (or disagrees) with something another article claims. It reiterates in a very concrete way the notion that each student has something important to contribute to the discussion.

The difference in the articles brought to the discussion mirrors the situation as students with different knowledge sets come into the composition class on the first day of class. Each student brings in the classroom the knowledge that is a result of upbringing, previous education, life experience, etc. Those differences are an important part of what social-epistemic rhetoric attempts to do: put opposing elements into conversation with one another. Students bring different articles to class for discussion and thus reiterate this purpose. It allows us, in class, to put those opposing viewpoints up against one another, debate them, and see what comes out of the discussion.

I notice that my students are often interested in and more easily respond to the content of the articles. So I begin by asking what they, the students, learned or what the sources have to say about the subject. As the instructor, I could exercise power and lecture on what I read in preparation for class, but that would negate the social-epistemic features of this activity by removing opportunities for students to exercise power. Instead, I prefer to get students participating in the discussion. As they begin to respond to my questions, they also begin to respond to one another, at which time I become just another participant in the discussion. Students then do not need to await my recognition to comment on something another student just said. When the discussion begins to lag, I ask other questions to get students going in another direction or to get them to think about the positions they have themselves taken in the course of the discussion. Thus, I invoke the social-epistemic idea that nothing is untouchable or unquestionable. By engaging the content first, as a class we deal with how the students themselves are responding to and interpreting the subject matter. It is at this stage of the discussion where students begin to recognize deeper implications and connections that the articles do not directly mention.

To do so, students draw on the interpretive and analytical skills that are important aspects of social-epistemic rhetoric and the composition class itself.

The discussion seems move freely between talking about the content of the articles and what the authors say, the students' interpretation of the content, and how that content is formed and shaped. As students are in the process of learning the nuances of rhetoric and argumentation, each article becomes a sort of model for them. They begin to see how the authors of these pieces have constructed their arguments and are in a position to discuss whether or not those arguments are effective. While I do not want my students to appropriate the writing style of journalism, I do want them to see concrete examples of where arguments work and do not work and be able to identify why that is. Even in the instances where I have chosen the reading for that day's class, which is often an example of the style of writing I do want my students to learn to use, the discussion follows the same pattern, leading us inevitably to the discussion of what academic writing is and why it is that way. These readings are not free from scrutiny and are not introduced in the classroom as indisputable examples of what academic writing should be. In our class discussions, we question those readings to ascertain what the author is attempting to do with the text as well as how he or she accomplishes that objective, if at all.

Though they might not be immediately aware of it (or at least not in these terms), students participate in a discussion that mirrors Burke's parlor in interesting ways. They bring the discussants into our classroom parlor, both themselves and the articles they have read in preparation for class. In this way they help construct the parlor in much the same way that I do when, as the instructor of the course, I select readings for them. Students, then, also step out of the parlor as part of the process of constructing it. As each

student chooses the articles to be read, reads those articles, and then comes to class prepared to discuss, he or she assumes the authority to speak about and in response to the articles. Each one of them becomes the "you" Burke refers to. The discussion students have joined is one that began before they entered. They listen, or read, a while and then jump in, making their own contribution to the discussion.

In terms of how I have re-imagined social-epistemic rhetoric, this activity allows for the circulation of power between myself, as the instructor, and my students. Parts of the activity are the responsibility of the students and other parts are uniquely mine. Students must decide on the topic of discussion, while I assign everyone, including myself, the task of bringing two articles to class. Students assume authority to speak about the articles they have read. I take it as my responsibility to encourage the continuation of the discussion by asking open-ended questions that require a more thoughtful response than "yes" or "no" and for which I may not have a definite answer myself.

As I see it, this activity accomplishes the work of social-epistemic rhetoric in a few different ways. By having students participate in the selection of readings, we recognize the fact that students do not inhabit a permanently subordinate role in the classroom. This accounts for the concern social-epistemic rhetoric has with the power relationship, principally with the notion that the instructor is the only one to exercise power in the classroom. As the instructor, when I ask my students to choose the readings they will do in class and then trust them to find articles to read and discuss, I make an implicit argument to them that they have an important stake in my class. Their role, like mine, is not passive; it is participatory.

Having students choose readings accounts for the social-epistemic need for individuals in a social situation with one another. The success and effectiveness of the activity depends on the students' participation in it. As Berthoff suggested, students at some point must withdraw from the company of others in order to perform some of the work required of them. Though the task of researching might be a solitary one, students perform it with the future discussion in mind. They do not research simply to research, but it has a purpose and that purpose influences how each student goes about completing the assignment. Whether alone or in the company of others, the student has in mind the social communication (class discussion) that comes after he or she has found the required two articles.

Finally, students have the responsibility to assume authority to speak. These instances are important to the production of meaning in the classroom. Foucault indicated that knowledge is one of the results of the exercise of power. For our purposes, it is meaning, rather than knowledge, that is produced through exercising power. As students assume the authority to speak, they contribute to the understanding everyone in the class has on the topic of discussion by either adding to what has already been stated or revising a previous assertion. Understood as exercises of power, such instances are vital producing and auditing meaning in the classroom.

This activity carries with it the self-reflexiveness of social-epistemic rhetoric. In other words, just as social-epistemic theory has a feature that allows for its own examination, so too does my activity of choosing readings. The power exercised in the course of the activity, both by me and by my students, can be interrogated as a way to refine the functioning of the activity. Whether or not students want to participate in this

way is another matter and falls outside the scope of this thesis. However, suffices to say that the possibility is there, should the class choose to seize it.

By examining this activity in terms of the version of social-epistemic theory I have proposed, I accomplish two things. First, I can gauge the effectiveness of the activity based on the aims and goals of the theory that informs it. If the activity for some reason does not accomplish those goals, then as the instructor I have the responsibility to revise the activity so that in the future, it does. As each class is different and presents to the instructor different challenges, this part of the activity becomes an important one so that the activity is tailored to fit the students who participate in it. Second, I can connect this activity to other activities that are likewise informed by social-epistemic rhetoric. The result is a collection of class activities that are connected in ways that make sense in terms of what social-epistemic rhetoric does in the classroom. By extension, any number of activities can be examined in the same way. By so doing, we can see clearly how each activity functions and avoid sending students mixed messages about what it is we are trying to accomplish in the classroom by linking similarly-informed activities together.

Conclusions

My class activity, while it may not be unique, is nonetheless informed by the revised social-epistemic theory I have proposed. Identifying the influence of social-epistemic rhetoric on the activity allows me to perform the analysis of it, to judge its success in the classroom, and to connect it to other activities that contribute to the purposes of the course. It is with the understanding of the theory that the activity's functions become apparent, thereby providing a sort of measuring stick with which as the instructor, I can see quickly if the activity works or not in terms of making considerations for power, the students and the production of meaning in my class.

Ann Berthoff saw the importance of understanding theory in order to audit class activities. In *The Making of Meaning,* she indicated that "the primary use of theory should be to define what our purposes and aims are and thereby how to evaluate our efforts in reaching them" (32) and again, that "the primary role of theory is to guide us in defining our purposes and thus in evaluating our efforts, in realizing them" (32). She suggests two outcomes of having a clear understanding of theory. First, we are able determine our purposes for using an activity because the theory carries with it a set of desired outcomes. The desired outcomes of social-epistemic rhetorical theory are to have individuals communicate to generate meaning and to de-center classroom power to such a degree that this communication can happen.

Second, with those goals in mind, we can measure individual activities and classroom practices in terms of the degree to which they accomplish those outcomes. It is these activities that represent our efforts to achieve the goals of theory. In the spirit of social-epistemic rhetoric, if an activity fails to accomplish an outcome, it can be revised

and tried again. As the make up of our composition classes changes from semester to semester, this practice of revision will happen fairly often. In this way, by clarifying the theory of social-epistemic rhetoric precisely so that it accounts for the power relationship described by Foucault, instructors who use this approach to writing instruction are better able to articulate the purposes of the course and the activities used in it. With a clearer understanding of social-epistemic rhetoric, and of its purposes, instructors will be in a better position to evaluate themselves. By refining the understanding of social-epistemic rhetoric to account for the dynamic and triadic characteristics of the power relationships it imagines, we can not only evaluate individual activities but begin to connect those activities to others that have the same goals.

Before any connections can be made, Berthoff insists that an understanding of why an activity worked must be reached. She says:

> Theory can help us judge what's going on, and it can also explain why something works. Suppose you look at a particular exercise that has been very successful and you say "Terrific! Now I'll do this." And you follow *X* with *Y*, which seems appropriate, and it doesn't work. If you don't have a theory about why *X* worked, you won't have any way of defining the real relationship of *X* to *Y*, logically or psychologically. (32-33)

Activities, when informed by theory and connected together, provide a continuity and purpose visible to students. When we understand first why we brought in an activity to begin with and then how it relates to other activities, students are more likely to figure out how each activity contributes to the larger purposes of the class.

On the other hand, failure to use theory for the purposes Berthoff describes leaves instructors with something of a recipe box of disconnected activities. And "the point is not," Berthoff says, "to have a recipe file of certain assignments which you come to class prepared to do" (124). As we well know, a box of recipes might give instructions on how to prepare a variety of dishes, but it does not instruct the cook how to couple those dishes to form a balanced meal. Likewise, having a collection of activities may provide an instructor with lots to do in class, but until that instructor has a clear sense of the theory that influences his or her pedagogy, those activities can neither be measured nor connected to others.

In a sense, what I have proposed, the re-imagining of social-epistemic rhetorical theory, is an apparatus with a set of important properties. It provides the connective tissue necessary to join together classroom practices in a way that makes sense to students and fosters a learning environment. Most importantly, this version of the theory accounts for the triadic relationship between power, knowledge, and the individual, performing an analytical function useful for examining individual class activities, the aims and goals of the entire course, and the theory itself.

This apparatus, while I believe to be fairly complete, is not meant to go unquestioned or unrevised. Built into it is the mechanism for its own revision. It is this aspect that makes the apparatus useful for revising one's own social-epistemic practices, but also to revise the discussion surrounding social-epistemic rhetorical theory itself without setting it up as something infinitely and unquestionably effective. I am of the opinion that before we see any transformation in our classrooms, before we see any

change in our books and journals, we must first see change in the way we think about social-epistemic rhetoric, beginning with the theory.

Considering social-epistemic rhetoric in terms of the diagram and the parlor metaphor may not unify instructors who use social-epistemic rhetoric to conduct their composition classes. As Fulkerson noted, compositionists twenty years ago may have come to some consensus about what constitutes good writing in composition, something he refers to as axiology, but "the major locus of our disagreements has shifted from axiology to process and pedagogy, where we have found plenty to fight about" ('Composition Theory in the Eighties' 424). Joining the parlor metaphor with a theory of power the way that I have is not meant to settle the disputes in discussions of process or pedagogy or any other aspect of writing instruction. This is but a contribution to a discussion that began long before I entered this parlor and will continue long after I leave. What I hope to have accomplished is construct a place to continue rather than one to begin or end. This point is one that continues the discussion in response to one of the most important self-diagnostic questions Berthoff asked: "How can we know what we're doing, how can we find out where we're going, if we don't have a conception of what we think we're doing?" (*The Making of* Meaning 32).

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