

her yearnings for the wider experience of the city, but making the most of the limitations of Southern life. She wrote *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* at twenty-two. Joyce Carol Oates makes observations on the phenomenon of creativity, and Doris Lessing deplores the lack of ethical values in current literature. The poet's total involvement in life is expressed in Denise Levertov's writing. Adrienne Rich and Sylvia Plath and Diane Wakoski speak in various ways of the need for a new social reality for women and of the difference between men and women poets. In Anne Sexton's poem, "The Black Art," she states:

A woman who writes feels too much
those trances and portents!
...She thinks she can warn the stars.
A writer is essentially a spy.

Other selections in the book represent various segments of society: Tillie Olsen represents the working class and tells of "unprivileged lives" as she call them, characters haunted by unfulfillment; Nikki Giovanni and Maya Angelou reveal the life of black women; Adrienne Kennedy is included for her significance as an experimental dramatist. Another dramatist, Myrna Lamb, writes of "the recognition that there is no support system for a strong female artist."

The cumulative effect of these comments and of the actual prose and poetry selections overwhelms one with the intensity and seriousness of what amounts to a political movement. But we are reassured by Diane Johnson, in a superb piece called "What Women Artists Really Talk About," that the proletariat in the movement, the working women writers, are discussing their craft and leaving to the theoreticians the discussion of ideology. She concluded, "Consciousness is androgynous in some degree... when readers will accept the female consciousness as mediating consciousness in a narrative with as little reluctance as they accept a male one... things will be greatly improved for the woman writer."

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and Joan Pettigrew.**

FUNCTIONAL WRITING.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.

378 pp. \$10.00.

Widely publicized as a possible solution to the problems presented by the 'literacy crisis,' this text constitutes a highly structured course complete with pre- and post-test writing samples, a final examination, and an instructor's guide which gives explicit directions on how to use

the text and how to evaluate student writing assignments (the *Guide* sells separately for 35 cents). Although the authors tell us that *Functional Writing* has been used with students from grade 12 through graduate school, it seems designed primarily as a freshman rhetoric. Its four parts, "Making Relationships," "Writing to Readers," "Building an Argument," and "Completing an Argument" comprise a series of small units based on the principles of mastery learning.

The text begins by posing what are, to my mind, several unassailable assumptions: that writing and learning are integrally related; that the writing process is dynamic and recursive; that we become better writers not by studying grammar or rules but by writing. Most importantly, *Functional Writing* stresses the often ignored but crucial link between writer and reader, a link also forged in Linda Flower's work with reader-based prose and in E. D. Hirsch's work with relative readability. In fact, this emphasis on writing with a reader firmly in mind is *Functional Writing's* greatest strength.

Unfortunately, a vast chasm stretches between sound theoretical conception and successful execution; in negotiating that leap, the authors of this text seem regrettably to have lost their footing. In short, the text belies the promise of its excellent assumptions. Though the authors offer an explicit denial in the preface, their text is largely prescriptive: it leads the student through a set of pre-conceived 'building-block' stages which imply that the writing process is the same for all writers and that its steps, subject to a series of rules and regulations, can be discretely studied and mastered. Only at the very end of the text will students "have a chance to integrate all the concepts and operations . . . learned earlier, making them work . . . as a unified and extended process." Such a format belies the concept of writing as a "continuous, integrated" process. And the result is generally analytic and prescriptive rather than synthetic and dynamic.

The first and most basic of *Functional Writing's* steps, "Finding Relationships," deals with inferential reasoning; the presentation assumes that students "already recognize" classificatory, causal, and hierarchical modes. On the contrary, ample evidence from research and from classroom experience indicates that a great many students are functioning well below what Piaget refers to as the true-concept formation stage, the stage necessary for effective inference-drawing. In other words, the student level of cognitive development often falls well below that which this text assumes. As a result, what the authors do provide in the way of *inventio* will be less than helpful for many students; because making relationships is a cognitively complex task, they will have vast difficulty getting started. Furthermore, the authors' assurance that "the learner can readily transfer what he or she learns at any stage to other writing activities in other subjects" is ultimately unconvincing. The reason that transfer of learning so often fails to occur has much to do with the inability to conceptualize quickly and accurately, or to make relationships.

One of the few characteristics of good writers we have been able to document clearly is their consistent use of revision, though not in the sense of a final formal 'step' in the process but rather as a recurrent, often continuous activity. And yet the concept of revision, while included in several early sections of *Functional Writing*, is hardly stressed. Too often, the division into mastery-learning units obscures the need for revision; after all, if your task is to formulate tentative organizing ideas you need hardly revise. Not even the last chapter, "A Review of the Text," discusses the place of revising in the continuous process of writing.

While the text does give at least some attention to revising, it ignores syntactic fluency almost completely. It asks that students make causal connections, connect strands of argument, and so on, while many simply do not have at their fingertips the syntactic options which will allow them to indicate such relationships. The text seems to assume that students will automatically possess such opinions or that they will stumble on them while working through the assignments. To my knowledge, no evidence bears out such an assumption.

I would like to be able to report that some of these shortcomings are redeemed by an engaging style and assignments that are sufficiently motivated and fresh. Such is not the case. On the contrary, the writing is dull and often tedious ("You first present a tentative organizing idea about your information to accommodate the opposed priorities of the reader"); most topics are of the old war-horse variety ('euthanasia,' 'capital punishment'); and the assignments are often highly contrived ("You are writing a simple introductory essay concerning the effects of certain fifteenth-century inventions on the development of European society. The essay is to be included in a textbook for children of grade school age"). The cumulative effect of such topics and assignments, I'm afraid, is far less than stimulating.

Because *Functional Writing* essentially rests on such sound conceptions, I have perhaps been overly demanding in my evaluation of it. But it is indeed disappointing to find such fruitful theoretical assumptions yielding such a sterile text.

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Ronald F. Price.
MARX AND EDUCATION IN RUSSIA AND CHINA.
Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977.
376 pp. \$29.95.

This book makes a significant contribution on a subject of increasing interest, namely, the theory and practice of education in post-revolutionary Russia and China. Literature on educational develop-