

Chapter six concludes the book appropriately with international perspectives on the teaching of poetry. There is a general agreement that poetry remains unpopular at the secondary level with both students and teachers, and that much of the problem can be attributed to the influences of New Criticism. The chapter provides insight into how various systems within the global village are attempting to meet the needs of their people.

In this writer's opinion, Patrick Dias and Michael Hayhoe have written a most important book. Since most teachers currently in the classroom are products of New Criticism, this book makes a strong argument for staff development. The implicit message also questions the very nature of an objectively definable (testable) literacy. I would take issue with those who claim that this book is too theoretical to be of practical use to classroom teachers because I have seen too often that the blind application of any methodology is worthless.

Rob Field
St. Charles Parish (La.) Schools

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Richard M. Coe.

TOWARD A GRAMMAR OF PASSAGES.

Carbondale & Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 123 pp. \$10.95.

This book was published for the Conference on College Composition and Communication of the National Council of Teachers of English. The major author, a professor of English at Simon Fraser University, worked with a number of teachers to develop a schematic device to illustrate meaning relationships among the sentences in a piece of writing. The schematic device is a two-dimensional graphic layout that purports to show whether pairs of sentences are coordinate or whether one is subordinate or superordinate to the others. With this device you can show students why their writing is good or bad. You can demonstrate discourse differences between cultures and between registers. You can describe with some accuracy the typical discourses in given registers or genres of writing, such as technical writing and scientific description.

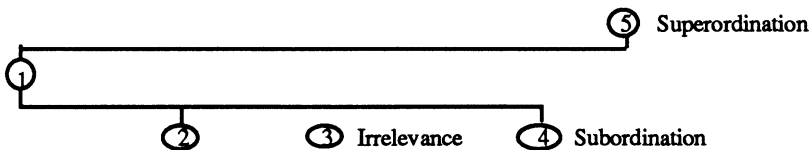
This is how it works: Given that written discourse consists of statements, or sentences or utterances, or T-units (strings of words that could be punctuated as sentences), and that these pieces of a discourse must perforce be expressed linearly, the flow of statements may be described according to the level of generality that each following statement has to the preceding.

Subordinate statements qualify, deduce, define, exemplify, give reasons, explain, and make plain. Coordinate units repeat (at the same level of generality), contradict, conjoin, and contrast. Superordinate units generalize, comment, and conclude.

An example of these statements is:

- (1) One American Indian tribe, the Iroquois, consider themselves a nation apart from the United States, even though they are citizens.
- (2) When the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, the Iroquois sent a message to Washington that they too had declared war.
- (3) They intended to use bows and arrows, though.
- (4) Since Germany made no separate peace treaty with the Iroquois at the end of World War I, the Iroquois didn't think it was necessary to declare war again in 1941.
- (5) Some other Indian tribes also think of themselves as separate nations.

The matrix of this paragraph is represented below.



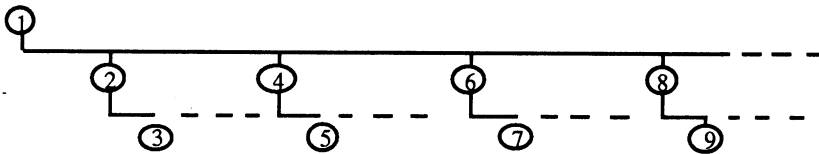
A matrix drawing is a representation of a reader's understanding of a text. Differing matrix drawings of a single passage indicate a misreading or ambiguity in the text itself.

Properly socialized members of a rhetorical community share tacit understanding of the appropriate arrangement of statements within a communication. Essay-text exposition is the property of those who have been schooled in it. In order to belong to the groups that control money and

social position we must exhibit a command of the sort of literacy that schooling is supposed to yield. This literacy includes the ability to structure statements within paragraphs in ways peculiar to cultures dominated by empirical science, with its emphasis on inductive reasoning. Teachers cannot count on students' having an intuitive grasp of discourses that are structured around controlling generalizations (topics), supporting statements, and syllogistic reasoning.

Furthermore, the investigation of the structure of registers and styles, such as magazine writing or business correspondence, can be enriched by using the discourse matrix. For example, *Time* – and *Newsweek* – style requires about twice as many indentations as other styles. Topics in these magazines are more often implied than overt.

The matrix has also been used to describe special registers such as technical writing. One most common pattern of technical writing is called the **list**. It requires an opening generalization that frames the list, and a number of items, each of which is developed further. There is no conclusion or regeneration at the end. When the matrix is drawn, it looks like this:



The discourse matrix can be used to show poor writers what is wrong with their work – the gaps, faulty development, and misorganization. It can clarify forms of punctuation. The matrix has been tested as a tool in teaching writing in carefully controlled studies. It proves to be a superior methodology. Some students lack a grasp of the basis of modern Western professional/academic discourse, that is, the logic of the sort that underlies modern science and is dominant among Western professionals. The matrix can be used to help them get with it, to learn the types of thinking, reading, and writing that are required in academic contexts. This same logic resides in all academic/professional fields.

Contrastive rhetoric, that is, different arrangements of statements depending on culture factors, can reveal cognitive differences between the thought structures dominant in modern and traditional societies. For example, there are two types of paragraphs in Chinese, one much like an inductive English paragraph, another resembling a spiral. This Chinese rhetorical pattern is the traditional eight-part essay that presents an idea in a repetitive yet developing spiral. An eight-part essay begins by asserting the importance of the topic; the next three parts develop aspects of the topic;

the fifth and sixth parts develop these aspects further; then the concluding two parts repeat the main theme. This is known as the "eight-legged" essay. It looks misorganized and illogical to English readers, for once a subtopic has been discussed and passed, one should not return to it in English essay-text.

In academic philosophical writing in Chinese and English, paragraphs in Chinese have about twice as many statements (T-units) as English. The Chinese contains more levels of generality and more statements on the same level. The topic sentence of a Chinese paragraph, the highest level of generality, is often found near the middle or the end of the paragraph. Most English paragraphs begin with topic sentences. In much Chinese discourse the importance of a statement to a speaker is demonstrated by how often the speaker reiterates it, a kind of emphasis that frustrates Westerners.

Farsi editorial paragraphs have typically five or six levels of generality; English has three or four. Farsi has much repetition and imagery, but less factual detail than English. Farsi is not concise and is not understated.

A note on the reading of this book: Start with Chapter 5 "Implications" and read the book backwards. Ironically, the first chapters are very poorly written and nearly opaque. It will be helpful to the reader to remember that the discourse matrix is not a descriptive grammar of text. It is a prescriptive grammar of logically idealized essay-text writing.

Joe Darwin Palmer
Concordia University

Contributing researchers: Susan Fahey, Sun-I-Chen, Zhu Wei-Fang, Jia Shan, Wendy Watson, Cameron Martin, and Ning Yi-Zhong.

J. Martin O'Hara, Editor.

**CURIOSITY AT THE CENTER OF ONE'S LIFE:
STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS OF R. ERIC O'CONNOR.**

Montreal: The Thomas More Institute; 1987.

589 pp. \$40, Hardcover, \$25, Paper.

I was privileged to meet Father O'Connor several times. The first occasion was in the mid-fifties when I took over the teaching of a course at the Thomas More Institute from an ailing colleague, and the last was in the late seventies, when he came to see me to explore the possibility of McGill