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Romanticism Reconsidered: The Implications of Organicism in Educational Reform.

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Romanticism reconsidered: The implications of organicism in educational reform

Griffin, Anne Burford, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1993

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ROMANTICISM RECONSIDERED: THE IMPLICATIONS OF ORGANICISM IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

Anne Burford Griffin
B.A., Louisiana Tech University, 1963
M.A., Louisiana Tech University, 1970
December 1993
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To my mother,
Jessie Wise Burford
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Southern University for employing me while I worked on my degree in Baton Rouge; without this support, I could not have completed my degree. I also wish to thank the members of my committee—Dr. William F. Pinar, Dr. Joseph G. Kronick, Dr. Ann Trousdale, Dr. Joe L. Green, and Dr. David England—who provided wise guidance and who enlarged my view of Romanticism and education.

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develop a close reading of Romantic and organicist texts—a reading that led me toward a new understanding of both the Romantics and what has traditionally been seen as Romanticism in education.

Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends. My husband Jerry; sons Jason and Clint Griffin; my mother, Jessie Burford; and my brother, Bob Burford, encouraged and sustained me. And I must also thank my generous friend Janie Stephenson; Louisiana Tech colleagues Irene Myles, Kay Prince, and Maria Hammon; L.S.U. friends Margaret Sullivan, Janet McGrath, and Lynn Benson; and Southern University colleagues Mary Joseph and Cindy Levy for their many kind, thoughtful, and encouraging words and acts. Finally, I must recognize the valuable support of my colleague Terry McConathy and of Dorothy Jewel, whose Louisiana Tech interlibrary loan searches provided me with materials which in years past I could only have wished to secure.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Berlin:

RR  Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985
WI Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges

De Man:

FI "Form and Intent in the American New Criticism"
IS "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image"
RP "The Return to Philology"
RT "The Rhetoric of Temporality"

Dewey:

AE Art as Experience
CF A Common Faith
DE Democracy and Education
EE Experience and Education
EN Experience and Nature
HWT How We Think

Felman:

JL Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight: Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture

Willinsky:

NL The New Literacy: Redefining Reading and Writing in the Schools

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The purpose of this study was to reconsider what has historically been called "Romantic" in American education. What I discovered was the ubiquity of organicism—an organicism which, when applied to education, promises to heal divisions with connection and integration. A reading of Romanticism as organicism is a traditional interpretation which fails to acknowledge the revisionist work of critics like de Man, Hartman, Bloom, and McFarland, who regard the Romantic recognition of language and self-consciousness as providing alienation, not unity. However, education continues to regard the Romantics as organicists and to provide organic remedies, such as the organic reforms proposed in the work of John Dewey, Harold Rugg, Caroline Pratt, Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, and John Willinsky. These educators adopt mechanistic metaphors in describing traditions they wish to see replaced and organic metaphors in urging their proposals for integration and connection. In chapters four and five, I focus on organic theories of writing and reading suggested by Dewey’s aesthetics and by Willinsky’s theories of language arts.
Emerson's influence on American education is extensive, but educators read him in a traditional way—as an organicist—disregarding his recognition of language and self-consciousness as creating the division between humankind and nature. This organicist interpretation of Emerson has especially dominated the process rhetoric endorsed by Willinsky. Regarding language and the imagination as implements of mediation, both Dewey and Willinsky assume a symbolic theory of language, and they argue, metaphysically, that reading and writing result in communication and shared meaning. Assuming an autonomous, centered subject, they see writing and reading as vehicles for connecting self with self and self with a community of others.

In chapter five I propose an interpretive model inspired by Shoshana Felman's reading of Lacan, one recognizing an asymmetrical triadic configuration of student, teacher, and Otherness—a triad which questions the mirrored narcissism of the organic model by suggesting the introduction of the unconscious as a source of new knowledge, a model which seeks the return not of a confirming sameness but of difference. In straining to effect connection, organicist educators have ignored Otherness, language, and difference.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Romantic poets and thinkers of the nineteenth century have been misread by American educators. They have been misread as organicists, pantheists, primitivists, idealists, and solipsists while their most significant contribution— their recognition of the discontinuity between language and nature— has been overlooked. That this contribution has been neglected, that they have been defined for us as nature worshipers and organicists, and that these misreadings have been translated into an educational philosophy called "Romantic" may be attributed to the ingenuous readings of educators; however, a more likely basis for this common interpretation is the work of literary historians of Romanticism and New Critical theorists whose interpretations eventually reified the critical canon that defined "Romanticism" for generations of Americans.

As a consequence of these interpretations, educators have read the Romantics primarily as wholistic reconcilers of fissures between subject and object, as synthesizers who imaginatively heal ruptures. Commanding Romantic critics such as Northrop Frye, René Wellek, and M. H. Abrams canonized such interpretations. Compounding the problem of
these influential historians who established the Romantics as "nature poets" and organicists was the approach of New Critics like T. S. Eliot, who attacked what he considered the excessive inwardness and subjectivity of the Romantics.

In arguing that these critics have laid the foundation for this historical misreading, I am not suggesting an ideological conspiracy, for I plan to acknowledge Romantic texts that prompted these interpretations. What I do argue is that the Romantics longed for a symbolic language that could represent union but that they expressed allegorically the reality of their fragmentation. In one voice—the dominant voice—the Romantics recognized their own self-consciousness and temporal instability and contrasted it with the superiority of nature's unselfconsciousness and permanence. This voice of recognition, what Paul de Man calls "this painful knowledge," is, in the words of de Man, the "true voice" of Romanticism (RT 191). In establishing organic interpretations, readers have ignored this voice.

In another voice—the voice that supports organic readings—the Romantics express desire and longing in symbolic language that imaginatively attempts to remove the burden of consciousness. De Man identifies the conflict as one between allegorical language, a "self seen in its authentically temporal predicament," and symbolic language, "a defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge" (RT 191). The Romantics, according to de
Man, engage in "tenacious self-mystification" (RT 191) when they, as Coleridge does, endorse symbol over allegory.

De Man says the

historical scheme . . . differs entirely from the customary picture. The dialectical relationship between subject and object is no longer the central statement of romantic thought, but this dialectic is now located entirely in the temporal relationships that exist within a system of allegorical signs. (RT 191)

The historians of Romanticism and the New Criticism read only the Romantics' wish to deny time, read only their nostalgia for the natural object, read, in other words, only their defensive strategies and ignore their failure to achieve this identification.² When their imagination allows the Romantics what de Man calls "tranquillity" and Harold Bloom calls "reciprocity," these imaginative identifications are even then "far from having been definitively reconquered"; they are, instead, what de Man terms "moments of peace" (IS 15) and what Bloom characterizes as coming "only in flashes" (9).

In their eagerness for synthesis, "Romantic" educators have chosen to respond to the flashes while disregarding what Thomas McFarland says "saturates" Romanticism: longing, incompleteness, fragmentation, ruin (7). Any Romantic impulse toward coincidence—a self-identifying or self-seeking union with nature—de Man has seen as "only one passing moment" and "a negative moment at that, since it represents a temptation that has to be overcome";
it does not, de Man reasons, "designate the main romantic experience" (RT 188). It is, however, these "flashes" and "passing moments" that educators and their critics have characterized as constitutive of "Romanticism" in education.

In short, "organic" Romanticism is the Romanticism of education. I contend, first, that organicism should not be termed "Romantic" by those who wish to draw parallels between organic reform measures and the Romantic poets and thinkers of the nineteenth century (doing so reduces the Romantics to naive nature worshipers) and, second, that the organic model neglects the complexities of cognitive relationships between student, teacher, and knowledge. Instead, I will argue that the desire for organic unity is an indulgence in a kind of mystification and that a more appropriate model would recognize not organic identity but otherness and would acknowledge what the Romantics appreciated: the instability of language.

In succeeding chapters I hope to demonstrate the tenacity of the organic model by delineating the history of an idea as it has appeared in the work of six educators--Progressives John Dewey, Harold Rugg, Caroline Pratt; deschooling philosophers Paul Goodman and Ivan Illich; and writing and reading theorist John Willinsky. I have made no effort at equal treatment, for I consider Dewey and Willinsky central to my criticism of "Romantic" organicism
and my own proposal to establish an alternative interpretive model. Running parallel to the organic philosophies of these educators is a century of debate over organic-mechanistic concepts of writing—a debate that mirrors the reform rhetoric of the six educators I’ve named and one whose organic components supposedly derive from Deweyan and Romantic expressionism.

John Willinsky’s endorsement of expressionistic writing and reader-response reading is but the latest effort at establishing writing and reading as organic processes that call for a student’s "sovereign, self-aware consciousness at the center" (Crowley 32) of these "natural" acts. Willinsky has invoked the "earlier voices" of the Romantics—especially the British Romantics—and has called for their "music" to be "replayed and reworked" (NL 188). But is Willinsky’s inspiration "Romantic," and are his attempts at synthesis sound?

Although he credits the muses of Romanticism with his adoption of organic theories of writing (a "connecting," an "integrating" of "the learner into what is to be learned") (NL 56) and reading (an "organic relationship" between readers and texts) (NL 70), I suggest that his relationship to the Romantics does not spring from what de Man calls the "main romantic experience."

In these early chapters, I plan both to establish the durability of organic educational philosophy and to
question its application to perceived dualisms in American education; in the final chapter I will focus specifically on Willinsky's endorsement of the "organic relationship" between readers and texts that he wishes to see established in the teaching of literature. As an alternative to his reader-response and organic models of interpretation, I will offer a Lacanian model suggested by the work of Shoshana Felman—a model which breaks up the dualism Willinsky and other organicists wish to avoid, a strategy correlating reader, teacher, and Other in triadic dialogue. Felman reminds us that learning is more than self-reflection, for

"self-reflection is always a mirror reflection, that is, the illusory functioning, of reasoning by the illusory principle of symmetry between self and self as well as between self and other; a symmetry that subsumes all difference within a delusion of a unified and homogenous individual identity." (JL 61)

The wholeness and unity offered by dialogical pedagogical models, Felman suggests, is "illusory," a fiction. A self-grounding system accounts for itself by means of self-reflection and smooths out differences to offer the "delusion" of "a unified" identity, but Felman's introduction of the Other disrupts this model and moves pedagogy from information to an asymmetrical reflexivity. This radical alteration of the classroom dyad results from Felman's removal of the teacher as the "subject presumed to know" (JL 84) and her introduction of thirdness, that is,
her introduction of the Other as a position from which both student and teacher hear their own unconscious discourse:

The unconscious is a discourse that is other, or ex-centric, to the discourse of a self. It is in effect a discourse that is other to itself, not in possession of itself; a discourse that no consciousness can master and that no speaking subject can assume or own.

The unconscious is a discourse that is radically intersubjective. Since it is a discourse that no consciousness can own, the only way a consciousness can hear it is as coming from the Other [original emphasis] . . . . (JL 123)

With the introduction of Otherness in high school and university classrooms, the teaching of literature will not be synonymous with the transmission of information, that is, with students' memorizing factual information about the poetry, novels, and short stories they read--information concerning the biography of an author, the meaning of a work, or the intention of an author--information which the teacher transfers to the student who responds to an anticipated question with an answer which is also expected.

Education should be more than the transmission of information; indeed, if pedagogy were defined as the transmission of information, then knowledge might be thought of as something that could be exhausted. In the kind of traditional, symmetrical dialogue defined by many educators as the organic union of questioning teacher and responding student, both student and teacher tell each other what they already know, transmitting information in a perpetual and controlled cycle. However, because this
cycle offers the opportunity for both student and teacher to express only the knowledge they already possess and offers no avenue for accessing a "discourse that is other" to "the discourse of a self," then the traditional dialogical cycle offers only an unfolding of what is already there, of what is already known.

With the introduction of Otherness, students would also move beyond the subjective responses to literature which Willinsky's pedagogy prescribes. Although Willinsky believes literature to be more than the dispensing of information, he does not move beyond a call for self-reflection (or perhaps self-reflection somehow merging with the myriad interpretations of a community of readers). His theory, then, does not recognize the Otherness outside the symmetry of self and self or self and others.

But Felman says that there is a discourse outside our conscious knowledge, a discourse "not in possession of itself," one that "no subject can master." While organicist educators call for symmetry and a smooth, integrated unity of self and other, Felman's pedagogy calls on difference, on the introduction of that "ex-centric" to "the discourse of a self." The establishing of triadic dialogue in a literature class would, then, require more than either information retrieval or subjective responses to literature. Felman's acknowledgment of Otherness recognizes ignorance--both of student and teacher--and
provides through the introduction of thirdness an avenue outside ourselves and outside the duality of self and other, an opportunity for us to discover in our ignorance new knowledge.

A partial reading of the Romantics by educators is an inadequate reading, reducing any application of Romanticism to education to the organic model which has been pervasive throughout the century. The Romantics can and should be a source for paradigm-building in education, but educators should consider the important critical work on Romanticism accomplished since the late 1960s—work which reveals the Romantics' realization of the opposition between consciousness and nature. The work of revisionist thinkers like de Man, Hartman, Bloom, and McFarland should stimulate educators to build Romantic models dedicated not to organic connection but to an interpretive or hermeneutic model that promotes the interminable dialogue which close reading encourages.
Notes to Introduction

1. The New Criticism, a critical approach which originated in the early 1940s, stressed that each part of a piece of literature should support the whole, that a poem or story should demonstrate unity and lend itself to a single interpretation. Perhaps the most powerful school in twentieth-century criticism, the New Criticism included such diverse theorists as Eliot, Allan Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Cleanth Brooks, John Crowe Ransom, William K. Wimsatt, I. A. Richards, William Empson, and others. Harold Bloom has called them a "secular clergy"; Lindsay Waters has questioned their "incarnationalist aesthetics," with "its organicist notion of the literary symbol"; and de Man has found their "salvational criticism" to be "overlaid with intentions of a mythical and religious order . . . aspir[ing] to an ultimate reconciliation on a cosmic scale" (see Waters 1; xlv; 1).

2. I use the word "failure" here not to indict the work of the Romantics but to indicate the consequences of their attempts to assuage alienation and division linguistically.
CHAPTER 2
EMERSON'S LEGACY: A "GREEN AMERICAN TRADITION"?

The green American tradition has its beginnings in Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Emerson's 'angle of vision' . . . has determined its course ever since. To be more precise, the green tradition is a branch of Emersonian thought emphasizing organic process, vital expression, cultural and political democracy, and the cultivation of indigenous art. (Peck 2)

Has Emerson bequeathed a green legacy of organicism to American education? Although John Willinsky credits the English Romantics for inspiring much of his organic philosophy in composition and reading and Dewey cites Wordsworth and Keats more frequently than he does Emerson when he attempts to define his aesthetics in Art as Experience, Emerson—as interpreted by educators and educational criticism—is the source of much of the organic philosophy in American education. He is also central to the organic philosophies of composition that Willinsky has studied and criticized; Emerson is especially significant to an expressionistic-transactionalist debate that is currently being waged in rhetoric—a debate that Willinsky's doctrines reflect. Emerson's legacy is a "green American tradition," but it is, I believe, one built on misinterpretation.
How central is Emersonian thought to the Progressives, and do they, as well as those educators following the Progressives, read Emerson’s philosophy as organic? Emerson is the Romantic whose name is most often linked to American progressivism or pragmatism and thus to Dewey; moreover, when theorists or critics do not cite Emerson, they frequently employ him in derived form—through disciples Thoreau and Whitman. For example, Harold Rugg in *The Child-Centered School* grounds his Progressive call for self-expression in the poetry of Whitman; and in the 1960s pre-writing researchers Gordon Rohman and Albert Wlecke—whose pioneering efforts are significant to process writing theory which is often considered Emersonian in philosophy—regard Thoreau as foundational to their organic theories of writing.

"Natural Continuity": Dewey’s Reading of Emerson

Dewey’s reading of Emerson is of primary importance to the dissemination of Emerson’s "organic" voice because Dewey’s ideas, though often damaged in transit from one educator or group to another, were vastly influential. How, then, did Dewey read Emerson?

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey uses passages from both W. H. Hudson and Emerson to illustrate "the mystic aspect of acute esthetic surrender" or "ecstatic communion" of a human being with his or her natural surroundings (28-29).
Hudson tells of a childhood experience having to do with the effect the "feathery foliage" of acacia trees on moonlight nights produced in him: "... this tree seem[ed] more intensely alive than others, more conscious of me and of my presence" (qtd. in AE 28). Dewey then couples Hudson's experience with Emerson's account of a walk he experienced as an adult—a walk which Emerson describes in one of the best-known passages of Nature:

Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thought[s] any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. (qtd. in AE 28-29)

Dewey concludes that experiences such as these are "resonances of dispositions acquired in primitive relationships of the living being to its surroundings"—dispositions "irrecoverable in distinct or intellectual consciousness" (29). What Dewey has taken from Nature is Emerson's expression of a longing for an escape from the burden of consciousness; this longing becomes apparent when one considers the remainder of the passage.

The remaining words—possibly the most famous passage in the book—may actually have better illustrated the "mystic" or "ecstatic" communion Dewey wishes to demonstrate: the scene is that of Emerson's becoming a "transparent eyeball." The remainder of the passage—beginning immediately after the last sentence Dewey offers—is as follows:
In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. . . . Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball. . . .

(my emphasis and my ellipses) (Nature 24)

In the final part of the quotation that Dewey has cited, Emerson says he is "glad to the brink of fear"; then he writes, "in the woods, too, a man casts off his years" and "at whatever period soever of life is always a child [my emphasis]." He rhapsodizes about "perpetual youth" in the woods and about "all mean egotism vanish[ing]" when he becomes a "transparent eyeball."

Why, then, is Emerson "glad to the brink of fear" in the passage Dewey quotes? Dewey concludes that Emerson’s joy issues from deposits from a primitive past—"irrecoverable" in our conscious thinking—a past when human beings lived in close relations to their environment: he calls this state "natural continuity" (29). But is the source of Emerson’s joy revealed in the words that immediately follow—those that Dewey omits, those that link the two sentences with the transitional word too? For the second sentence reveals the joy to be also located—that is, as has been the "exhilaration" of the earlier sentence quoted by Dewey—in the casting off of his years, in the recovery of his innocence, in his enjoyment of "perpetual youth," in his savoring the loss of consciousness of self
--in essence, in Emerson's realizing how "all mean egotism vanish[es]" in events such as the ones he has experienced in the woods and in crossing the common.

In Emerson's accounts of these two experiences, we see what Joseph Kronick refers to as "one of the great themes of Romanticism--self-consciousness" (39); what anguishes the Romantics, says Kronick, is the recognition that human beings are forever divided from nature because "perception, the means by which man comes to understand nature, severs him from the world... man dwells in the in-between; he belongs to neither the self nor to nature" (55). What Emerson perceives is not "continuity" with his natural surroundings but an acute consciousness of his separation from them: nature is stable, permanent; human beings are time-bound, mortal.

Childhood, then, offers a shelter from consciousness. When Emerson "casts off his years" and accomplishes "perpetual youth," he dispenses with the onus of self: "all mean egotism vanishes" in his contemplation of a time before thought, certainly a time before one has thoughts of death. Geoffrey Hartman believes the "Romantic poets do not exalt consciousness per se. They have recognized it as a kind of death-in-life, as the product of a division in the self." Childhood and "certain irrevocable moments," concludes Hartman, remind the poet that he has "purchased with death the life of the mind" ("Romanticism" 303).
What de Man has argued in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" is that the Romantics' use of the symbol to express a perceived relationship between human beings and nature may be construed as allegory: though symbolic identification is desired by the poet, allegorical difference results. Emerson desires to forget his self-consciousness, to see his egotism vanish, to become a transparent eyeball; however, his language reveals not identity with nature but the difference between unselfconscious nature and a time-bound mortal.

Dewey, unlike Emerson, regards language as transparent. He argues in *Experience and Nature* that symbolism "is a direct vehicle, a concrete embodiment, a vital incarnation" (82). When he sees "natural continuity" in Emerson's exhilaration, he subscribes to a symbolic theory of language—one which "would suppose that this abyss can be bridged," but, as Kronick argues, "language names the void and does not bridge it" (62).

Barbara Packer speaks of the "discouraging arithmetic" that reveals the disparity between the "serene and profound moments" Emerson speaks of in "Experience"—moments when Reason is apprehended (such as the transparent eyeball scene)—and the experience of life "as it presents itself to the senses" (129-134). These "visionary moments" constitute what Emerson calls his "half a dozen reasonable hours" in fifty years (129). What Packer designates as
Emerson's "visionary moments" and what de Man and Bloom have called "moments of peace" and "flashes," Emerson documents in his journals and essays again and again with words expressing a unity unattained and unattainable. These moments he describes in *Nature* as "delicious awakenings" (43); in journal entries they become "certain moments" (62), "a moist, warm, glittering, budding, melodious hour" or "a bright hour" (86), "a moment of sunshine" (328). In "Experience" the flashes come "for a moment" (261) or constitute "only a half-hour" of "angel-whispering" (265). Yet these evanescent moments constitute the whole of an interpretive tradition—the green American tradition—that has defined Emerson for American education.

"Natural continuity" is not represented in the Emerson passage Dewey has quoted, and the "ecstatic communion" that Dewey reads into it is undercut by Emerson's desire to escape from self-consciousness. De Man has written of the futility of any attempt to establish unity through language:

> Critics who speak of a 'happy relationship' between matter and consciousness fail to realize that the very fact that the relationship has to be established within the medium of language indicates that it does not exist in actuality. (IS 8)

Thomas Alexander's 1987 study of Dewey's aesthetics demonstrates the importance of the idea of continuity to Dewey. Continuity, says Alexander, is the core of Dewey's "metaphysics" and "the underlying idea in Dewey's
conception of 'an experience'" (xvii). Continuity, he maintains, eliminates the "mind-body problem" in Dewey and "connects naturalism with emergentism" (98). With continuity, Alexander argues, the "organic model, so important for Dewey from the start of his career, achieves mature expression . . . " (99).

And though Alexander does not directly link Dewey's theory of continuity with either Emerson or "organic Romanticism," he does not insist, as many Dewey scholars do, that Dewey's philosophy is unrelated to Romanticism:

Too often is pragmatism understood as fostering a spirit inimical to that sponsored by the Romantics. Clearly in Dewey's case we see a stern attempt to transform many of the ideas of romanticism into practicable and realizable goals. The romantic dimension of Dewey's thought cannot be safely ignored [original emphasis]. (283)

While it is apparent that Alexander sees Dewey as transforming Romanticism from the ineffectual or unrealizable to the pragmatic, I believe Dewey's aesthetics establish not a "romantic dimension" but an organic dimension.

In A Common Faith, Dewey addresses the poet's use of organic synthesis:

The ties binding man to nature that poets have always celebrated are passed over lightly. . . . A religious attitude, however, needs the sense of a connection of man, in the way of both dependence and support, with the enveloping world that the imagination feels is a universe. (53)
Dewey finds worth in the poet's establishing "ties binding man to nature" and connecting human beings "with the enveloping world." In fact, the faculty by which the synthesis is to be accomplished—the imagination—is defined by Dewey in *Experience and Nature* as an "organ of nature." He adds, "A purely stable world . . . . permits of no illusion. . . . It just exists" (62). The "romantic dimension" of Dewey's aesthetics is not Emersonian but organic. When Dewey speaks of symbolic language as a "concrete embodiment" and a "vital incarnation" and the imagination as an "organ of nature," his words reflect what Jonathan Culler has said of organicism: "[It] is not merely a natural analogue. It is also a theological idea . . . ." (155).

Hartman has commented that Romantic literature has a function analogous to that of religion. The traditional scheme of Eden, fall, and redemption merges with the new triad of nature, self-consciousness, imagination: while the last term in both involves a kind of return to the first. ("Romanticism" 307)

After the fall, the Christian yearns for redemption, which promises a return to Eden; Hartman, however, states that the Romantic artist never wishes for a return to nature, or union with nature (as an organic reading implies) but, instead, yearns for a recovery of unselfconsciousness, what Bloom refers to as a recouping of his former "selfless self" (15-16).
Dewey's veneration of the imagination apparently coincides with that of the Romantics; however, there is a significant difference. Dewey looks to the imagination to supply the tie that binds, that connects. The Romantics desire not union with nature but a transcendence of nature: "It is the destiny of consciousness, or as the English Romantics would have said, of Imagination, to separate from nature, so that it can finally transcend not only nature but also its own lesser forms [my emphasis]" (Hartman, "Romanticism" 301). Dewey's description of imagination, like the reading of the Romantics by literary historians and the organic textual theories of the New Criticism, is a much more theological idea. Moreover, his organic reading of Emerson is not refuted by educators who followed Dewey. In three studies appearing in three different decades—from the 1960s to the 1980s—educators evaluated Emerson's work as organic.

More Organic Readings: Merging with Roses and Rivers

James Dickinson Grant's 1985 Harvard dissertation argues that Dewey not only continued in the tradition of Emerson but that Emerson actually influenced Dewey. He defines Emerson as an organicist whose "integrated" (79) and holistic (177) perspective, whose belief in "wholeness" and "connection" (133), whose insistence on "connection, relation, and continuity" (175) influenced Dewey.
Important also is Grant's assertion that Emerson contributed to Dewey's aesthetics (79; 175) with his idea that "the aesthetic experience is continuous with common experience... (175). In other words, Grant argues that Emerson is, like Dewey, a philosopher who unifies.

The concepts of integration, wholism, connection, relation, and continuity frequently appear in organicist, not pragmatist, texts. Although Dewey argued that when he used words like whole and integration in Art as Experience, he used them as they apply to aesthetic experiences and "not to experiences of other kinds" ("Experience" 551), critics accused him of damaging his pragmatism with an organic aesthetics. The question I raise, however, is whether these concepts are used similarly in the works of Dewey and Emerson. Grant's thesis requires him to connect their philosophies; however, Emerson's philosophy does not reflect wholism and unity.

Both Grant and Alexander have stressed the importance of the idea of continuity in Deweyan philosophy, and Dewey himself calls for a poet's synthesizing imagination in making these connections. However, the Romantics know that language names the chasm between themselves and nature. If they recognize the break as irreversible, have they succeeded in establishing the tie connecting humanity and nature that Dewey envisions? According to Grant, both Emerson and Dewey regard continuity as occurring "through
interaction with nature" (96). Thus, Grant must demonstrate how Emerson acknowledges humanity's connection with an "enveloping world." He attempts to do so by using a passage from "Self-Reliance":

"These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. . . . But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time. (qtd. in Grant 75)

Grant reads this passage as a reflection of Emerson's belief (shared with Dewey) that "life is essentially experience" and that the "fullest possible experience is marked by full integration of organism and environment," the "indication of this full integration" being the "ability to live fully in the present . . . ." (75). Hence, Grant uses this passage to join Dewey's call for integrating the human being with the "enveloping world" with what he considers to be similar organic sentiments in Emerson. However, Grant misreads Emerson. What Emerson says in the passage is not symbolic; there is no identity, only difference. The human being is self-conscious, mortal--in short, is becoming. The rose, however, is. De Man would say of the rose, ". . . existence and essence coincide" (IS 4). Grant omits the two sentences that open the rose passage and elides two sentences appearing in the
middle of the passage; they appear below in the order I have named:

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am,' but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose.

... .

Before a leaf bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and its satisfies nature in all moments alike. (SR 157)

Grant reads the rose passage as an endorsement of living "fully in the present," (75); Emerson, however, questions whether postponing, remembering, tiptoeing human beings can ever secure the satisfied stability of the rose living "above time." Grant has proposed "full integration of organism and environment" as a condition for living fully in the present; however, Emerson's words reflect no integration of the rose and the human being. Grant confuses Emerson's privileging of the present moment with a spatializing self-presence. In "Self-Reliance" Emerson says, "This one fact the world hates; that the soul becomes; for that forever degrades the past . . . ." (158). What he acknowledges in this statement is that human beings are bound by time. In privileging the present moment, Emerson makes an ontological, not an organic, assertion. In misreading the rose passage, Grant erroneously credits Emerson with having established what Dewey endorses: "ties binding man to nature."
In the rose passage Emerson grapples with the temporal dilemma of the human being who cannot be buoyed by the thought of a correlation between the "satisfied" rose—"perfect in every moment of its existence"—and the human being who cannot emulate this essence. The rose lives "with nature in the present, above time." Language, or self-consciousness, lets the human being think the difference; the rose is, as Whitman in "Song of Myself" says of unselfconscious animals, "placid and self-contained."

Emerson's rose expresses fully the Romantic sense of estrangement: the rose is; the human being is becoming. Friedrich Schlegel represents Romanticism as "an eternal 'becoming' that has as its chief characteristic that it 'nie vollendet sein kann'—can never be completed (qtd. in McFarland, 13). The rose is complete, placid, self-contained. Human beings feel incomplete and fragmented. Emerson says in "Experience": "I know better than to claim any completeness for my picture. I am a fragment, and this is a fragment of me" (272). Thomas McFarland sees this incompleteness and fragmentation as constitutive of Romanticism (7), and he suggests that the Romantic preoccupation with infinity as a solution to problems of temporality is accompanied, paradoxically enough, by the poet's perception of parts—fragments that can only hint at "the hypothetical wholeness of infinity" (28-29). The
fragmentation and the parts, says McFarland, are the reality.

Emerson's work is replete with statements reflecting the distinction our minds make between our own feeling of fragmentation and the stability of infinite nature; the problem, he reasons, is our self-consciousness. In Emerson, images of binding, belting, strapping, and girding reveal the human condition; on the other hand, images of fluidity and vigor characterize the infinity of nature. His essays and journals declare the human desire for liberty--"freedom boundless I wish" ("Journals" 137)--but they also reveal the reality of "a strap or belt which girds the world" ("Fate" 46)--a "bounded world, bounded everywhere--all immoveably bounded, no liquidity of hope or genius" ("Journals" 329).

He represents self-consciousness as the problem:

But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. . . . Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence,—must always be formidable. . . . (SR 149)

The alienation arises from thought, but Emerson's only remedy for what Hegel calls man's "unhappy consciousness" is to "pass again into his neutrality," that is, to return to an unselfconscious state of childhood. Of course, Emerson realizes this to be no legitimate alternative.
Elsewhere he says, "Every thought is also a prison. . . ."; however, he proposes that the poet might "unlock our chains" and provide "emancipation" with "a new thought" coming from "greater depth" ("Poet" 36). The new poet that Emerson proposes, he concedes that he has not found, for "Time and nature yield us many gifts, but not yet the timely man, the new religion, the reconciler, whom all things await" (238). While Emerson has not found the "timely man" or the "reconciler," his search for freedom from thought is a Romantic refrain. Bloom has shown the objective of the search not to be that which traditional criticism has proposed—the poet’s uniting of self and nature—but a recovery of unselfconsciousness. The Romantic poet was, according to Bloom, a seeker not after nature but after his own mature powers, and so [he] turned away, not from society to nature, but from nature to what was more integral than nature, within himself. The widened consciousness of the poet did not give him intimations of a former union with nature or the Divine, but rather of his former selfless self. (15-16)

McFarland contrasts the Romantics’ reality of fragmentation with their attraction to infinity; that attraction, he says, is often represented by the ocean as infinity and by the stream as a symbol of process (28). In "Experience," Emerson struggles to name "the sentiment from which it [consciousness] sprung, to name "this unbounded substance." He writes that the word "Being" is as close as we can come to naming the "ineffable cause": ". . . we
have arrived as far as we can go. Suffice it for the joy of the universe that we have not arrived at a wall, but at interminable oceans" (268).

Grant's use of the rose to explain Emerson's compulsion to connect typifies education's interpretation of the Romantics. At times the misreading has come from an educator's incomplete grasp of the texts; at other times, educators have listened to the voices of literary historians and critics. But the characterizations of Emerson as an organic philosopher are the standard, not the exception.

In his 1972 study, Richard Welke Cass attempts to plumb Emerson's work for its implications in reforming curriculum. He says the "... correspondence between mind and matter, subject and object, physical laws and moral laws is for Emerson the key to knowledge and the basis for knowing" (54). Emerson, in Cass's interpretation, becomes a reconciler of epistemological dualisms: "Emerson's theory of knowledge, then, is more than either cognitive or blind faith [;] it is a unification of rational cognition with intuitive perception" (113). 7

To illustrate his own organic conception of curriculum, Cass draws an extensive analogy between Emerson's view of the human mind and the natural characteristics of the Mississippi River—a symbolic
rendering inspired, or so he apparently believes, by the organic ideas of Emerson:

The mind Emerson sees in man metaphorically resembles a mighty river, one like Twain's Mississippi, perhaps. Like this river, man's thought draws from an enormous watershed for its ever appearing and always renewed substance.

Like this Mississippi, then, Emerson's conception resembles the river's ceaseless process of skillfully going somewhere by being broad but by also being defined. . . [man] must be able to know intuitively, see generally, and refocus to the horizon. Man's knowing, then, must be a three-dimensional matrix of broad and deep movements. (149-151)

In the Cass interpretation, Emerson offers organic synthesis of intuitive and cognitive ways of knowing in a "ceaseless process," which is both "broad" and "defined." Emerson, however, sees division, not synthesis. Cass's reading of Emerson as a wholistic philosopher exhibits strands of New Critical organicism. Though he does not acknowledge the New Criticism's attack on Romanticism, he does apply a New Critical apparatus. Cass uses T. S. Eliot's objective correlative in reading Emerson's "The Over-Soul":

The pattern and movement of the essay reproduces something of the pattern by which the Over-Soul functions in man. Hence the essay, itself, becomes the objective correlative of the working of the Over-Soul, a concept which the essay is simultaneously trying discursively to define. (23-24)

Not only does Cass read Emerson as a reconciler, but he also sees, New Critically, an organic totality of effect in the Emerson essay.
Like Dewey and Grant, Cass attributes to Emerson powers of synthesis and reconciliation which Emerson himself desires but never achieves. Emerson records in his journal:

The bread which we ask of Nature is that she should entrance us, but amidst her beautiful or her grandest pictures I cannot escape the second thought. I walked this P. M. in the woods, but there too the snowbanks were sprinkled with tobacco-juice. We have the wish to forget night and day, father and mother, food and ambition, but we never lose our dualism [original emphasis]. (275)

Perhaps the most extravagant claim made for Emerson's unifying powers and the application of those powers to education appears in Rena Lee Williams Foy's "The Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Its Educational Implications" (1962). Foy reads Emerson as an idealist. As a result, she transcendentalizes the curriculum she proposes. As Cass had drawn epistemological implications from "the ceaseless process" of the Emersonian Mississippi River, Foy wishes to stamp curriculum with Emersonian eternal processes of "striving" and "advancing" toward what she theocritically terms "ascension":

Throughout the writings of Emerson, there is affirmed an unwavering faith in a universal order of things, the order is not static, but each component part is striving for ascension--to the One, the Great Unity. (9)

The concern with parts-to-whole relationships issues from the reality of the Romantics' fragmented being, but the Romantic emphasis, according to McFarland, always falls on
the parts. Foy, however, believes Emerson has transcended the dualisms, and she metaphysically focuses on the Whole, the One, the Great Unity. Since component parts of the Emersonian doctrine are "striving for ascension," then the Foy-informed classroom will duplicate this process:

Since all diversity at last blends into unity, the student's progress should be marked by increasing ability to organize, classify, relate, and synthesize. The sequence is from the learning of facts to philosophy. (354)

Foy also applies unity to the study of morals; nature, she says, provides the model for moral instruction:

"The teaching of the ascension process gives the child a sense of being caught up on an advancing continuum . . . ." (343). Foy's reading of Emerson is, in short, organic and theological.

Emersonian Process Writing

Winifred Horner has shown that until quite recently composition research has largely been accomplished by schools of education, not by departments of English (6), and James Berlin has said the history of composition is "closely related" to the history of American education (RR 1). Not surprisingly, then, "Romantic" rhetoricians, often educators or researchers working closely with educational theorists, adopt an organic reading of Emerson.

John Willinsky explains writing as a "method of connecting, of integrating the learner into what is to be
learned. . . " (NL 56), and he bases his organic theories of process\(^8\) writing on British Romanticism; however, his research also draws heavily from American sources. Though Willinsky does not specifically cite Emerson as a Romantic source for his New Literacy, other American process theorists do. In fact, within process pedagogy, both expressionistic and transactional theorists specify Emerson as forebear.

Berlin has graphed movements within composition pedagogy in American colleges through both nineteenth- and twentieth-century manifestations. An epistemic transactionalist, he grounds his own theories in the democratic, social, communal aspects of Emerson. However, Berlin readily acknowledges that Emerson is claimed by expressionists who see him in a very different way: as an individualist concerned with self-expression. Although these two groups have conflicting aims, each looks to Emerson as foundational. Stranger still, each reads him similarly: as an organicist.

In his history of nineteenth-century rhetoric, Berlin's chapter on "Emerson and Romantic Rhetoric" claims Emerson for the transactionalists. And though Mark Wiley's essay interpreting the work of two leading expressionists--Peter Elbow and Donald Bartholomae\(^9\)--designates Emerson an expressionist, a common ground does emerge in the two interpretations: an organic and metaphysical reading of
Emerson. Both Berlin's and Wiley's process theories emphasize a symbolic view of language. This view, the Coleridgean position, has been defined by Ann Berthoff as mind and nature "shar[ing] with nature an organic character--an essentially active, growing, developing, transforming power" (59). This symbolic, Coleridgean position also defines Willinksy's position on process writing:

The process model of writing would seem to provide a clear instance of Coleridge's 'blending, fusing' powers of the imagination to the classroom. In the process model, the teacher ensures that the student's writing takes on a development of its own . . . until it achieves a kind of organic independence. ("Seldom" 274)

Like Willinsky, American theorists embrace organicism, but they most frequently use Emerson rather than the British Romantics as a model.

Berlin's argument that language is the key to Emerson's epistemology is one that I have also advanced, but Berlin sees a different Emerson, one who "locates the real in the fusion of the sensual and ideal" and who says "knowledge is possible only in the interaction of the two" (46). This is, of course, Emerson as symbol-maker, reconciler, and uniter. According to Berlin, it is Emerson's use of metaphor that establishes a "point of intersection between outside and inside" (48).

Berlin says Emerson believes that nature supplies us with the language through which our sense perceptions of
the material world can express the ideal (48). In Berlin's interpretation of Emerson, then, sense perceptions link human beings to nature. Joseph Kronick has spoken of Emerson's concern with "the medium of perception."

According to Kronick, "Emerson's use of the word perception . . . is indistinguishable from the concept of mediation." Perception, in other words, does not link the subject and object; it mediates. Kronick continues, "What concerns Emerson is the medium of perception; we can never see the thing-in-itself because the medium of the senses intervenes between self and object [original emphasis]" (55). Emerson says, "This slight discontinuity which perception effects between mind and the object paralyzes the will" (qtd. in Kronick 55). In Emerson's view, then, perception does not link material nature and the ideal but intervenes between self and object.

In "The Poet" Emerson does not find the making of metaphor a "natural" thing:

For poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word or a verse and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem. (224)

The necessity of "substitut[ing] something of our own," Emerson believes, is due to the discontinuity existing between nature and the poet:

Language is fossil poetry. . . . so language is made up of images or tropes, which now in their secondary
As Kronick tells us, "Language does not link mind and nature, for nature has its own visual grammar, and intellect must borrow a language [my emphasis]" (61). Kronick indicates that Emerson is well aware of the inadequacy of symbolic language; instead of "bridg[ing] the gap between subject and object," Emerson looks on language as "creat[ing] the abyss wherever it appears" (61).

Berlin, however, believes Emerson endorses the "use of metaphor. . . as the paradigm for all language use" (48). He reads Emerson as indicating that "[s]ubject and object have meaning only in the creation of the unifying symbol" (48). Because of his own belief in the social and transactional uses of writing, Berlin looks for the social in Emerson; he says Emerson "spells out [language's] role in public discourse. . . . [It] must be metaphoric" (51). In Berlin's analysis Emerson seems to imply that metaphoric language is to be called up only as an act of will; Emerson, however, recognizes figuration as integral to language: language is "fossil poetry" made up of images and tropes "now in their secondary uses." Language is, then, "always figurative through and through" (Miller 48). According to Berlin's perception of Emerson, the writer achieves a "metaphoric display" only after concrete experience and the idea have been united; thus he
interprets Emerson as insisting on the importance of "contact with all of a language's resources" (52).

Emerson says language decays and "old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults . . ." (qtd. in Berlin 52). But Berlin interprets Emerson's dissatisfaction with the capacity of language to represent reality as an exhortation for writers to create fresh metaphors to express truth. He reads Emerson as endorsing a "fresh union of object and idea" so that these new metaphors might express truth (52-53).

Berlin has misread Emerson. He sums up Emerson's influence on process rhetoric with these words:

> Emerson's rhetoric, not restricted to securing a desired effect on the audience, was attempting to restore the search for truth to the composing act. Truth, moreover, is organic, is a holistic product growing out of the entire rhetorical situation—reality, speaker, listener, and language. All are involved in discovery and each changes in response to each. (WI 57)

Finally, Berlin says, "... one does not have to be a philosophical idealist to see reality as the convergence of perceiver and perceived with language as the agent of mediation" (57). With an organic interpretation of Emerson's language philosophy at its base, Berlin's transactional theory insists on the convergence of subject and object through language. In this insistence on language as a vehicle of union, Berlin subscribes to what Derrida calls the "metaphysics of presence." Sharon
Crowley has explained this relationship of language, consciousness, and the world:

. . . by a kind of doubling movement, the relation of signification that exists between voice and mind is transferred to the relation of minds to nature. In other words, the metaphysics of presence assumes two sets of similar relations: as minds represent or signify the substances of nature, so does language represent or signify the 'stuff' of minds, and through this, nature. . . . Thus traditional metaphysics constructed a self-sealing argument regarding the representative relationships that exist between minds, the world, and language. (3)

Mark Wiley’s attaching of expressionistic theory to Emerson’s thought focuses not on the social, democratic aspects of Emerson that Berlin stresses but on Emerson’s individualism: Wiley represents his subjects—Elbow and Bartholomae—as theorists who argue for student empowerment. Wiley says the two compositionists help students gain "real voice" by encouraging them to resist authority; they are to do this by making language their own. Once again, a critic speaks of language as a tool, as a medium of communication; Emerson, however, expresses doubts as to the capacity of language to make thought phenomenal.

Wiley says, "Elbow’s trope of real voice resonates with . . . Emerson’s belief that our words originate from things" (59). However, he, in the doubling movement Crowley has described, maintains that Emerson desires the things themselves to speak through a language generated through intellectual acts focused on their experiences. Language is used
by a person to get beyond words in order to reconnect oneself with the world [my emphasis]. (59)

This idea of getting beyond words to reconnect oneself with the world is not Emersonian: Emerson recognizes the split between signifier and signified, between subject and object. Adopting the "right" word, Wiley says, may aid a writer insofar as "the relationship between self and objects in the world is revealed through the proper use of language" (59). Once again, the interpretation is language as a tool, a way of accessing reality; and once again, the reading is organic: words will aid in reconnecting oneself with the world. Wiley interprets expressionism as encouraging writers "to get beyond words" in making these connections.10

Eager to relieve the expressionists from the charge that they are excessively subjective, even solipsistic, he declares real voice to signify "a special type of social entity"; peer response groups become "small, closed communities." While striving for real voice is still theoretically an "individual activity," it is "carried out in a public sphere; hence, it is simultaneously personal and transpersonal, and in a wide sense, religious in nature." Individuals strive to "realize a power within, which, when manifested, transcends the individual and unites the group" (61). This "power within" issues from what Wiley calls "the Emersonian imperative for each person
to seek the 'God within.'" He suggests this power might be
called the unconscious, the soul, or instinct but that its
function is "to reunite the person with the world" (61).
The function of the "power within" is, in Wiley's
rendering, a mystical, organic unifying of the person with
the world.

Debrah Raschke--a transactional theorist--regards the
"real voice" of expressionist rhetoric as a Romanticism
perilously close to solipsism--the indictment Wiley seems
aware of when he speaks of expressionist peer editing as
social, public, communal. Raschke regards the
expressionist self as "a self beyond language," one
"created away from and without dialogue with the rest of
society." And Raschke regards the expressionists' use of
peer editing as "subtly reinforcing this personal
landscape" (6). More significant than her interpretation
of Emerson as the cornerstone of expressionism is her
misreading of Emerson. She interprets him as endorsing the
idea that language is "neutral and pure," and she
characterizes him as unifying the Not Me and Me, "turning
all of it into a mirror of his own mind." Emerson, she
says, "essentially denies difference, denies the dialectic
by making it all a unified whole contained within the human
mind" (9-10). Raschke obviously wishes to place Emerson
in the expressionist group Wiley has characterized. To do
so, she misreads both Emerson's theory of language (she
sees him as a symbolist) and his message of unity. She too reads him as organic.

Two different Emersons emerge from the transactionalist and expressionist uses of Emerson; however, the two schools are one in their organic reading of Emerson. With their emphasis on (or ambivalence about) an interpretive community," what the two schools reflect is the tension Gregory Desilet has seen between what he labels as "rhetoric" and as "communication." He says the compositionists who stress communication as establishing "shared meaning" through a community of interpreters is a hermeneutic position that is metaphysical:

... hermeneutics retains the key feature of metaphysical orientations: concealed preference. Hermeneutics leans to one side of the same/different opposition in the ease with which it assumes communication, as the sharing of meaning, to be pervasive in the use of language. This choice privileges the sameness of intersubjectivity in the self/other relation, thereby upsetting the balance in the individual/collective relation. (153)

This is Berlin's epistemic (transactional) position, one that places great emphasis on the intersubjective and social contexts of communication while at the same time rejecting the expressionists for their individual or private visions. "Acceptance by a consensus of others becomes the basic criterion for what counts as knowledge" in Desilet's interpretation of hermeneutic communication (156). In privileging collective over individual interpretation, Desilet says, "communication" shows its
metaphysical mooring. On the other hand, "rhetoric," as Desilet distinguishes it, "conveys the stimulation and provocation of meaning with the additional advantage of neither implying nor precluding shared meaning" (169). This view, he says, is represented by Derridean post-structuralism.

Desilet cites the work of Steven Mailloux, who has distinguished two hermeneutics: first, "hermeneutic realism," in which "meanings are discovered, not created," with texts determining interpretation and, second, "hermeneutic idealism," in which "meaning is made, not found," with communal interpretation creating the text (qtd. in Desilet 174). Hermeneutic idealism is the description which best characterizes what Desilet sees in the hermeneutic emphasis on "shared meaning."

Berlin's pedagogy requires shared, communal interpretation. In this, in his misreading of Emerson's understanding of language, and in his view of Emerson as organicist, Berlin reflects a philosophy with metaphysical shadings. In his attempt to secure Emerson for social, epistemic composition theory, Berlin must deny Emerson's subjectivity while at the same time privileging what he views as Emerson's symbolic theory of language. Though Berlin and Wiley see in Emerson a foundation for conflicting rhetorical theories, they hold in common the notion of an Emerson with powers of reconciliation.
Sources of an Organic Emerson

What is the explanation for the organic interpretation of Emerson that pervades education? Even the interpretation that seems to issue from an educator's own careless reading possibly has been prompted by two powerful sources that he or she is perhaps unaware of: literary historians and the New Criticism. Jasper Neel tells of the omnipresent authority of the New Criticism and Northrop Frye's myth criticism: "These two systems led to tens of thousands of articles and books explaining the true meaning of each poem, play, and novel in the Anglo-American tradition" (57). The critical interpretations of these authoritative voices have provided a base for studies in English for generations. Sharon Crowley reveals how M. H. Abrams assumed "an authoritative reading" for a piece of literature--"a reading which would put a stop to all other readings and which would, then, not itself be readable (that is, open to criticism)" (20). These critical interpretations foster the single best meaning while restraining others. The result is an interpretation that would, in Crowley's words, "put a stop" to other interpretations.

These "authoritative" readings of the Romantics produced a single way of regarding the Romantics: as organicists who wished to reconcile self and nature. In 1962 a René Wellek essay was published in an edition which
Frye edited and titled *Romanticism Reconsidered*. In his essay Wellek gives a synoptic survey of German, French, and American Romantic criticism of the twentieth century; he finds almost univocal agreement.

He says that a "neglected" German work advances the "once central and valid concept: the reconciling, synthetic imagination as the common denominator of Romanticism" (113). He credits Morse Peckham for "singling out the criterion of 'organic dynamism' as the definition of Romanticism" (109). He commends Beguin's "understanding of the nature of the Romantic imagination and its rootedness in a sense of the continuity between man and nature and the presence of God" (121), and he finds Poulet's evaluation of "all Romanticism" wisely summarized as an "effort to overcome the oppositon of subject and object . . ." (122). Abrams, he credits with having established "the chief theme of continuity. . . in many important Romantic poems" (125), and he commends Wilson Knight for having come "to the right conclusion that Wordsworth aims at a 'fusion of mind with nature to create a living paradise . . .'" (127). Finally, Wellek summarizes the collective, monolithic wisdom of decades of Romantic theorizing:

In all of these studies, however diverse in method and emphasis, a convincing agreement has been reached: they all see the implication of imagination, symbol, myth, and organic nature, and see it as part of the great endeavor to overcome the split between subject and object,
the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious. This is the central creed of the great Romantic poets in England, Germany, and France. It is a closely coherent body of thought and feeling. (131-32)

T. S. Eliot, leading theorist of the New Criticism, argued for the transparency of poetic language: "Language in a healthy state presents the object, is so close to the object that the two are identified" (qtd. in Waters, xliv). The Eliot position is the symbolic or organic position that educators have themselves seen, or have had represented to them, as being characteristic of Romantic literature. Eliot's idea that language reflects the object so closely that the two are one is organic and, as Waters says, revealing of "an ontological compulsion": the literary symbol accesses reality (il).

Catherine Belsey has pointed out the weakness of the idea that words "inhere timelessly in the phenomenal world or in the continuity of essential human nature." With words inhering timelessly, the meaning of a piece of literature, once determined, becomes petrified. What the New Critics failed to acknowledge, Belsey says, is that language . . . provides the possibility of meaning, but because language is not static but perpetually in process, what is inherent in the text is a range of possibilities of meaning. . . . Meanings are not fixed or given, but are released in the process of reading. . . . (20).

Paradoxically, while New Critical theorists castigated, on the one hand, Romantic subjectivity--the way the Romantics
pondered separation and wholeness--they, on the other hand, espoused the symbol and organic form.

It is no wonder that education has failed to recognize that the significant legacy of the Romantics is their concern with language and consciousness and not organic unity. This reduction of Romanticism to organicism\(^3\) has prompted educators to define wholism, unity, reconciliation, synthesis, and other components of organicism as "Romantic."
Notes to Chapter 2

1. Allusions to Emerson and the affinity of his thought with both Progressivism and pragmatism are abundant. He is commonly presented as an organic philosopher of unity and wholism.

   Interpretations link him to the educational, political, and social aspects of Progressivism. For example, Daniel Aaron calls him "the real prophet of the progressive tradition" (*Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives*, p. 7). Daniel H. Peck identifies Emerson as the inspiration for the Progressive "insurgence" in anthropology (Veblen), architecture (Sullivan) and education (Dewey) at the turn of the century in the city of Chicago; in the same book—*The Green American Tradition: Essays and Poems for Sherman Paul*—Hugh Dawson points out correspondences between Emerson and Whitman's organic philosophy and Louis Sullivan's views on both architecture and education (see pp. 2; 6-7; 100-108). See also John F. Roche's "Building for Democracy: Organic Architecture in Relation to Progressive Education." Roche connects Chicago's "Organic Architecture" and Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright with "the Romantic theory of organicism" (p. 298); Dewey, he says, drew the respect of both Sullivan and Wright, both of whom were passionate advocates of "radical change in education" (p. 305). See also Lauren S. Weingarden's *Louis Sullivan: The Banks*. Weingarden specifically refers to Sullivan's inheritance of the "symbol-making project" from Whitman and Emerson (p. 7).

   Emerson is also considered a progenitor of educational progressivism and American pragmatism. James Dickinson Grant has called Emerson "an important forerunner of progressive education in the United States" (p. 2) and "the father of the distinctly American tradition of philosophy" (185) ("Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Dewey: A Study of Intellectual Continuities and Influence"). And Cornel West has said Emerson is "the appropriate starting point for the pragmatists' tradition" (The American Evasion of Philosophy, p. 6). In a 1943 study, Albert E. Lewis says, "Regardless of terminology, Emerson stands at the fork of the road which leads on to Dewey and Kilpatrick and the progressive movement of today" ("The Contributions of Ralph Waldo Emerson to American Education," p. 168). Denis Donoghue describes Emersonian thought as a precursor of pragmatism (Emerson and His Legacy, pp. 26-27). See also Howard Mumford Jones, who has collected Emerson's work on education and who points out elements of progressivism in Emerson's educational philosophy (Emerson on Education, pp. 19-20).
2. Ann Shumaker is listed as a co-author of The Child-Centered School; however, in future references I will use Rugg alone (one wonders whether Shumaker served in a research capacity in this endeavor; the style appears to be pure Rugg).

3. Dewey's aesthetics, not his instrumentalism, is central to my study of his organicism. Alexander, however, argues that "the central guiding thought" in Dewey's philosophy is the "aesthetic dimension of experience" (p. xiii) and that the "aesthetic experience . . . is an inherent possibility of most experience" (p. 6). "What was needed most of all," says Alexander, "was an analysis of the relationship between his description of aesthetic experience and his instrumentalism" (184). Positing that experience "underlies both aspects of his philosophy," Alexander believes "the fundamental condition for instrumentalism is that experience is capable of integrated fulfillment which is the result of intelligently directed human activity" (p. 184).

4. I make no attempt to characterize Dewey's religious beliefs when I associate organicism with theology. James Dickinson Grant quotes Dewey as having said in a letter to Joseph Ratner that his antipathy to dualism was emotional, not religious. Grant concludes that the base of religious belief in Dewey and Emerson was similar: "But there is clearly an affinity of religious spirit between the two men—both men associate religious experience with a sense of broad connection between man and nature" (p. 80).

5. Grant studied the underlined passages and marginal notations Dewey made in his personal copies of Emerson's works; he also read the class notes Edwin Peck took in the course on English and American transcendentalism Dewey taught in 1892. Peck recorded these remarks of Dewey's: "Emerson saw clearly the absurdity of making art a thing in itself, more than almost any other man. Art is a vehicle. To get this one idea well from Emerson is worth reading several of his essays through. . . ." (see Grant, p. 80).

6. Alexander has given comprehensive treatment to what he calls the "Pepper-Croce Thesis"; see the introduction to John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling; also see chapter two. Pepper pronounced Art as Experience organicist and argued that an "organistic esthetics cannot be harmonized with a pragmatic esthetics" (see "Some Questions on Dewey's Esthetics," p. 372). Others called Art as Experience "romantic" (Campbell, p. 85); "idealistic" (Platt 108; Kazin 143) and "organicist (Campbell 85; Jeannot 267). D. C. Phillips believes Dewey's philosophy has all the characteristics of
the five components he names as essential to organicism. Although he does not associate Dewey’s organicism with Romantic literature (he believes evolutionary biology and Hegel were sources), he does maintain that organicism is Dewey’s "root metaphor" (see Phillips’ "John Dewey and the Organismic Archetype," pp. 232-271).

7. Kieran Egan’s 1990 study, Romantic Understanding: The Development of Rationality and Imagination, Ages 8-15, is suggestive of Cass’s use of Emerson as a reconciler of intuitive and cognitive ways of knowing. Though Egan revises turn-of-the-century recapitulation theory, his models are the British Romantics and Alfred North Whitehead. Representing "modern educational thought at its best as merely footnotes to Wordsworth" (286), Egan calls on a Romantic model for reconciling knowledge accumulation and psychological development. Egan views the Romantic achievement as being one of "discovering a key to harmony and balance in our cultural lives" (82). See also Harriet Scott’s recapitulation theory of curriculum in Organic Education (1899). Scott’s new curriculum is described as having "branches of study" springing "from the same trunk (p. 8).

8. What constitutes "process" rhetoric is currently being debated in research discourse. Its opposite is product-oriented pedagogy, often described as "current-traditional." Generally, process theorists describe writing as a process of discovery.

Andrea Lunsford and Robert Connors (The St. Martin’s Handbook) define process writing as "seamless and recursive, meaning that its goals or parts are constantly flowing into and influencing one another, without any clear break between them" (p. 2). Lunsford and Connors, as do many process theorists, disdain clearly defined prewriting, writing, revising "steps," saying that writing, instead, takes place "simultaneously, in a kind of spiraling sequence" of "exploring, drafting, and revising all taking place throughout the process of writing" (p. 2).

Though process theorists Maxine Hairston and John Ruszkiewicz advise students not to think of the final product, they, unlike Lunsford and Connors, do envision steps and stages, advising students of the "smaller steps you can take to pull off that finished product," for "writing... is a process that moves through stages." Their "process menu" includes preparing, planning, drafting, incubating, revising, editing, and proofreading (The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers, p. 5).

The historiographer of two NCTE-published studies of rhetoric, James Berlin has outlined two major schools of twentieth-century process composition: subjective
and transactional. According to Berlin, subjective rhetoric—represented by expressionism—locates reality within the individual and transactional—represented by classical, cognitive, and epistemic pedagogies—locates reality in the transaction between the observer and the observed (between the private and the social); see Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985, pp. 145-179.

9. These designations oscillate, both with writers themselves declaring an alteration in theory or with critics contending among themselves as to the correctness of a classification. In Rhetoric and Reality Berlin says Bartholomae "has recently moved firmly into the ranks of the epistemic category" (p. 185).

10. Bob Morgan calls the kind of plea Wiley makes to "get beyond words" the "bleached language" or "correspondence" theory of language. Language is transparent: it "conveys the presence of the world to us"; there is "a one-to-one correspondence between the objects in the world, the words in a language, and the concepts in our heads" ("Three Dreams of Language; Or, No Longer Immured in the Bastille of the Humanist Word," p. 450).

11. The transactional has at its theoretical base the importance of writing as a transaction between the writer and his or her social environment, between the private and the public. Berlin says expressionists ground their theory in private discovery; for them, he says, reality is "a personal and private construction" (p. 145).

12. I do not wish to misconstrue the Berlin position. In his later volume on the history of twentieth-century composition, he speaks of language not being a "simple sign system" and of language "being the very condition that makes thought possible" (p. 48). However, in his characterization of Emerson, Berlin adopts an organicist position; in other parts of this earlier text, he also endorses the use of organic metaphors to describe the composing process (p. 83).

13. See Morse Peckham, The Triumph of Romanticism: Collected Essays, pp. 12-13; see also Peter L. Thorslev, Romantic Contraries: Freedom and Destiny, p. 85. Peckham reduces the three components A. J. Lovejoy and Wellek have defined as "Romantic" to one—organicism—and Thorslev says organicism is Romanticism's "most
distinctive" hallmark. These writers, of course, fall into the pattern of traditional Romantic criticism.
CHAPTER 3  
THE LANGUAGE OF REFORM  

In reform tracts of the twentieth century, educators have attempted to mend division, separation, and alienation with wholeness, connection, and integration; in expressing the division, theorists have used mechanistic metaphors which associate educational problems with technology, construction, production, and confinement; in proposing reform, they have used organic metaphors which symbolically identify their reform with nature. While the idea of the whole as being especially desirable is as old as thought and the valuing of the thing "grown" over the thing "made" (Williams 37) is a distinction which Leo Marx says permeates American thought (229), organicism is mystification which fails to mend irreconcilable divisions or to ameliorate genuine problems in education.

Paul de Man believes the alienation that the nineteenth Romantics experienced is inescapable and that any attempt at reconciling subject and object is impossible. According to de Man and Geoffrey Hartman, the New Critics, who criticized the Romantics for their subjectiveness, were equally alienated and equally incapable of "escaping this inwardness" (Waters 1).
If, as de Man has argued, self-consciousness—made possible by language—is inescapably accompanied by the reality of separation, then our own time, no less than that of the nineteenth century, is destined to be inwardly contemplative of that separation. De Man believes an awareness of this alienation is marked in Romantic texts by allegorical difference, not symbolic identification. The allegory, de Man says, arises out of a recognition of time and mortality, and it "takes place in a subject that has sought refuge against the impact of time in a natural world to which, in truth, it bears no resemblance" (RT 190).

When educators represent solutions to divisions within education with organic metaphors, they are—unlike the Romantics—expressing symbolic identification instead of allegorical difference. De Man maintains that when the Romantics do engage in symbolic identification, they are engaged in a "defensive strategy" in their attempt "to hide" from their knowledge of an irreparable division between nature and self. This symbolic identification is not, according to de Man, the main Romantic experience. However, when it appears in Romantic texts, it represents what he terms "tenacious self-mystification" (RT 191). I believe educators engage in the same mystification when they wrap their proposed reforms in the plant, the stream, the horizon, or in the "black earth of freedom" (Rugg, Child 314).
The use of organic metaphors to remedy educational dualisms is apparent in the Progressive rhetoric of Dewey, Rugg, and Pratt; it continues through mid-century in Goodman's and Illich's work, and it currently marks Willinsky's theories of language arts education. What does the organicism acknowledge? Does it recognize the inescapable reality of division? De Man suggests that the fact that the integration must be accomplished "within the medium of language" reflects "that it does not exist in actuality" (IS 8). How, then, do educators regard language? Because of his importance and because of his expansion of his own philosophy of language and meaning, John Dewey's symbolic theory of language will, I believe, demonstrate a foundation for the use of organic and mechanistic metaphors in reform rhetoric.

Dewey's Language: "Bullion in the Vaults"

Emerson's longing for the stability of the natural object is expressed metaphorically in a May 26, 1837, journal entry: "As a plant in the earth so I grow in God. I am only a form of him. He is the soul of me" (62). However, allegorical difference—which de Man has shown to be stronger than symbolic identification in the work of the Romantics—takes over in the remainder of the journal entry:

Yet why not always so? How came the Individual, thus armed and impasioned, to parricide thus
murderously inclined, ever to traverse and kill the Divine Life? Ah, wicked Manichee! Into that dim problem I cannot enter. A believer in Unity, a seer of Unity, I yet behold two.

This particular journal entry demonstrates both longing and realization—a wistfulness but a knowing better. Emerson's realization arises out of his awareness of "the inadequacy of language" (Kronick 24) to reconcile subject and object. Metaphoric reconciliation—Emerson's becoming a plant in the earth—represents only the longing. In *Nature* Emerson demonstrates this awareness when he says, "Words are finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimension of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it" (41). The difference between Emerson's recognition of the inadequacy of language to heal divisions and Dewey's use of metaphor to reconcile them is best demonstrated in their attitudes toward language. In *Nature* Emerson speaks of the inability of words to stand for things:

> The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. . . . and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time the fraud is manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections. . . . (33)

Dewey views language instrumentally: as a tool—"the tool of tools" (EN 186). Like Emerson, he employs money as a metaphor in attempting to explain the connection between signified and signifier, but Dewey believes words are
Words, then, are substitutions for "physical things with their own immediate and final qualities"; they "embody relationships." Dewey thinks of language as an implement of exchange: money (and, by implication, language) "facilitates exchange" (EN 173). Like the New Critics, Dewey looks on language as transparent, as symbolically connecting word with thing, as leading to communication and shared meaning:

The meaning of signs moreover always includes something common between persons and an object. When we attribute meaning to the speaker as his intent, we take for granted another person who is to share in the execution of the intent. . . . Persons and things must alike serve as means in a common, shared consequence [my emphasis]. (EN 185)

Dewey's emphasis on the capacity of language to effect shared communication and to culminate in shared meaning is yet another example of organicism's metaphysical base--an example of Desilet's "hermeneutic communication" (156) and of Mailloux's "hermeneutic idealism" (qtd. in Desilet 174). Dewey's community of language users and his assumption of shared meaning satisfies Desilet's definition of hermeneutic communication: "... it assumes
communication, as the sharing of meaning, to be pervasive in the use of language"—a choice that "privileges the sameness of intersubjectivity in the self/other relation . . . [my emphasis]" (153). This emphasis on language as shared communication is the same emphasis James Berlin's transactional theory of writing supports. Both Berlin and Dewey metaphysically privilege the collective in the collective/individual hierarchical opposition.

Dewey says "... every meaning is generic or universal. It is something common between speaker, hearer and the thing to which speech refers" (EN 187). Using Hegel's explanation of the Hic and Nunc in the Phenomenology, Joseph Kronick addresses the impossibility of a particular, concrete, "self-maintaining Now"; for "Now is always universal and mediated, not immediate":

The self-maintaining Now exists only in language. The Now only maintains itself by the existence of its negation; therefore, the Now can never be a particular Now, but must be universal, for a universal alone is neither this nor that and is either this or that. And whenever we say "This," it is always the universal "This." (56-57)

Kronick concludes that "... we are left with words, which are universal and never concrete" (57). Dewey's theory of language, however, focuses on its functional capacities and on its users' facile substitution and manipulation of symbols. Thomas Alexander has said that in Dewey's thinking

[Language is the most efficient and creative of the symbol systems invented, for it readily]
passes from one user to another and back. At one moment I can be the "I" and at the next moment the "you" or the "he," and I have no difficulty sorting these out or placing them together. I became your "you" and someone's "he." The identity here is functional. . . . To be involved in communication, then, is for there to be an interplay not only between various parties, but between the present, past, and the future. (163)

This interplay or negotiation between speakers and writers and among present, past, and future results in Dewey's idea of communication, in his belief in a "consensus of action," which "brings with it the sense of sharing and merging in a whole" (EN 184). In Dewey's view, meanings become generic and common and are readily acknowledged by a community of users who are thereby unified in a "consensus of action." Meaning, he says, is not "adventitious and arbitrary." A word becomes a word "by gaining meaning; and it gains meaning when it establishes a genuine community of action" (EN 184-85).

Dewey, however, ignores the inability of language to point to a particular "now," and he is forced back on the "naive empiricism-idealism" Catherine Belsey has seen in the New Critics, who argued that "words stand either for things or for experiences, and that these inhere timelessly in the phenomenal world or in the continuity of essential human nature" (18-19).

Alexander has spoken of Dewey's attempts to use a word like "experience" in a new way; he says Dewey "wanted his philosophy to transform the culture itself and so he
attempted to co-opt its language" (xii), but Alexander points out how critics were unable to grasp Dewey's new meaning. Dewey's difficulty in making a word like "experience" signify newly demonstrates the problem that a correspondence or transparent theory of language presents, for transparency implies a clear and easy transmission—an implication that ignores the difficulty of translation and the materiality of language.

In a study of Dewey's growth metaphor, Joe Green says Dewey "was adamant in the belief that the role of language should be the transmission of meaning" (357); Green tells of how Dewey wrote Arthur F. Bentley about the "necessity of such a definite language symbol-behavior that, if the word is used, there will be no doubt as to what it designates . . ." (qtd. in Green 357). His belief in "definite language symbol-behavior" apparently contradicts Dewey's own attempt to use a word like "experience" in a special way—an attempt that seemingly endorses the idea that meaning in language is arbitrary—a position antithetical to the one Dewey customarily advocated. Characteristically, Dewey adheres to a symbolic theory of language and argues for a connection between signifier and signified or between language and nature.

A symbolic theory of language—such as that held by Dewey—undergirds the use by educators of organic metaphors, a symbolic theory that is further elucidated
when he calls a symbol "a direct vehicle, a concrete embodiment, a vital incarnation" (EN 82). What follows is the history of two metaphors, a characteristic binary opposition repeatedly employed by organic educators who privilege the natural of their reform over the mechanical of the status quo.

Mechanistic Metaphors: Separation and Alienation

The motor, the body, and then the wheel
Are put on by men who do not feel.
They stand at their jobs from twelve to ten;
They are grimy, oily, mechanical men.
Some turn a screw, some paint it tan,
Each part done by the one same man.
The chain of cars rolls on its way—
They are cars that are made in half a day.
(qtd. in Pratt 129)

I have quoted part of a poem titled "Machines" written by Caroline Pratt's thirteen-year-old group after it had visited a Ford assembly plant in the early 1920s. The young writers, in attempting to deal with the routine labor at the factory, conclude that the mechanical labor has cut the men off from meaningful endeavor: "For as they work there day after day/ Their minds grow stupid, their brains decay./ They are now only grimy mechanical men,/ Yes, just grimy, oily, mechanical men" (129). In the children's view, the factory work has bound, restrained, and limited the minds of the workers: "minds grow stupid" and "brains decay." The reaction of these students is harmonious with that of Pratt and other Progressives who look on restraint
of the individual mind as arising from mechanical division. And what better symbol of division in the early years of the century than Ford—the company which wrought the assembly line?

In reform literature mechanistic metaphors are even more prevalent than organic metaphors. Suggestive of division and alienation, the mechanistic metaphor is perhaps employed most repetitively in the 1960s. The earlier Progressive writers illustrate their sense of separation and alienation again and again with figures of machines, factories, construction, and confinement. Though attached to various problems of school setting, curriculum, teacher, and student, the mechanistic metaphor signifies boundaries, limits, restraints. When used (as it often is) in tandem with the organic metaphor, the freedom denied by mechanism is realized in organic growing, blossoming, flowing.

I have studied the figurative language of three reformers—John Dewey (Schools of To-Morrow, 1915), Caroline Pratt (I Learn from Children, 1948), and Harold Rugg (The Child-Centered School, 1928). I chose these specific works because they deal with the establishing of Progressive schools, they reflect early dreams and goals, and they represent the strong years of the movement (Pratt's book, though published in 1948, retraces a career which began in 1914). In these three Progressive texts,
the machine generally represents impersonality, standardization, and deadening routine. In *Schools of To-Morrow*, Dewey complains of the "school machinery" and its methodical, mechanical pace: It "works on at the same rate, regardless of any individual pupil or study," resulting in the student's conclusion that "his own efforts are not important" (190). Dewey later laments the division of the curriculum from actual social life and surmises that workers unschooled in the social and physical facts behind the machines with which they work will become victims of the machines, will become, in Dewey's words, "blind cogs and pinions" (246).

Like Dewey, Rugg also complains of the school machinery. He believes theater has been excluded from the traditional curriculum because teachers had resented its interruption of the "smooth running machine of school classes" (267); the old education, Rugg argues, was life-denying, "crushing out life it purported to nourish," while "originality, initiative, individuality" are being "fed into revolving rollers, to be flattened into conformity, standardized" (293). In Rugg's assessment, the teacher too has become machine-like; the "mechanic-teacher" has become the product of a system "she helps to perpetuate." She is "a blind, helpless cog in the great machine of enforced mass education" (323). Rugg's mechanic-teacher has memorized her subject matter, has marked her books, has
"her eye on the answer," but she is divorced from "growth . . . and the psychology of mental and emotional life" (322). He argues that progressive education offers freedom to the teacher as well as to the student: the "artisan-teacher" will be encouraged to be original and individualistic— to be a "guide," not a "taskmaster" or "a kind of section boss for the huge railroading system known as school" (322).

The attitude of Pratt's thirteen-year-old students toward the "griny, oily, mechanical men" mirrors the aversion of their teacher. Looking back on her own childhood, Pratt contrasts that world—"a wide wonderful place"—with the confinement of the lives of her students, whose world has become "a narrow cell, walled about with mysteries of complex machinery" (xv). As Dewey and Rugg had complained of the lack of freedom in the old curriculum, Pratt says the old curriculum has resulted in students' lack of interest, curiosity, initiative, and imagination, making it appear that the students had been "turned out by a factory" (5).

Akin to the machine and factory metaphors is the pump metaphor used by both Dewey and Rugg to describe the teacher-student relationship. In Dewey's mind the reservoir and pump represent the traditional idea of teacher as a reservoir of information with the student as a pump to suction out and passively receive the information.
He calls for a curriculum to abolish this mechanical relationship (87). Rugg suggests the teacher become something more than a "force pump" (229).

Indicative of restraint in Progressive rhetoric are metaphors of confinement: cells, prison, walls, yokes, lids, shells. Dewey pictures the traditional school that fetters students:

Instead of providing this chance for growth and discovery, the ordinary school impresses the little one into a narrow area, into a melancholy silence, into a forced attitude of mind and body, till his curiosity is dulled into surprise at the strange things happening to him. Very soon his body is tired of his task and he begins to find ways of evading his teacher, to look about him for an escape from his little prison. (20)

In Rugg's work, students of traditional education are said to be "pigeonholed" in "long rows of desks, filed in stereotyped classrooms as alike as the cabinets in which the methodical principals preserve their records" (2), or they suffer from a day "pigeonholed" into "strict timed segments" (73). He makes a plea for the "lid" to be taken off students so that they might build up attitudes of self-expression (180); this he later repeats when he asks that the lid be taken off to let the child reveal his "genuine self" (235). In speaking of the confinement of students in traditional schools, he charges that the "rigid desks, desks in rows" were there "to prison youth while education laid its heavy yoke upon them" (302-03).
Pratt too employs confinement metaphors. The child's world has become a cell (xv). The curriculum of the old formal schools was "fixed, immovable" (137); her experimental school, however, frees both student and teacher from this "straitjacket" curriculum, allowing for the "group's interest, the events that were the talk of the dinner table at night or the headlines of the morning paper" to guide the curriculum (139). Looking on the traditional school as a "curious confinement" for children, Pratt wonders why friendliness in the classroom has been considered "a disturbance" (166).

Moreover, the three Progressive reformers condemn those who confine and bind. Dewey calls the traditional teacher a "cicerone and dictator" instead of a "watcher and helper." And Rugg speaks of "the old régime" (125), the college and administrative "rulers" of the schools, the "reign" of college entrance requirements, the "régime" of "education-as-discipline" (245), and the "autocratic teacher" (267). Pratt's advocacy of educational liberty is opposed to a teacher behaving "like a classroom Hitler":

If we were preparing our children to live under an autocratic regime I could understand the need for iron discipline. . . . But we are preparing our children to be responsible citizens in a democracy. . . . Why then the screwed-down benches, the interdiction on speech, the marching through the halls in silent single file, the injunction on the teacher to behave like a classroom Hitler? (167)
Though Lawrence Cremin speaks of the death of Progressivism in 1955 (vii), the 1960s deschooling movement picked up on and intensified the mechanistic metaphors the Progressives had used. There is, however, an alteration. Among educational intellectuals like Paul Goodman, the metaphor is no longer based on a grimy assembly-line worker. For thinkers like Goodman and Ivan Illich, minds can grow stupid and brains decay as easily from the impersonality and routine of the Ford board room as from its assembly line. Both Goodman and Illich record the mechanization that results from the mating of education and business. As a remedy for the resulting division, Goodman recommends that young people secure their best education by quitting college (48) or by not going to classes at all (138); Illich promotes "deschooling."

Both Goodman, whose *The Community of Scholars* (1962) focuses on postsecondary education, and Illich, whose *Deschooling Society* (1970) gave a name to a movement that proposed the elimination of education as it was known at the time, identify fragmentation with metaphors that duplicate Progressive images of machines and confinement. Each wants to remove boundaries, limits, restraints; to do so, they propose radical changes in American education. The refrain appearing in each writer's work is that of standardization and impersonality as represented by the
"educational machine" (Illich 48). Goodman says the university is really a machine for its own sake [which] run[s] and produce[s] brand goods for selling and buying. . . . More revolutionary products like free spirit, individual identity, vocation, community. . . are, rather, disapproved. But frictionless and rapid running is esteemed; and by clever co-ordination of the moving parts, and lots of money as lubrication, it can be maximized. (63)

The problem, Goodman maintains, is the business machine that runs American colleges; this machine isolates and alienates what should be a "community of scholars," related one to the other, to knowledge, and to life. Instead, the business mentality of the administration looks on school "as a teaching machine to train the young by predigested programs in order to get pre-ordained marketable skills" (8). According to Goodman, the community of scholars has been replaced by a community of administrators (74). He thinks colleges are run like banks and have become "factory-like"; they "do not encourage communities and differentiation" but "behave like department stores opening new departments and sometimes branches, and increasing efficiency by standardizing the merchandise and the sales force" (76). The style of the administration "is impersonal, like any machine" (80). And walls, he concludes, separate the university from the rest of society (5). In Goodman's view, the administrative machine is
incapable of reuniting teachers, students, studies in a community of scholars.

Illich sees a similar educational machine. And like Goodman, Illich looks back to incidental learning of medieval villages (33); but modern education, he laments, is a business:

School sells curriculum--a bundle of goods made according to the same process and having the same structure as other merchandise. Curriculum production for most schools begins with allegedly scientific research, on whose basis educational engineers predict future demand and tools for the assembly line, within the limits set by budgets and taboos. The distributor-teacher delivers the finished product to the consumer-pupil. . . . (59)

Illich and Goodman find the mechanization of administration bringing about a concomitant mechanization of teacher, curriculum, and student; repeatedly the two mourn the loss of spontaneity: Illich draws consumption as preventing us from being "spontaneous, independent" or "related to each other" (76). Spontaneity and relation--qualities which are not reflected in the machine--are characteristics organicists frequently value.4

The machine image is the overarching metaphor in Illich's book, and the self-sealing casket is his ultimate machine:

Our society resembles the ultimate machine which I once saw in a New York toy shop. It was a metal casket which, when you touched a switch, snapped open to reveal a mechanical hand. Chromed fingers reached out for the lid, pulled it down, and locked it from the inside. It was a box; you expected to be able to take something
out of it; yet all it contained was a mechanism for closing the cover. (151)

The 1960s reform rhetoric of Goodman and Illich underscores the lack of connection and the absence of community in American education. The two reformers anticipate being able to find a meaningful whole; instead, Illich's "ultimate machine" reveals only "a mechanism for closing the cover."5

John Willinsky, who says the "seeds" of his New Literacy were planted during the 1960s reawakening of progressive education, subscribes to the process theory of writing. Willinsky, as well as others, gives Gordon Rohman and Albert Wlecke,6 two Michigan State University researchers, credit for initiating pre-writing in process writing pedagogy. Rohman and Wlecke's work, like that of Willinsky, endorses expressionistic writing—an approach with goals opposed to those of objective or product-oriented current-traditional schools of composition. As had Goodman and Illich, Rohman and Wlecke use metaphors of the machine to describe division in the composing process. With their emphasis on the writing process as discovery, they find objective rhetoric's concern with "methods, tradition, conditioning, grammar, and the like" to fall short of a "fresh perspective"; indeed, they believe objective approaches have a kind of machine deadliness about them: "... such approaches can be positively harmful by reducing writing and writers to 'things' on
machine analogies" (23). Rohman and Wlecke believe that though they live in an "age dominated by machine analogies," the writing process should be "more like a growing process than a mechanical one" (20).

Their research, actually a government-sponsored 1964 study, was conducted at Michigan State University with both experimental and traditional classes of students. A colleague who aided in the evaluation of the two groups' work found the essays of the traditional classes to be marked "with the dead level tone of the hum of an assembly line, for there is no personality involved in them." A machine, he determines, could turn out work with such "robot-like results," the machine metaphor indicating the impersonality resulting from a division of thought from process. The consequences are once again a kind of death like that of rusted car-bodies in a junk yard waiting to be further corrupted by rust as they wait to be smashed into squares of mere iron to be lifted by a mechanical magnet into a truck to be carried to a smelter to be made into reclaimed iron to be made into objects on an assembly line. (140)

Willinsky says that those who work from an "organic conception of the mind" are reluctant "to conceive of the mind as a machine, or of language and learning as mechanical processes" ("Seldom" 268-69). In fact, Willinsky credits the Romantics with supplying him with the two metaphors of the New Literacy: the machine and the garden ("Seldom" 271). Believing authoritarian educators
and too great an emphasis on the book to have detrimental effects on literacy, Willinsky cautions against transforming the child "from a flower to an engine, all for want of the accidental and spontaneous" ("Seldom" 276).

Two other process theorists whom Willinsky cites and whom he calls "Neo-Romantics" ("Seldom" 277) are C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon. Berlin believes Knoblauch and Brannon more expressionistic than the epistemic label they claim (RR 185); however, as with other process theorists, they disdain the dividing of composing into parts. While the early work of Rohman and Wlecke defined a pre-writing step, Knoblauch and Brannon are firmly opposed to steps or parts divisions: "The parts of an automobile engine precede the engine viewed as a whole; but the parts of a plant, stem, leaves, roots do not precede the plant as a whole" (84-85).

Berlin finds an early ancestor of process theory in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century work of Fred Newton Scott, whose organic and epistemic theories of composition Berlin himself endorses. He draws a distinct line between Scott's organic metaphor-driven theory and the machine metaphors he uses to characterize objective rhetoric. The objective rhetoric that Scott opposes sanctions, in Berlin's words, a "mechanistic view of the mind as container or muscle" (WI 79-80); the essential difference between process and objective (current-
traditional) rhetorics can be gauged, according to Berlin, by the metaphors that ground each theory: current- traditional composition "is governed by the image of the machine"; the metaphor guiding Scott's early epistemic theory is that of the plant, the essay being "regarded not as a dead form, to be analyzed into its component parts, but as a living product of an active, creative mind" (WI 83-84).

Organic Metaphors: "A Fine Flowering"

A discontinuity between language and nature prevents the reader from ever making contact with nature. To experience nature, we must interpret it, which means we must violate it by inscribing man and nature in the text of culture. The search for nature leads into the pit of metaphor. (Kronick 24)

The use of the organic metaphor follows the Romantics' voice of symbolic union and longing, a voice de Man believes uncharacteristic of the principal Romantic experience. Revisionist scholarship has shown the Romantics' own realization that identification with nature emanates from human consciousness and the Romantic recognition that any such coupling is accomplished through the imposition of the writer's will, not through an identification of some sort of inherent natural unity.

The organic metaphor, like the mechanistic metaphor, is, then, an identity established through language. The two metaphors are another form of the binary opposition
represented by the terms "nature" and "culture." Sharon Crowley has seen this sort of hierarchical opposition as indicative of the metaphysics of presence. Other binaries that Crowley names include mind/body, presence/absence, theory/practice, reality/appearance, content/form, literal/figurative, and so on (12); these, she says, result in our privileging one term in the pair (such as the first term in the pairs just identified) over the other "as a way of acknowledging, and yet denying, the movement of différance." Crowley thinks these binaries have long marked American education (for example, the separation of thought or content from language or form) (12). Metaphysical thought in education, then, favors nature over culture when privileging the plant over the machine.

J. Hillis Miller has examined pedagogical metaphors in George Eliot's Mill on the Floss. He explains how Eliot offers one educational metaphor after another: the students's mind as "a field to be plowed and harrowed by grammar and geometry; teaching as 'instilling' information; mind as an intellectual stomach; mind as a blank sheet of paper; mind as a mirror" (45-46). The problem, Miller posits, is that "each metaphorically based theory... has its own built-in fallacious bias and leads to its own special form of catastrophe in the classroom" (48). Just as a mind is not a field or a blank sheet or a stomach, a student is neither machine nor plant.
Nonetheless, three Progressive educators—Dewey, Rugg, and Pratt—all identify their reforms with nature: Dewey speaks of students continuing the curiosity of their preschool years by "following the path of natural growth (Schools 21); Rugg says creativity should slowly "blossom" (Child 253); and Pratt speaks of students who throw out "roots" (130) and who "wither" (82) if required to learn subjects in bits and pieces. But students and curriculum are not plants; what Miller refers to as a "fallacious bias" exists in these organic metaphors that attempt to identify with nature what educators consider positive.

"An image of this type," says de Man, "is indeed the simplest and most fundamental we can conceive of, the metaphorical expression most apt to gain our immediate acquiescence" (IS 7). Why do we want students to follow the path of "natural growth," and why do we ask for creativity to "blossom" in the classroom? De Man says we are nostalgic for the origin of the natural object—the flowers which the Progressive educators employ as growing, sending out roots, and blossoming—the natural object which seems "to have no beginning and no end" (IS 4). But a human being, unlike plants, does lead a temporal existence with knowledge of his or her mortality. De Man explains:

The obviously desirable sensory aspects of the flower express the ambivalent aspiration toward a forgotten presence that gave rise to the image, for it is in experiencing the material presence of the particular flower that the desire arises
to be reborn in the manner of the natural creation. (IS 6)

In the three periods of American education I surveyed --Progressive, mid-century, and late-century reform movements--organic metaphors with their "obviously desirable sensory aspects" and their metaphysical base mark the discourse. "Growth" is the organic metaphor identified with Dewey and Progressive reform, but its use is so pervasive that I have omitted any detailed consideration of it from my study. Green's analysis of the metaphor as used by Dewey in The School and Society, graphs three different uses of the growth metaphor; however, he concludes that Dewey generally binds growth to his concept of democracy (361).

Generally, Caroline Pratt does not use "growth" in defining students' emotional, social, or cognitive processes; instead, she uses "living" metaphors and a few horticultural tropes. She calls on "growth" metaphors in references to her school and teachers: she says her school will "grow" (40) and speaks of it as "a living, growing organism" (64); at the close of the book, she envisions the school from the vantage of her old age, but in 1948 the school, in Pratt's mind, is still a "living organism, with a vitality of its own, putting forth new growth" (181). With her growth metaphor, Pratt bestows continuity, or as de Man has pointed out, bestows being "reborn in the manner
of the natural creation" on her experimental project: it will not die; it will continue.

In writing of the teachers needed for her new school, Pratt demands freedom for her teachers, saying that she wants them to "grow" (64). Here, again, is a metaphor appropriating the freedom of a natural object. The Progressives associate their reform with the freedom of plants—a freedom which they believe divided, machine-like human beings, curricula, and pedagogy do not possess. Pratt has failed to consider what Peggy Rosenthal has seen as the "deterministic implications" of organic metaphors, for a plant is essentially programmed for growth: "it simply follows" what are "its inherent laws of development." Rosenthal continues, "The organic metaphor is thus a poor choice. . . when we want to assert human freedom . . ." (79); yet the organic metaphors of Pratt and other organicist educators suggest the plant as a model of freedom from restraints, rules, limits, routine, and division.

Pratt uses other metaphors related to the growth metaphor: figures of "living" and horticulture. Offering continuity similar to that bestowed in her image of the school as a growing, living organism is Pratt's dictum that education is not an end in itself but something to be "continued"; education, she says, is a "living thing" (14). Students comprising her six-year-old group are not products
to be written about in school records but a "living group" (65). "Like healthy plants," Pratt writes, "children absorbed in jobs, throw roots out in every direction from the jobs to draw in ever more educational nourishment" (130). When Pratt's seven-year-old pupils are exposed to a traditionalist, one who divides reading and writing from the children's other activities, their lives "withered" (82). Like Emerson's rose, which lives above time and is thus connected to God, the Sevens enjoy what Pratt wishes us to see as full organic connection: absorbed in work, "roots" thrown out, "nourishment" drawn in. But when they are asked to learn in parts—in bits and pieces—subjects that have been divided into rigid time slots rather than integrated into their work, the children are deprived of their sustenance. With subjects set apart discretely, they lose their organic wholeness, and the children wither.

Advocating self-expression, Rugg explains that students become more confident when teachers themselves model self-expressive behavior. Then, he says, students' creativity slowly "blossom[s]" into "a fine flowering" that can exist only in "an air of freedom" (Child 253). Rugg's organic metaphor thus asks us to link the plant's freedom with freedom from restraint in the traditional classroom.

Both Rugg and Pratt use the horizon in metaphors that treat the curriculum of the new education: the Progressive idea of initiating the child in the near (the child's own
neighborhood, the city, and the region) before ushering in things distant. Pratt explains that she sees the child in relation to "his own horizons" and sees "how the circle of his interest widens outward, like the circles made by a stone thrown into a pond" (8). Similarly, Rugg uses the horizon to advance the idea of studying things close first; for, he writes, the work of later years will "expand the horizon" to the world at large (93).

The organic metaphors of the Progressives moved into the 1960s, accompanied by the mechanistic metaphors the Progressives were so fond of; however, both Goodman's and Illich's prose has fewer organic than mechanistic metaphors. Their organic metaphors, however, undergird their reform proposals. Goodman's "community of scholars" is based on organic relations and connections. He envisions not walls between the school and society but a two-way transaction of students "enlivened" by society and society revitalized by the young leaving the university. He speaks of the social purposes of such a community of scholars: "... with such purposes, society has its growth as organically part of itself, like the cambrium of a tree" (52).

Illich's central metaphor is an organic one: what he proposes instead of schools is "learning webs." He tells why he chose "web" instead of "network." "Network," he believes, designates "the channels reserved to material
selected by others for indoctrination, instruction, and
entertainment" (109-10), and though he wishes to avoid the
connotation of "entrapment" associated with "web," he
prefers the organic metaphor to the cultural one.

Willinsky's embracing of organic metaphors is
enthusiastic; he believes the mechanistic alternative leads
to positivism--that is, to what he believes will "measure
and control"--and he says this alternative "may convince
many teachers of the urgency and rightness of the organic
metaphor" (NL 192). Willinsky has set up the binary
opposition of organic/mechanical so that one term--the
organic--is privileged over the other; the opposition he
draws allows no movement of différance and results in what
Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence.

Saying that he does not wish to "forsake" his
Romantic models, Willinsky draws a parallel between a
student striving for self-expression and an onion:

the writer now faces becoming an onion, as self-
exploratory writing is a peeling back of the
layers revealing only other, inner leaves, one
after the other, no truer or more certain than
those on the surface, but more translucent,
slippery. . . . (23)

And Willinsky does not limit his organic metaphors to his
writing theories; he also uses them in exploring his use of
reader-response interpretation: "Learning to read is
finding a meaningfulness in print that is rooted in
students' experience and grows through students' experience
in texts that are ends in themselves. . . " (68).
His interpretation of the Romantics as organicists is a misreading which I believe to be grounded in the traditional way they were interpreted; in fact, both he and Rohman and Wlecke use M. H. Abrams to supplement their own interpretations of the Romantics. Willinsky credits Abrams with describing the Romantic endorsement of organicism and their antipathy to mechanism:

> If the mechanical view looks to the domain of the well-tuned machine or flow-chart for its model of thought, the organic theory turns to the garden, to fields of living, growing things, in which the self-evolved interdependence of parts is the secret of life, as Abrams has described it [my emphasis]. (NL 190)

Rohman and Wlecke's expressionism is anchored in both Abrams's traditional reading of the Romantics and the organicism of the New Criticism. They believe their prewriting activities will empower students "to search for a 'seed-idea' out of which an organically coherent essay might 'grow'" (41). The origin of their organic metaphor is the philosophy of Romanticism, its best expression they believe to be articulated in M. H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp* (11).

Rohman and Wlecke's work is a veritable hothouse of the organic: meditation in prewriting will, they argue, result in something like "creation itself"--there will be "growth through moments along a line until a 'flowering' of concept or idea" occurs (31); analogical thinking in prewriting will result in what they hope will be a
"germinating discovery" (38); and they caution that the essay "is not to be seen in external fashion" but should be regarded by the students as "a developing plant, growing from within themselves" (57).

Their Michigan colleagues are told to evaluate the essays by closely observing the idea of "form"; that is, they ask their colleagues to be true to New Critical dicta:

By 'form' we mean something better described in organic metaphors: a sense of the "growth" of a "seed idea" or single theme, "exfoliation" of an argument or proof, "fruition" in the totality of the essay. The whole seems a "growing" whole, not necessarily a static or finished whole. The parts serve the whole as an arm the body, the leaf the plant. (131)

Process theorists Knoblauch and Brannon enlist the same plant metaphors when they explain the impossibility of teaching writing:

the ability to use language can--and does--grow, but it is not consciously learned; it can be nurtured but it isn’t taught. One enables a plant to grow by watering its soil, not by paying elaborate attention to each of its leaves (87).

When educators cast their reform in the bipolar structure of machine and plant, they privilege the natural (the leafy plant, the flowing stream, the blooming flower) over the mechanism (the assembly line, the rusty automobile, the self-sealing casket). It becomes, in fact, an easy choice: life over death. And though de Man has shown that natural images are the "simplest and most fundamental" and are "most apt to gain our immediate acquiescence," educators who represent their reform as a
reflection of the natural image are not deriving that organic unity from nature but from the very thing that separates humankind from nature: consciousness and language.
Notes to Chapter 3

1. Peggy Rosenthal says that wholism and relation have always seemed preferable to parts and division: "it's one of the ideas that seem inherently good. And Western thought has always, or at least since Plato made the One the highest good, perceived the whole as especially meaningful and reached for it as the object of knowledge" (p. 189, Words & Their Values: Some Leading Words and Where They Lead Us).

2. Evelyn Dewey is listed as a co-author; however, I will in future references refer to Dewey as sole author. It appears that his daughter fulfilled a research role and that Dewey wrote the text. I do not wish to slight the contribution of Evelyn Dewey; her research role appears to reflect the subordinate status to which women were historically assigned, an issue which is not related to my study. After initially recognizing both father and daughter as co-authors of Schools of To-Morrow, Lawrence Cremin—in his influential study of American progressivism, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education: 1876-1957—refers to Dewey as sole author.


4. See Peter Thorslev's analysis of spontaneity as a characteristic of organicism (chp. 4 of Romantic Contraries: Freedom and Destiny).

5. Rena Foy's 1962 study is another reflection of mid-century education's concern with the individual losing identity and becoming "no more than a cog, indistinguishable from other cogs, in a machine composed not of metal parts but of linked and intermeshed human beings"; she warns of the dangers of the division of labor and machine technology to education (p. 358, "The Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Its Educational Implications").

6. Berlin goes further. He believes Rohman and Wlecke established the language of process writing.

7. Kronick explains "différance" as a Derridean neologism indicating "that the process of signification presupposes that the sign represents the absent thing for which it stands... the sign differs from the thing and defers or
 postpones the moment we can come into contact with the thing itself." The thing itself "is never present to itself (which would require that it be free from language); it is always related to something other than itself and is constituted by its relation to this other" (p. 57, American Poetics of History: From Emerson to the Moderns).

8. Freedom from authority is the general interpretation Max Black has given the growth metaphor. See Scheffler's The Language of Education, p. 49.
Educators who use as metaphors for their reform growing plants, blooming flowers, and flowing streams while representing traditional education with rusting automobiles and mind-decaying assembly-line work figuratively allude to educational life and death. Perhaps their symbolic identification of the plant with life and the machine with death derives from Coleridge. In 1815 Coleridge wrote Wordsworth about how Cartesian philosophy had substituted a machine for a world created by divine fiat: "a lifeless Machine whirled about by the dust of its own Grinding. . . ." He proposed to Wordsworth "the substitution of life and intelligence . . . for the philosophy of mechanism, which, in everything that is most worthy of the human intellect, strikes Death. . . [original emphasis]" (qtd. in Abrams 169-70). But if in the nineteenth century the machine represented division and death to Coleridge, the machine became in its twentieth-century manifestations even more representative—at least in educational discourse—of all that was deadening. And if educators like Dewey, Rugg, Pratt, Illich, and Willinsky were prone to symbolic identification of their reforms with nature, they were also susceptible to casting their theorizing about thinking,
especially creative thinking, in organic frames. Often, as with Dewey’s aesthetics and the foundational theories of compositionists, an acceptance of a symbolic theory of language is accompanied by a Coleridgean concept of imagination.

In fact, rhetorician Ann Berthoff argues that Coleridge’s concepts of the symbol and the imagination are identical:

In one pole of Coleridge’s theory of the active mind is Imagination, at the other we find Symbol: neither is conceivable without the other. The reason for speaking in terms of polarity and polar oppositions is provided by the Coleridgean doctrine that oppositions are expressions of one and the same force. (58)

She believes, with Coleridge, that "the Imagination creates in symbols the reality we know." This view of the creative imagination is central to an educational organicism that gives to the imagination the task of reconciling divisions and polarities, "forming and transforming" them. Organicist educators believe that language "provides the means by which the mind can act according to its nature"; this is what Coleridge means, says Berthoff, when he repeatedly says that knowledge comes from within (58).

The reconciling of opposites accomplished through the imagination and symbolic language is a fundamental organicist concept. This is how Berlin characterizes both his own philosophy and Emerson’s: reality is the concurrence of subject and object with "language as the
agent of mediation" (WI 57). This is Dewey's idea that human beings are connected to nature through the imagination— an organ of nature (CF 53)— and symbol— a "direct vehicle," a "concrete embodiment," a "vital incarnation" (EN 82). And this is what Willinsky means when he speaks of process writing as a "clear instance" of what students' writing can accomplish when guided by the concept of Coleridge's "blending, fusing" imagination ("Seldom" 274). These organic views are not consonant with Emerson's conviction that language is incapable of representing reality. They do not reflect the divisions the Romantics acknowledge, nor do they reflect the Romantic imagination. What these organicist notions do indicate is de Man's pointed observation that organic reconciliation is always accomplished through language, a condition which reveals that the reconciliation does not in actuality take place (IS 8).

When organicists examine a creative act, they rely on natural images to explain how an essay, a poem, or creative idea "grows." They speak of natural growth, inner processes, organically developing form, spontaneity, natural rhythm, the lack of conscious will, and the resulting organic totality or unity of the creative product. Seldom do they speak of creating an essay or a poem as an act of conscious deliberation, and to speak of creating in steps or stages is, by its mechanical nature,
anathema to them. In "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe narrates the anything-but-organic process by which he constructed "The Raven." Composition is, Poe argues, not an act of "fine frenzy" or "ecstatic intuition" but one of "painful erasures and interpolations" (364). According to Poe, conscious will dictated every step of the process:

... no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition ... the work proceeded step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem. (365)

Wimsatt also believes the poem is a "contrived moment":

This is so even on the supposition that the author achieves his sonnet in one perfect first draft. For he reviews it and accepts it and puts it out as a poem. No matter how spontaneous and lucky in one sense, in another sense it is also artificial. (69)

When organicists fail to consider the painful-erasures-kind of thinking and speak of the student as an onion or the essay as a germinating seed, they provide not fusion but an organic metaphor that fails to acknowledge the complexities of cognition. By smoothing over differences with suggestions of organic unity and by looking at creativity as something already there which requires only an opportunity for unfolding, they avoid the problem of reflection.
Growth Like Roses and Lilies

Coleridge’s theory of the imagination is structured according to the plant-machine antithesis: the "mechanical" memory and "passive" fancy as opposed to the vital imagination that "assimilates," "blends," "fuses," and "recreates" (qtd. in Abrams 168-69). In following Coleridge’s theory of the organic imagination, educators like Dewey and Rugg and compositionists like Rohman, Wlecce, Willinsky, and Knoblauch and Brannon employ the same bipolar metaphors: the creative imagination represented by the vital growth processes of nature and objective theories of creativity aligned with mechanism, rigidity, and deadly formalism.

For example, Dewey terms an act of expression "mechanical" when it originates solely out of "direct effort of 'wit and will'" (AE 73); using Keats, he argues that "reasonings" originate "like that of the movements of a wild creature toward its goal" and that "they become spontaneous, 'instinctive,' . . . sensuous and immediate, poetic" (AE 33). To Dewey, Poe’s explanation of his mechanistic construction of "The Raven" indicates only that the creative acts of some people require greater degrees of "participation of wit and will" than those of others (AE 74). In the work of another Progressive, Harold Rugg, an imaginative act again is represented as a natural expression of an internally generated impulse. Rugg
describes a person involved in an expressive act as an "active and self-directed" organism, not a reactive automaton controlled by stimuli from the outside [original emphasis]" (Imagination 292).

In the 1960s Rohman and Wlecke, early process expressionists, told their students to think of the essay as a "developing plant, growing from within themselves" from what they called a "seed-idea," one with "sufficient potency to beget other ideas . . . some of which may have the power, like a plant," of assimilating different elements to the "total organism of the essay" (57-58). Rohman and Wlecke abjure regulating creative process by mechanism: "... writing is more like a growing process than a mechanical one" (20).

Current theorists like Willinsky and Knoblauch and Brannon continue this dialectical pattern. Maintaining that the "seeds of the New Literacy were planted during the 1960s reawakening of progressive education" (19), Willinsky holds that his organic theories venerate process, "a reverence which is not driven like the Enlightenment by a need to uncover the gearing of its mechanism and the logic of its engineering" but by Coleridge's conception of the imagination as "a living faculty" (190). Advocates of students' using language "unself-consciously" (87), process theorists Knoblauch and Brannon stress that language use is not learned. "The ability to use language," they argue,
"can— and does— grow, but it is not consciously learned" (88). They refuse to think of the composing act in steps, stages, and parts:

When discourse is conceived in mechanistic terms, the parts are primary and the focus is on the ways in which the parts work together. . . . When discourse is conceived in organic terms, its plasticity or continuity is emphasized. (85)

Dewey's aesthetic beliefs are closely aligned with both expressionist and transactional rhetorics. And though transactionalists like Berlin, Raschke, and Berthoff believe reality is derived from the interaction of subject, object, and language--that is, that meaning is derived only through social and communal efforts--and expressionists like Rohman and Wlecke and Willinsky rely on a subjective search for meaning, both streams of process are, in their organic emphases, metaphysically argued.

The idea of linking a student's creativity with the growth processes of a plant was in the Progressive era, in the 1960s, and is, in today's process theories, an attempt to deliver composition from the clutch of an objective or skills orientation. This attempt at establishing a more "natural" relationship between the student and the act of composing is frequently cast in metaphors that are illogical and deterministic. What is disturbing to Berthoff and other transactionalists, however, is the solipsism they fear expressionist subjectivism produces. Ross Winterowd, another transactionalist, believes "growth
models" render images of a "student communing with himself or herself" (xii). 1 Winterowd's argument with author-centered, expressionistic models of composition--such as those of Rugg, Rohman and Wlecke, and Willinsky--is that they generate solipsism because meaning is brought about through isolated self-engagement. Berthoff--like Berlin, Raschke, and Winterowd--also fears "creative/expressive/private use of language" (67). Transactionalists are eager to separate their own process emphasis on the communal aspects of writing from the individualist emphasis of the expressionists. Both expressionists and transactionalists, however, are prone to link process with natural growth, especially when they, in a common voice, confront the "machine" of current-traditionalism. 2

What seems at least equally as significant as transactionalist fears of expressionist solipsism, however, is the determinism and faulty logic of the metaphors that both groups employ. To both, writing is seen as an unfolding of something already there, a genetic gift--a seed planted, needing only the nurturing "facilitating" of a sympathetic gardener-teacher for growth and blossoming to occur. Berthoff says this geneticism is an essential and necessary characteristic of "natural process, namely, that what develops is in a sense already there" (58).

What are the logical implications of representing knowledge as inherent and learning as an unfolding? M. H.
Abrams has questioned the horticultural foundation of Coleridge's organic imagination: "For if the growth of a plant seems inherently purposeful, it is a purpose without an alternative, fated in the seed, and evolving into its final form without the supervision of consciousness [my emphasis]" (173). William K. Wimsatt has exposed this same flawed logic. He reveals how Coleridge, in his assessment of Shakespeare's dramas, does "a double step away" from the idea that organic form can be accomplished with "vegetable imagery" (67). According to Wimsatt, Coleridge concedes that Shakespeare's art was a conscious art—that is, he acknowledges that Shakespeare's dramas did not grow like plants: Coleridge says that a "man would be a dreamer, who otherwise than poetically should speak of roses and lilies as self-conscious subjects [original emphasis]" (qtd. in Abrams 173).

Scott Harshbarger has specifically addressed composition's use of natural images. Criticizing Berlin and Knoblauch and Brannon for their tendency to wrap their theories in green, growing images, he questions whether "'the plant' ought to be the paradigmatic metaphor for modern conceptions of the composing process" (1). When theorists couple writers with plants, he says, the idea of students making conscious decisions "can seem little more than an interruption of the 'natural process'" (5). Insofar as process theorists adopt organic metaphors
because they wish to extricate composition from the grip of 
a mechanistic skills model, Harshbarger's words reveal the 
irony of such a strategy: "Thus the possibility of freedom 
from external rules which dynamic organicism seems to 
promise is bought at the expense of submission to 
impersonal forces operating from within . . ." (5).

Creativity tied to Coleridge's plant analogy 
eventually must confront the problem Rosenthal, Abrams, 
Wimsatt, Harshbarger and others have seen with the organic 
metaphor: the plant is "fated in the seed" (Abrams 173), 
that is, fated to "grow" and develop without conscious 
intent, its destiny "inevitable and inexorable" (Thorslev 
99). Unlike the growing rose or lily, which is genetically 
fated to develop inevitably and inexorably, students' 
cognitive endeavors are acts of consciousness. A student 
in the act of composing has what no plant or animal 
possesses: "a capacity for self-revision, rearrangement, 
mending" (Wimsatt 68). As Wimsatt reminds us,

Plants renew leaves and flowers; animals moult in 
several ways; a lobster can lose a claw and 
regrow it; the human body heals cuts and regrows 
a finger nail. But there is no action of any 
physical organism that remotely approaches the 
power of the human mind to revise and recast it itself [original emphasis]. (68)

The product of a creative imagination, then, does not grow 
like lilies or roses; it is an "act of a self-reflexive 
consciousness" (Wimsatt 72).
Are these organic impulses derived from a Romantic conception of the imagination? While it is true that Dewey uses Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth and Emerson in defining creativity, that Berlin refers to Emerson as the founder of two branches of process composition, that Rohman and Wlecke use Abrams’s interpretation of Coleridge to develop their pre-writing experiment, and that Willinsky employs the British Romantics as a foundation for his writing and reading assumptions, I believe these theories—though conceived by these educators as "Romantic"—are actually organic. Even Coleridge, the most organic of the Romantics, speaks in both an organic voice of identification and an allegorical voice of separation.

De Man has studied Coleridge’s voice of separation. He argues that Abrams reads a passage from Coleridge as "limiting the task of the mind to interpreting what is given in nature"—a reading that would indicate that Coleridge recognizes nature as prior; however, says de Man, Abrams in the same paragraph uses passages from Coleridge and Wordsworth that advocate the "self over nature" (RT 182). Though Coleridge apparently advocates symbolic identification between humanity and nature, critics like de Man and those who have followed de Man’s argument in "The Rhetoric of Temporality"³ have seen his attitude as much more tenuous and equivocal.
Other than Coleridge’s attempts to distinguish between the mechanical fancy and the organic imagination, what comprises the Romantic definition of imagination? In an earlier chapter, I spoke of Hartman’s argument that the Romantics do not wish organic union with nature but a separation from nature so that their imagination might transcend nature ("Romanticism" 49). In reading Wordsworth’s The Prelude, Hartman identifies the Romantic imagination as "growth toward independence of immediate stimuli"; the mind is thus "a power separate from nature," a power of the poet to "feel as if by his own choice, or from the structure of his mind [my emphasis]" ("Romanticism" 292). If we accept Hartman’s interpretation, then, any educational interpretation of imagination as organically identified with nature might more appropriately be called "organic" rather than "Romantic."

Defining theories of creativity as "Romantic" is difficult because, as Hartman has shown, the Romantics never conceptualized their theories of art and never gave "an adequate definition of the function of art" ("Romanticism" 50). Like Hartman, de Man describes the Romantics’ concept of imagination as one not based on identity with nature but one founded on "a possibility for consciousness to exist entirely by and for itself, independently of all relationships with the outside world, without being moved by an intent aimed at a part of this
world " (IS 16). The Romantics' recognition of language and self-consciousness and their belief that art should issue from a mind independent of nature are ideas that complicate attempts to call the Romantic theory of imagination "organic" or, more significantly, complicate attempts to link educational organicism with Romanticism.

Dewey's Vital Process

The IMAGINATION, then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception. . . . The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will, . . . differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. . . . it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory . . . . modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association [original emphasis]. (Coleridge 396-97)

I have quoted part of Coleridge's definition of imagination as he distinguishes it from fancy because organicist educators tend to follow the Coleridgean distinction between the vital growth of imaginative process and the fixed properties of thinking derived from conscious choices, will, and memory. In the twentieth century, the idea of thinking as process owes much to Dewey; however, it is process as Dewey defines it aesthetically, not
instrumentally, that is the subject of my study. Moreover, it is the aesthetic process, as Dewey interprets it in *Art as Experience*, that is congenial to organic writing pedagogies.

The actual pairing of John Dewey with some form of process writing theory—be it transactional or expressionistic—has been made by numerous authorities. George Hillocks associates what he calls "natural process" writing with Dewey (247); James Kinneavy believes Dewey’s theory of art influenced expressionistic composition (14); Margaret Mathieson demonstrates that by 1905 Dewey’s ideas had influenced the British to convert to an expressionistic writing emphasis (58-59); and Berlin’s comprehensive historiographies of rhetoric place Dewey at the beginning of process writing (RR 46-47; 50-51). Process rhetoric, with Dewey as an antecedent, calls on the process of writing as a way of creative discovery, the emphasis being on process and not on product.

When Dewey’s fellow Progressive, Harold Rugg, published *The Child-Centered School* in 1948, process rhetoric in either of its Progressive strands—transactional (social emphasis) and expressionistic (individual emphasis)—was essentially active only in the public schools, the objective philosophy having gained supremacy in American colleges (RR 46). In the following passage, fairly typical of a Progressive public school
emphasis on expression and process, Rugg demonstrates the organic concern for the "unfolding" of the inner, "latent," and "hidden powers" of students:

. . . we must reiterate that is is not for the sake of the product that our schools are setting up a régime of creative effort. It is for the sake of educating youth in the creative process . . . . The result . . . will be measured in terms of the unfolding of the personalities of children, not in terms of the painting produced, the verse written, the measure composed . . . . [I]t is the discovery of latent hidden powers, reserves of artistic emotion . . . that is the true goal of the new education. The truly creative act . . . leads to the discovery of new powers within one's self and brings about a widespread sense of release. (Child 285)

These organic emphases--the unfolding process, the inner powers, the reserves of emotion--originate from an organic notion of imagination. Thorslev says that Coleridge couples the primary imagination with creative, organic, and unconscious powers and links the secondary imagination with powers which, though conscious, still treat creativity as being derived from "deeper wells." These unconscious or deeper sources, Thorslev surmises, were contrasted by Coleridge with the fancy, which he saw as fully conscious but mechanical (90). Rugg himself, however, makes little distinction between Coleridge's primary imagination and secondary imagination, saying that they are "but two phases of one continuous organic process" which constitutes "the eternal act of creation" (Imagination 197).
That Dewey, like Rugg, organically conceived creativity is best reflected in his description of an act of expression as involving "subconscious maturation" without "direct effort of 'wit and will'"—a process that involves purposes "below the level of intention" and results in something "born almost in spite of conscious personality and certainly not because of its deliberate will" (AE 73). Though I will couple Dewey's ideas of organic process with theories of rhetoric, Dewey himself never developed a philosophy specifically tailored to the act of composing. *Art as Experience*, however, is a full rendering of Dewey's concepts of creativity. In that study Dewey says that imagination should not be "treated as a special and self-contained faculty" but should be judged a "quality that animates and pervades all processes of making and observation" (267). Dewey's aesthetic views, then, seem appropriate when searching for the evolution of organic conceptions that mark specific process discourses.

Alexander deems a "very radical feature" of Dewey's philosophy to be his idea that "experience is not primarily cognitive," though "knowing may play a significant role" (185). When Dewey considers the matter and substance of the arts, he speaks of the unity of a work of art, saying that unity can "only be felt," "can only be emotionally intuited" (192) and that the "sense of things as belonging together... is immediate" and "cannot be a product of
reflection" (194). Though he does not say that poetry is more physical than intellectual, he adds, "But it's more than intellectual . . . " (216). Passages such as these validate Alexander's assertion that Dewey refused "to understand the aesthetic as a form of cognitive experience" (32).  

While Dewey does not attribute creativity to the workings of Spirit, he experiences difficulty in analytically examining creative acts which he believes emanate from non-cognitive ways of thinking. For example, when Dewey analyzes an expressive act, he speaks of unconscious intent and the absence of will and surmises that the creative act is a kind of possession:

> The direct effort of "wit and will" of itself never gave birth to anything that is not mechanical . . . . Yet as they [different purposes, acts] all proceed from one living creature they are somehow bound together below the level of intention. They work together, and finally something is born almost in spite of conscious personality, and certainly not because of its deliberate will. When practice has done its perfect work, the man is taken possession of by the appropriate muse and speaks and sings as some god dictates. (AE 73)

Thorslev argues that the organic mind is

> . . . not analytic, logical, skeptical, or self-consciously deliberative. [It] is not the scientific or the philosophic mind, but an organic, dynamic mind, a mind forever in motion, in process. It is indeed creative, but creative as is Coleridge's primary imagination, not consciously or deliberately. (98-99)

Dewey's belief in creative acts as "more than intellectual," as proceeding "below the level of
intention," and as being born "almost in spite of conscious personality" demonstrates an organic concept of imagination. When he proposes that will of itself produces nothing but the mechanical, he endorses Coleridge's idea of the mechanistic fancy limited by its restriction to will and conscious choice.

Throughout Art as Experience Dewey alludes to the rhythms of organic process. Experience has form because there is "dynamic organization," because, says Dewey, "it is a growth" (55). This dynamism is reflected in the poem or drama's "self-movement" (70). Like the inner-directed movement of a "live creature," the work of art moves in a "developing process," the artist finding "where he is going because of what he has previously done; that is, the original excitation. . . undergo[es] successive transformation" (111). Should energy fail to move in rhythmic, natural process, it becomes "inchoate, mechanical, or loose and diffuse" (157). The onward movement of process should be like the "onward waves of the sea," not "compelled by outside necessities" (172).

Closing the Book and Blossoming

"It is consciousness," says Thorslev, "which splits, analyzes, distinguishes, and separates us, even alienates us, from other men and above all from the continuity of organic nature" (91); as a result, Thorslev concludes, the
organicist is involved in a retreat from consciousness, which manifests itself in two ways: in anti-intellectualism and in an emphasis on spontaneity and "naturalness of expression and action, unmediated by deliberation or conscious judgment" (93). Among those subjects Thorslev finds most likely to be considered by organicists as spontaneous and natural are subhuman nature (animals) and children.

In a passage near the end of the first chapter of *Art as Experience*, Dewey reflects on the unified activities of the fox, the dog, and the thrush whose retention of the past and whose anticipation of the future give them "directions in the present" (19). Like Emerson's rose and Whitman's "placid, self-contained animals," Dewey's animals live in the present. Unlike humankind, the fox, dog, and thrush do not utilize the past as a model "upon which to draw" but, instead, use the "past absorbed into the present" (19).

Insofar as Dewey recognizes the separation of self-conscious human beings from unselfconscious nature—represented in his acknowledgment that "thought withdraws us from the world" (19)—he appears to echo the allegorical voice of Emerson. However, Dewey's organic voice is dominant: instead of recognizing the irreparable division brought about by thought—that is, that the fox's unity can never be duplicated by human beings—he sees, instead, a
rhythmic developing. From the animals' unified actions, Dewey concludes that "... experience is heightened vitality"; it "affords our sole demonstration of a stability that is not stagnation but is rhythmic and developing [my emphasis]" (19). To a Romantic, Dewey's fox, thrush, and dog—unencumbered by the burden of thought—represent a stability human beings cannot hope to achieve.

But to Dewey, an experience of heightened vitality replicates the unity of the animals by releasing the human being from the confines of "one's own private feelings" so that organic "interpenetration of self and the world" results (AE 19). To one who is fully alive, the future, Dewey thinks, is not dreaded but holds promise; like the live creature, a fully alive human being is in process or is becoming, for "[i]n a finished world, sleep and waking could not be distinguished" (AE 17). Experience as "heightened vitality" demonstrates "active and alert commerce with the world" (AE 19) In Dewey's view, then, experience and art, like language, release us from isolated subjectivity and organically connect us to the world. This view is, of course, the opposite of the Romantic idea that language and self-consciousness do, in fact, create the gap between subject and object. Dewey elevates literature over other arts not only because of its capacity for expressing "meanings to which we had been dumb" but also for its
greater ability to make common "what has been isolated and singular," thereby connecting "the one who utters" to "those who listen" (AE 244).

Dewey's understanding of experience as "heightened vitality"—a vitality which is rhythmic and developing—is manifested in the expressive act, which, if not actually spontaneous, appears to be spontaneous; he draws his model of this spontaneity from nature and from playing children. Though Dewey considers language a tool, a "practical device" (AE 215), he believes that language sometimes falls short of representing nature. At such times experience itself, he argues, should suffice. Ever the reconciler, Dewey concludes that experience does not need "reduplication in language" (AE 215). This privileging of organic connection, which occurs in experience if not always in language, is manifested in Dewey's preference for experience—such as that demonstrated in the live creature's organic activities or in the play of children—over the secondhand experience in books.

Spontaneity in an expressive act, Dewey explains, follows "complete absorption in subject matter" and is not actually an immediate outburst. Spontaneity, even though it may follow long reflection, will be manifested "if . . . matter has been vitally taken up into a present experience" (70); he gives two examples of natural spontaneity: the rhythmical movement of happy children and the volcano's
eruption. Though the volcano's "outburst" looks spontaneous, Dewey points out that it "presupposes a long period of prior compression"; significantly, Dewey finds that this long incubation results in a unified mass of lava, not in "separate rocks and ashes" (71). The rhythmical movements of children, like the mass of lava and the unified actions of animals, issue from a "union of something stored from past experience, something therefore generalized, with present conditions"; this unison, he says, is rarer with "maturer persons." The adult's expressive act, however, "may issue with the spontaneity of the cadenced speech or rhythmical movement of happy childhood" (71-72).

In Dewey's aesthetics and in the work of the organic process theorists, the privileging of the "natural," the spontaneous, the intuitive, and the internal at times results in an elevation of the child (and, simultaneously, in a diminished role for the teacher). Willinsky's expressive writing theory is centered on the "child's unconscious genius which requires only a writerly opportunity to bring it into play" (NL 193). His New Literacy writing gives primary consideration to the "experience of children and the natural power of their minds to find their own way"; once this responsibility has been shifted from the external authority of the teacher to the child's own interior, he says, "... children can be
said to be responsible, by this act of writing, for their own intellectual stimulation" (NL 192). Willinsky's philosophy recognizes writing as an unfolding of the student's natural ability. Though he wishes to emphasize the social scene of writing, he, at the same time, urges that students be "engaged in figuring things out on an informal and personal level" (NL 42) and that meaning should begin "within" (NL 46). With his conceptual movement of the teacher from a mechanistic to an organic figuration, Willinsky envisions a writing philosophy that will stimulate a "flowering of thought": "Not only is writing to come that much easier and more powerfully for . . . the New Literacy by turning to the organic metaphor, this writing will serve to awaken and advance the mind" (NL 192-93).

Knoblauch and Brannon, like Dewey and Willinsky, assign the child superior powers. They argue that "no technical virtuosity" is needed to "put the 'pieces' of language together"; therefore, they believe "no deliberate learning is required before people are able to respond grammatically to the world, a fact borne out by simple observation of the complexly fluent verbal performance of young children" (88). Because they consider these abilities "natural," Knoblauch and Brannon are perhaps the most anti-instructional of the organicist rhetoricians. Insofar as writers "naturally" organize by the modes
utilized in objective rhetorics; that is, they "naturally" define, compare, classify, and so on, they do not, according to Knoblauch and Brannon, need textbooks or teachers. They argue that it is "the teacher's need to tell, more than the students' need to know, that motivates skill-based instruction." As do many organic process theorists, Knoblauch and Brannon define the writing teacher's role as "facilitator," for "[t]eachers can facilitate maturation of a natural capacity, but they cannot control growth by means of their pedagogy" (94). The teacher's role, then, is a "peripheral role of nurturing a competence" and providing a context because teachers "can't create thinkers and writers after their own image" (94).

Because he thinks students should find within themselves their own method and process, Willinsky insists that they not follow teachers, "who do not think enough of it [the method] to try it themselves" (NL 45). Linking his pedagogy to Illich and 1960s deschooling, Willinsky wishes a teacher's learning to "circulate" authority throughout the class "rather than lord it over them" (NL 52). He describes a New Literacy pedagogy that "shift[s] the educational authority from . . . the experience and knowledge of the teacher to . . . those qualities in the student" (NL 192). His inspiration for students' finding their own way is the Romantic poet Wordsworth, who,
Willinsky says, valued "experience and the inspirational power of time spent reflectively alone without a teacher except Nature" (NL 192). Because he reads in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" that Wordsworth "unrestrainedly celebrates" the child, Willinsky sees a rationale for a child-centered writing curriculum.

The organicist's privileging of the child is not, however, the Romantic notion of the child's superiority. Willinsky reads the Romantics as exalting childhood, and he uses his reading of Wordsworth as an inspiration for his students' writing. But Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode" looks wistfully to childhood only because of the child's unselfconscious, unified relationship with nature. In the "Ode" Wordsworth's child appears among nature's beauty, seemingly clothed in "a celestial light" (1. 4). The poet looks back wistfully and concludes that he no longer possesses unity with nature. This "original relation" that the child enjoys convinces the poet that "a glory" has passed from the earth. The verses, however, do not celebrate the child but the unselfconscious state of the child.

As in The Prelude and "Tintern Abbey," the ode appraises the three stages of the speaker's separation from nature: the child, who is still connected to nature; the youth, who daily travels "farther from the East"; and the
Man, who "perceives it die away" (5). In stanza eight Wordsworth refers to the child as the "best philosopher," the appellation that Willinsky uses in grounding his process approach. However, Wordsworth's characterizing the child as having an immense soul and as being an "eye among the blind" is indicative of his belief that the child has what the mature poet does not have: unity with nature. The poet yearns for "those first affections/ Those shadowy recollections," but he concludes that he appreciates nature even more than he had in childhood. The speaker appears reconciled, but when he reveals that the most ordinary flower that blooms gives him "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," we realize the depth of his alienation. Willinsky reads the Romantics as idealizing childhood, but what Wordsworth actually ponders is the loss of his former "selfless self."

Organic Form: Rose, Lilies, and Stones

To the organicist vital process is realized "naturally," without outside direction or manipulation. Throughout their examinations of creativity, organic educators extol the primacy of inner thought, intuition, and intrinsic form. This privileging of intrinsic over extrinsic is what Crowley believes to be the "fundamental opposition that entered into the inaugural gesture of metaphysics: inside/outside" (12). To the organicist
plumbing the mystery of creativity, "inside" is infinitely preferable to "outside." As hallowed as the interior impulse toward creativity is the internal self-movement of organic process. Even though a period of "subconscious maturation" or "long compression" (AE 73) may precede production, Dewey believes creativity comes with little application of "direct effort of wit and will" and that its form is organic, that is, "inherent, not imposed from without" (AE 137). Organic creativity, then, is inner-directed, is driven "below the level of intention" (AE 73), and realizes its structure from germination within, not from outside mechanical imposition of structure.

In Coleridge's famous definition, organic form is innate:

The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form. (Lectures 409)

Since he first defined creativity in genetic terms, Coleridge's theory of organic form has had long-standing influence in literature and criticism. Organic form is one of the foundational tenets of the New Criticism, and theories of creativity--from Dewey to the present time--have incorporated its critical dicta.
Poe told of his conscious intention in writing "The Raven," and Wimsatt saw a poem as an "act of a self-reflexive consciousness," a conscious application of wit and will, but the organicist cannot acknowledge intention. De Man in "Form and Intent in the American New Criticism" says that if one attempts to define the difference between a stone and a chair, one must, in defining the manufactured object, specify its intended use, namely, that it is "destined to be sat on." But a natural object like a stone may be defined by the totality of its sensory appearances. Thus

by asserting a priori. . . that in literary language, the meaning is equal to the totality of the sensory appearances [as the New Critics asserted], one postulates in fact that the language of literature is of the same order, ontologically speaking, as a natural object. The intentional factor has been bypassed. (24)

New Critical and organic conceptions of creativity, then, slight conscious intention and will because, in de Man's interpretation, they confuse "intent," defining it as the mental content of the poet's mind. But, says de Man, intentionality is not something physical nor psychological, "but structural" (FI 25). Though creative production is "more complex," de Man believes that it follows this same logic: "[T]he intentionality of the act, far from threatening the unity of the poetic entity, more definitely establishes this unity" (FI 25). He concludes that the New
Critics denied intentionality because it compromises their idea of organic form (FI 28).

Knoblauch and Brannon express their aversion to a student's being required to consider an essay mechanistically or in parts, that is, in stages or steps, because they believe the form of an essay should grow like a plant; they thus deny the value of writing that assumes a predetermined form:

When discourse is conceived in organic terms, its . . . continuity is emphasized, its integrity as a whole, while the differentiation of parts is regarded as the product of analytical investigation, not as an a priori condition. The parts of an automobile precede the engine viewed as a whole; but the parts of a plant, stem, leaves, roots do not precede the plant as a whole. (85)

Knoblauch and Brannon think of a piece of writing as a plant whose parts are not to be differentiated, as an act without a priori analysis. In defining the composition as a plant, they cannot logically subscribe to an intentionality which would refute their organic metaphor. Intention belongs to the human being constructing the chair, the automobile, and "The Raven," not to a rose or a lily that is "fated in the seed" to grow inevitably and inexorably.

Dewey's *Art as Experience* is filled with allusions to the necessity of organic form in creative production. Like Knoblauch and Brannon, Dewey disavows external organization, which is inimical to the "ordering of a
growing experience . . . invol[ving] . . . the whole of a live creature toward a fulfilling conclusion" (81). Elsewhere, he says the organization of an act of expression should not be "impelled by outside necessities," as it often is in ordinary life, but by "an onward motion like that of waves of the sea" (AE 172). He defines form as "the operation of forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene, and situation to its own integral fulfillment [original emphasis]" (AE 137).

This organic unity, Dewey suggests, exists in a poem if the subject matter of the poem has first been "poetically felt" in "such a unified and massive way as to determine its own development, that is its specification into distinctive parts [my emphasis]" (AE 192). Should those parts appear in the finished work as parts or "seams and mechanical junctions," Dewey says it is "because the substance is not controlled by a permeating quality" (AE 192). This quality that must appear in all the parts and contribute to a "sense of totality" can "only be felt"; it "cannot be a product of reflection" (AE 192-94). Even though arduous labor might precede the final production of a poem or drama, Dewey maintains that its movement is a "self-movement" because "prior labor" fuses freshly with a new emotion (AE 70). He describes this unified organization as "dynamic . . . because it is a growth" (AE 55).
Rohman and Wlecke's 1960s experimental work in expressionistic process was founded on characteristics of the plant. Like Dewey, Rohman and Wlecke stress dynamic growth of parts, a totality of effect, and internal, rather than external, organization. They tell their students that their essays "ought to be thought of as growing into an organized whole from the dynamic encounter of the writer's mind with his seed-idea" (56). The seed-idea is central to Rohman and Wlecke's idea of process and organic unity, for the "single compelling insight" or seed-idea necessary to organic form is also what drives the process (56-58). The seed-idea is powerful enough, Rohman and Wlecke believe, "to beget other ideas," which develop "inevitably" but "not necessarily logically" into yet other ideas which have "the power, like the plant, of assimilating . . . elements that can be included in the total organism of the essay" (57-58).

The totality that Rohman and Wlecke wish to see demonstrated in student essays is described as "a sense of the 'growth' of a 'seed idea' or single theme, 'exfoliation' of an argument or proof, 'fruition' in the totality of the essay" (131). Because the whole is a "growing" whole, it cannot be viewed as "static" or "finished" (131). It is in process, becoming. For Knoblauch and Brannon, "form emerges--the sense of a whole with integrated parts or aspects" (85). By "form," they
mean "a fabric," "a texture," "a continuity" but not some "conventional shape like a paragraph" (85). For Dewey, the self-movement of a poem represents "a universe in itself" and "a miniature whole"; the poem is "self-enclosed and self-limiting" and has "self-sufficiency" (AE 241). This miniature whole moves internally, organically, the "medium and its meaning seem[ing] to fuse as by a preestablished harmony," which Dewey attributes to the "music and euphony of words" (AE 242).

When educators organically define the creative imagination, their concept does not derive from what de Man calls "the main Romantic experience" but from Coleridge's theories of imagination and symbolic language. Representing the imagination and language with the capacity to reconcile the division between writers and their acts of expression or between the natural world and human acts of conscious deliberation disregards Emerson's belief that language does not have the capacity to represent reality. And the attempt by theorists to ameliorate division by linking a student's idea with a seed or the essay with a plant is to pair a conscious act with an unconscious natural image and to offer the plant as liberating when its growth is fated and determined. Expressionists like Rohman and Wlecke and Willinsky and transactionalists like Berlin and Berthoff treat the act of composing as an unfolding; however, this kind of process theorizing fails to recognize
that writing is not organic but cognitive, an act of reflection which is always intentional. Images of seeds, fruit, roses, lilies, animals, and waves do not explain the creative imagination but offer, instead, mystification.
Notes to Chapter 4

1. I wrote in Chapter Two of how a transactionalist like Debrah Rashcke pairs Emerson with the solipsism she fears is generated by expressionistic rhetoric and of how an expressionist like Mark Wiley attempts to relieve the expressionist focus on individual activity by promoting peer groups as small communities. Though Willinsky speaks of the process as beginning "within" (The New Literacy: Redefining Reading and Writing in the Schools, p. 46) and as "learning from oneself" (p. 35), he also labors to align his expressionism with "the social situation of the individual" (p. 55).

2. I have already mentioned Berlin's proclivity for the natural image; Knoblauch and Brannon's brand of transactionalism is also framed organically. Berlin places his own work in the epistemic transactional branch of process; he includes, among others, Winterowd, Crowley, and Berthoff; however, though Knoblauch and Brannon claim this same orientation, he sees them as expressionists who understand composing as "the expression of the isolated self" (p. 185, Rhetoric and Reality).

3. Kronick demonstrates how Coleridge in Essays on the Principles of Method uses allegory to explain the mind's power for symbolizing; however, though the narrative indicates the possibility of man's retracing "the path leading man away from unity" (resulting in a reuniting of language and nature), the allegory "undoes itself" when it reveals unity left behind (pp. 64-64, American Poetics of History: From Emerson to the Moderns).

4. In Chapter Two, I noted Berlin's acquisition of Emerson for transactional composition and his acknowledgment of a similar expressionist claim. Dewey suffers from the same sort of tug-of-war: both transactionalists and expressionists claim him. Berlin says that early transactional rhetoric "was the most complete embodiment of John Dewey's notion of progressive education" (Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985, pp. 46-47). And he finds in Fred Newton Scott, a disciple of Emerson, a biographical, if not a philosophical, linkage to Dewey. According to Berlin, Scott and Dewey were colleagues at Michigan, and Scott taught a class in aesthetics for Dewey in the philosophy department there (RR, p. 47; Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges, p. 56). It is apparent that Scott relished organic metaphors quite as much as Berlin and Dewey. In an early text Scott and colleague Joseph Villiers Denny argue that writing should not be thought of "as a dead form. . . but a living
product" and that a paragraph is like a plant "springing up in the soil of the mind from a germinal idea" (qtd. in Berlin, WI, p. 84).

5. In the 1960s, Jerome Bruner's emphasis on process stimulated a renewal of process rhetoric in universities (Berlin, RR, p. 122). However, it would be difficult to distinguish how much of this revival was inspired by Bruner or by Dewey, whose work had kept process alive in public schools while it faded away on the college level (RR, p. 46). Berlin admits his bias toward the transactional (epistemic) process model (and its "Romantic," Emersonian-inspired nineteenth-century manifestation in Scott's work). Berlin's narrative describes the attempts of David-like process rhetorics challenging the Goliath-like current-traditional model (the prevalent writing theory for the past 150 years). He metaphorically represents the current-traditional theory as a mechanistic, assembly-line, product-oriented epistemology (Berlin, WI, p. 29; p. 83); the process theories he defines in plant metaphors.

Berlin has told of how Scott's inaugural attempt to launch an early (1890s) alternative to the current-traditional philosophy failed on the college level. In the Progressive-influenced and Dewey-inspired years of 1920-1940, the popularity in public schools of both the transactional (with its emphasis on the "social nature of human experience") (RR, p. 58) and the expressionistic (with its accent on individualistic self-expression) reflected the two tributaries of Progressive education, which Berlin says Dewey attempted to reconcile (RR, p. 59). Dewey is, therefore, frequently cited as the precursor of both rhetorics.

In the 1960s, with Rohman and Wlecke as revival figures, process writing (in an expressionistic form) reappeared in a university setting. Other process theorists treated in this study—Willinsky and Knoblauch and Brannon—currently endorse some form of an expressionistic, transactional blend of process.

6. Dewey is careful in distinguishing between the aesthetic experience of consuming—"appreciating, perceiving, and enjoying"—and that of actual producing—the making of a poem or a painting (AE 47). Still, as is frequently the case with Dewey, he strains to effect a reconciliation. Though appreciation and production are different acts, "[t]o be truly artistic, a work must also be esthetic—that is, framed for enjoyed receptive perception. Constant observation is, of course, necessary for the maker while he is producing" (AE 48).
7. José Rosario demonstrates a similar belief in Rugg, who, he says, viewed the imagination as the "key to an understanding of knowing and creation as basic processes underlying the generation of all knowledge" (see "Harold Rugg on How We Come to Know: A View of His Aesthetics" in Contemporary Curriculum Discourses, p. 347).

8. Rosario credits Rugg with early recognition of the "constraints of pragmatism" (p. 350) while simultaneously accusing Dewey of failing "to explain what was psychologically possible and perhaps necessary in a creative and liberating experience" (p. 351). Leroy Troutner also finds Dewey's pragmatism "inadequate" in explaining "man's subjectivity" (qtd. in Rosario, p. 351). Even so staunch a defender of Dewey as Thomas Alexander (John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience & Nature) concedes a deficiency in Dewey's failure to articulate the "relationship between his description of aesthetic experience and his instrumentalism" (p. 184). Alexander, however, argues that Dewey's theory of experience is basic to both his instrumentalism and his aesthetics (p. 184). Rugg, however, (even in the posthumously published culmination of his research on creativity, Imagination, 1963) fails to acknowledge Dewey's treatment of creativity in Art as Experience, a study that came late in Dewey's career (Rosario, p. 357).

9. While Thorslev believes organicism to be the distinguishing characteristic of Romanticism, I have argued differently. The retreat from consciousness that he describes is part of the separation I have earlier attributed to the Romantic awareness of disunity. The organicist, however, disavows any irreparable separation in identifying with nature.

10. "Becoming" represents process to the organicist; to the Romantic it represents human instability as opposed to nature's essence: Emerson's rose is; human beings are becoming. To an organicist like Dewey or Willinsky, becoming engenders positive process. Willinsky adopts a philosophy of becoming and calls it "Romantic" on the basis of Morse Peckham's interpretation of Romanticism. According to Willinsky, Peckham recognizes three dominant thought patterns in Romantic literature: a predilection for organic rather than mechanical metaphors, a philosophy of becoming rather than being, and a privileging of relationships rather than entities (qtd. in Willinsky, p. 188, The New Literacy: Redefining Reading and Writing in the Schools).
11. The organic educator's emphasis on knowledge gained from experience rather than from teachers and books, as traditionally conceived, is commonly characterized as an element of "anti-intellectualism." Under a sub-heading titled "Questioning Authorities and Undoing the Book," Willinsky concedes that the New Literacy he advocates has inherited the "anti-intellectualism" label from the Progressives; "the charge," he believes, "will always have a toehold on a movement which challenges the authority of the book" (The New Literacy, p. 199).

Dewey's philosophy has borne this label more than any other educator's. See Richard Hofstadter's Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (1962) and Morton White's essay of that same year, "Reflections on Anti-Intellectualism." Dewey's influence is implied in White's treatment, but Hofstadter devotes over fifty pages to Dewey and what he considers to be his negative impact on American education. When both studies were printed in 1962, about five years after Sputnik, American education was being criticized for its failure to teach hard science and logic -- central concerns of the pure rationalist--at a time when the country appeared inclined toward rationalism as a "necessary" educational base.

Though Dewey does not refer to specific matters of curricula praxis in Art as Experience, his references to the wrong use of teachers and books are numerous and widespread throughout his work. For example, in How We Think (1910), Dewey praises the common man "with little schooling" because of his success in practical affairs (p. 120); twenty-eight years later, he reiterates this sentiment in Experience and Education when he calls the educational deficit of the common man with "little schooling" a "positive asset" because the man has common sense and has learned from his experiences (p. 48).

Dewey believes a student who attempts to memorize a "simulated cut-and-dried copy of the logic of an adult" will find his own logical processes stultified (HWT, pp. 79-80) and a student tied to a book will become a "parasite living on the secondhand experience of others (HWT, pp. 79-80). Books, he says, are "the chief representatives of the lore and wisdom of the past (EE, pp. 18-19). In both Democracy and Education and How We Think, he finds books, as traditional education uses them, negatives, rejecting "bookishness" (DE, p. 232) and advising students to avoid the "paths already trodden in the book" (HWT, p. 264).

12. Though rarer, unity achieved by mature persons is, Dewey believes, "on a deeper level and with a fuller content of meaning" (AE 72).
13. Throughout *The New Literacy*, Willinsky confronts the old Progressive tension between focusing on individual self-expression or on the communal and social. He is an expressionist in his writing philosophy. However, as an organicist, he feels an attraction for the organic whole. Organicists often place emphasis on "collectivism rather than on individualism" (Thorslev, *Romantic Contraries*, p. 90).

14. Rohman and Wlecke structure their pre-writing experiment on M. H. Abrams's five characteristics of plant life as it differs from mechanical systems. Abrams's characteristics evolve out of his analysis of Coleridge's "founding image" of "the distinction between the root analogies of machine and growing plant" (p. 170, *The Mirror and the Lamp*).
An organic reading pedagogy, such as that recommended by John Willinsky, looks upon literature as an occasion for confirming and consolidating identity: the self seeks and discovers in the mirrored representation of literature sameness. This discovery should, then, according to an organicist like Willinsky, be shared with a community of readers; reading, in this model, becomes an implement of organic connection—of self with self and of self with others. What I propose as an alternative to this organicism is a model derived from Felman’s reading of Lacan—one which promotes not sameness and mirrored reflection but difference. This Lacanian model is triadic rather than dyadic in its configuration of teacher, student, and Otherness. In the discourse driven by this triad, student and teacher discover neither self-knowledge nor self-confirmation but difference: the discovery of unconscious knowledge, the discovery of what they did not know they knew.

While Willinsky moves the teacher to the periphery and defines his or her role as that of inspirational leader, the teacher in the Lacanian model is part of a
configuration which features no center but which attempts to access new knowledge denied to our conscious discourse. While Willinsky believes that critical judgments derive from emotional responses to literature and that students should not engage in an analysis of what he calls the "artifact," a Lacanian pedagogy would insist on the impossibility of subjective interpretation and would require that students closely examine the text in their active production of meaning.

Willinsky's model for teaching literature parallels the organicism of his writing pedagogy. But perhaps even more than in his model of expressionist writing, Willinsky's teacher becomes an insubstantial, almost apparitional, figure assigned to the periphery of the classroom. Because he wishes an autonomous reader to derive his or her own meaning from a literary work rather than having it furnished by a teacher, he advocates "reading without teachers" (NL 85). His philosophical base is reader-response criticism, specifically reader-response theory as defined by David Bleich. From this reader-oriented pedagogy, Willinsky promotes reading that offers "pleasure, insight, and self-exploration" (NL 72), "engagement and self-expression" (NL 94), "a means of learning more about the world . . . outside of and within the student" (NL 97), and an occasion for "a deep level of
engagement as well as expression of personal meaning" (NL 105).

Most of all, Willinsky believes reading should achieve "associations of self and community" (NL 108)—associations that result in what might be identified as the gist of Willinsky's organicist reading philosophy: connection. He sees "education in literature becom[ing] an association among texts and readers" and argues that "in this way, response becomes connection" (NL 107). An education in literature, he believes, "makes bold strides toward the classic humanist call of 'only connect,' and it makes them through this essential connection" (NL 107).

In short, Willinsky's design advances the idea of students' engaging texts in search of personal meaning, self-exploration, and self-expression, with the ultimate goal being the organic integration of individual selves with the larger community. His reading theory assumes both the transparency of language and a centered subject; in arguing thus, he fails to acknowledge how language limits and defines the subjects he treats as autonomous. Speaking of the kind of intersubjective communication and centered subject that Willinsky envisions, Catherine Belsey has said:

. . . the form of the classic realist text acts in conjunction with the expressive theory and with ideology by interpellating the reader as subject. . . . This model of intersubjective communication, of shared understanding of a text which re-presents the world, is the guarantee not
only of the truth of the text but of the reader’s existence as an autonomous and knowing subject in a world of knowing subjects. In this way classic realism constitutes an ideological practice in addressing itself to readers as subjects, interpelling them in order that they freely accept their subjectivity and their subjection. (68-69)

As an alternative to the organicism Willinsky proposes, I suggest Shoshana Felman’s Lacanian reading model, an asymmetrical model which differs from the traditional dyadic configuration by insinuating a third point—Otherness—representing a means of accessing the unconscious knowledge of both student and teacher. Using Freud and Lacan, Felman argues that a reading model built on the psychoanalytic relationship of analyst, analysand, and the unconscious—a triadic configuration of teacher, student, and Otherness—moves pedagogy from "the transmission of ready-made knowledge" to the "creation of a new condition of knowledge, the creation of an original learning disposition" (JL 81). With the addition of Otherness, both the teacher and the student gain access to knowledge outside themselves, that is, to knowledge outside their conscious knowledge and outside the duality of their relationship. Felman’s pedagogy thus dispenses with the dualism Willinsky opposes but to which he can offer little other than a metaphysical notion of connection. Addressing the binary oppositions which organicist educators repetitively, and metaphysically, ask language and
imagination to reconcile, Felman explains how a model of asymmetrical reflexivity eliminates these dualisms:

By shifting and undercutting the clear-cut polarities between subject and object, self and other, inside and outside, analyst and analysand, consciousness and the unconscious, the new Freudian reflexivity substitutes for all traditional binary symmetrical conceptual oppositions— that is, substitutes for the very foundations of Western metaphysics— a new mode of interfering heterogeneity. (Felman JL 61)

Willinsky's reading model is caught up in the teacher-student or student-text dualisms which he reconciles with suggestions of merging and connecting; Felman, however, "shifts and undercuts" these polarities with an Otherness, an "interfering heterogeneity," that works to bring unconscious thoughts of both student and teacher to conscious discourse. In an analytic reading model, the teacher's position is neither central (there is no center in this centerless model) nor peripheral because the triadic exchange eliminates centers. The teacher, then, like the student and the Otherness of the unconscious, occupies a position in the triad.

Organicists align students with plants, curriculum with flowering, and ideas with seeds, all the while insisting on their homogeneity. Felman's Lacanian model, however, insists not on identity but on difference, on Otherness. What a model attentive to Otherness brings to consciousness is something different, something the teacher and student do not identity with but recognize as something
other--something they never knew they knew. Gregory Jay says Otherness results when the teacher "brings unconscious defenses, desires into the realm of discourse . . . . Students then may discover how what they don't know that they think prevents them from knowing or thinking something else" (790). What Jay suggests is that thinking contains an element of ignorance or blindness. In a model recognizing Otherness, the aim of pedagogy becomes that of revealing how ignorance--what students don't know that they think--prevents their learning something else. A model like Willinsky's does not recognize how ignorance can teach because it is self-grounded: reading is self-reflection, a vehicle for self-exploration, even self-confirmation. Inasmuch as Willinsky's pedagogy sanctions the essential, centered self of students, it cannot offer them what Felman urges--an "original learning disposition" (JL 81).

An organic, reader-centered interpretive framework views learning as an organic, linear unfolding. But Felman's psychoanalytic pedagogy moves on "breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action" and raises doubts about the kind of organic wholism Willinsky imagines:

. . . the unconscious, in Lacan's conception, is precisely the discovery that human discourse can by definition never be entirely in agreement with itself, entirely identical to its knowledge of itself, since, as the vehicle of unconscious knowledge, it is constitutively the material locus of a signifying difference from itself. (Felman, JL 77)
Felman's theory moves interpretation from self-reflection, which, she reminds us, is always a symmetrical and mirrored reflection, to an asymmetrical, "revolving reflexivity": a triadic, rather than dyadic, configuration. Felman's addition of Otherness not only eliminates what Willinsky fears--the reading teacher as dispenser of meaning--but, more powerfully, argues that literature is more than a substance to be dispensed. Inasmuch as "textual knowledge" is "knowledge of the functioning of language . . . knowledge at once derived from--and directed toward--interpretation," Felman argues that it cannot be "acquired (or possessed) once and for all" (JL 81). She draws a parallel between the analytic and pedagogical structures. The analyst, she maintains, has only textual knowledge that offers no "ready-made interpretation" in any specific patient's case:

While the analysand is obviously ignorant of his own unconscious, the analyst is doubly ignorant: pedagogically ignorant of his suspended (given) knowledge; actually ignorant of the very knowledge the analysand presumes him to possess of his own (the analysand's) unconscious: knowledge of the very knowledge he--the patient--lacks. (JL 82)

It is from the patient's speech, which "says much more than it knows, that the analyst will come to learn the patient's own unconscious knowledge, that knowledge which is inaccessible to itself. . . [original emphasis]" (JL 82).

Felman contrasts this psychoanalytic structure with the dialogic structure of the traditional classroom: in
this conventional arrangement the teacher's question is answered by the other (the student) in a totally "expected" way. But Lacan argues that the "true Other... is the Other who gives the answer one does not expect" (qtd. in Felman, JL 82). The answer that is not expected—what Felman calls "new knowledge previously denied to consciousness" (JL 76)—is "that which comes as a surprise, that which is constitutively the return of a difference [my emphasis]" (JL 82). Felman explains how this new knowledge, which offers difference coming as a surprise, must come from an Other. An organic conception of reading recognizes only the ego, not the unconscious.

Robert Con Davis has contrasted Lacan's use of the early Freud with the later, or American, Freud: in the earlier Freud preferred by Lacan, "the center of functioning... is not the ego but the unconscious"; in the American Freud the ego is the center, "a substantial thing, the actual self of the person [original emphasis]" (751). Willinsky's model looks to reading as self-expansion, offering greater engagement, exploration, and expression of the essential selves of reading students. Traditional pedagogy, such as that represented by the organism of Willinsky, believes, as does American ego psychology, in "the illusion of individual autonomy" (McGee 673).
The Lacanian Freud followed by Felman stresses, however, what Davis calls "positioning." Pedagogy is, Davis says, a

science of positioning, of understanding a student's relation to a dominant discourse, a discourse the student is constituted by as well as has an effect on. . . . a discourse [which] itself is unconscious [original emphasis]. (752)

What Davis calls "positioning," Felman refers to as "a process that gives access to new knowledge previously denied to consciousness [my emphasis]" (JL 76). Teaching, then, becomes "the creation of a new condition of knowledge, the creation of an original learning disposition [my emphasis]" (Felman JL 80-81). With "positioning" and "the creation of an original learning disposition," Felman's paradigm moves interpretation in literature from Willinsky's appeal for seeking a personal connection with a work to a discovery not of self (of either student or teacher) but of the Otherness in each.

Willinsky's interpretive pedagogy lacks positioning, for he sees literature as a project of the reader's connecting the experience of the author with his or her own "personal history" (NL 106-07); students exit the course with much of what they brought in, never questioning their centered positions nor their relation to larger discourses that actually define them. They leave without questioning the reality of an "autonomy" that a pedagogy like Willinsky's promises them. They fail to discern what is
actually an "illusion": the subject fails "to see beyond the illusion of autonomy to the implication of the subject in cultural processes" (McGee 671). Instead, students remain in an illusory center without access to "an original learning disposition."

The Unconscious and Otherness

What does Felman mean by "Otherness," the third position in her model of triadic dialogue? Otherness does not issue from Willinsky's illusion of personal autonomy, nor does it emerge from what Felman refers to as the "traditional pedagogical dynamic," that is, from the teacher's conventional questioning of the student or from the student's request for information. Answers returned by both student and teacher in these traditional, symmetrical roles call for information and closure; answers to questions traditionally posed are, says Felman, "expected" (JL 82), thus incapable of offering a return of the unexpected—the return of a difference or of "new knowledge." This is the mirrored, symmetrical duality that Felman distinguishes as essentially narcissistic (JL 126).

Otherness is not a part of this traditional pedagogical structure. Instead, Otherness develops out of

... a discourse that is other, or eccentric, to the discourse of the self. It is, in effect, a discourse that is other to itself, not in possession of itself; a discourse that no consciousness can master and that no speaking subject can assume or own.
The unconscious is a discourse that is radically intersubjective. Since it is a discourse that no consciousness can own, the only way a consciousness can hear it is as coming from the Other [original emphasis]. . . . (123)

If the discourse of the Other is "not in possession of itself" and is a discourse "no consciousness can own," then the Willinsky model, built on a "personal response" (NL 103) to literature and "on meaning that arises within readers" (NL 106), is essentially self-reflective. Willinsky's organic reading model assumes the subject's presence and the similarity of self and its representation in language. Derrida has spoken of the unconscious as

. . . differed--which no doubt means that it is woven out of differences, but also that it sends out, that is delegates, representatives, or proxies; but there is no chance that the mandating subject "exists" somewhere, that it is present or is "itself," still less that it will become conscious. . . . This radical alterity, removed from every possible mode of presence, is characterized by irreducible aftereffects, by delayed effects. (Speech 152)

These "representatives," "proxies," "aftereffects," or "delayed effects" are what Otherness represents; they manifest themselves in "unmeant knowledge that escapes intentionality" (Felman, JL 77), in dreams, in jokes, in slips of the tongue and pen (Belsey 131; Felman 22). This "unmeant knowledge" is not readily available through a pedagogy that fosters self-reflection. Freud speaks of this knowledge that "escapes intentionality":

. . . A part of the activity of your own mind has been withdrawn from your knowledge and from the command of your will. . . you are using one part
Felman sees in this explanation a pedagogical occasion, for Freud speaks of a part of the mind being unavailable to another part: it is "thus that psychoanalysis has sought to educate the ego," to offer access to "new knowledge" (JL 76).

Lacan uses the Freudian discovery of the unconscious to explain how a human subject, through induction into language, learns to "relate symbolically to other signifiers . . . to other humans and to articulate his own desire, his own unconscious, unawares" (Felman, JL 115). Lacan says that the unconscious is born at the moment the child acquires language (enters the symbolic order). According to Lacan, the child at first does not realize its own identity, but during the "Imaginary or mirror phase," it gains a dual perspective (of self and other). Belsey maintains this "'recognition' is an identification with an 'imaginary' (because imaged) unitary and autonomous self" (60); this mirrored reflection represents both harmony and alienation to the child: its specular image represents wholeness, yet the "I which is perceived and the I which does the perceiving" (Belsey 64) also demonstrate division. When the child enters the symbolic phase, represented by
the father who stands for the law and the restriction against incest, the child hears its first authoritative "no," the first imperative of renunciation, inaugurating, through this castration of the child's original desire, both the necessity of repression and the process of symbolic substitution of objects of desire, which Lacan calls "the Symbolic." (Felman, JL 104)

The child must deal with both desire and the law regulating desire "through a linguistic structure of exchange." Repeatedly, the child must replace and substitute symbolic objects as substitutes of desire (JL 104).

Belsey says the Symbolic division reinforces the alienation of the mirror or Imaginary phase: "There is thus a contradiction between the conscious self, the self which appears in its own discourse, and the self which is only partly represented there, the self which speaks" (64-65). As a result,

The unconscious comes into being in the gap which is formed by this division. The unconscious is constructed in the moment of entry into the symbolic order, simultaneously with the construction of the subject. The repository of repressed and pre-linguistic signifiers, the unconscious is a constant source of potential disruption of the symbolic order. (Belsey 65)

The child not only gains access to the "possibility of social relations" with its newly discovered language abilities, it also is able to voice its own needs and wishes (Belsey 65). However, Belsey explains that "... at the same time a division within the self is constructed" because language "cannot by definition formulate those
elements of desire which remain unconscious"; the subject thus becomes the "site of contradiction" (65)—contradiction that manifests itself in what Derrida has called "aftereffects" and what Felman has designated as "unmeant knowledge" that "escapes intentionality" (JL 77).

Unconscious desire, then, "once repressed, survives in displaced symbolic media that govern the subject’s life and actions without his ever being aware of their meaning . . ." (Felman, JL 41)—unconscious desire that comes to be "exposed" in language (JL 43). Felman associates what a subject does not remember "with repression, with the imperative to forget—the imperative . . . not to admit to knowledge" (JL 79). Ignorance thus becomes "no longer simply opposed to knowledge: it is itself a very radical condition, an integral part of the very structure of knowledge" (Felman, JL 78); ignorance, Felman insists, is "not a passive state of absence, a simple lack of information" but "an active refusal of information" and thus a "desire to ignore." And teaching, according to Felman, "has to deal not so much with lack of knowledge as with resistances to knowledge" (JL 79). Freud’s great "discovery," she believes, was "in showing the ways in which ignorance can teach us something, become itself instructive" (JL 79). Barbara Johnson uses Socrates’ words—"Most people are unaware that they do not know the true nature of the things they discuss"—and his avowal—"I
know only that I am ignorant" (qtd. in "Teaching" 181)—to make the point that what we usually think of as knowledge "is really an array of received ideas, prejudices, and opinions—a way of not knowing that one does not know [original emphasis]" ("Teaching" 180).

An analytically informed reading pedagogy, then, would focus interpretation on making ignorance informative, would examine the gaps and inconsistencies in texts, and would ask these questions: "Where does a text ... precisely make no sense, that is, resist interpretation? Where does what I see and what I read resist my understanding?" (Felman, JL 80). Jay argues that a literature class may serve as "the occasion for [the] articulation" of these resistances: "what we resist knowing is intricately tied to our constitution as social subjects. It is this structure of resistance that the student already 'knows' yet still needs to 'learn'. . . ." (789).

What constitutes this repression, these unconscious desires? Though Felman states that the Oedipal question is central to analysis, she stresses that the question is "not necessarily" one "addressing analysands' desire for parents" but "a question addressing analysands' misapprehension, misrecognition . . . of their own history" (JL 129):

The subject's question in no way refers to the results of any specific weaning, abandonment, or vital lack of love or affection; it concerns the subject's history inasmuch as the subject
misapprehends, misrecognizes, it [original emphasis] . . . . (JL 129)

Willinsky insists that students should find their own personal meaning in what they read, but Felman says that what can be read (and perhaps what should be read) is not just meaning but the lack of meaning; that significance lies not just in consciousness, but specifically, in its disruption . . . . that the lack of meaning—the discontinuity in conscious understanding—can and should be interpreted as such, without necessarily being transformed into meaning. (JL 45)

Not only does Willinsky believe that students should search for "personal meaning" and the "sense of a text's meaning" which "arises inside readers" (NL 106), he believes that they should do so in a virtually "teacherless" atmosphere. Felman, on the other hand, maintains that the unconscious cannot be accessed by one alone: the discourse of the unconscious is "radically intersubjective" and accessible only by "coming from the Other" (JL 123).³ While the position of the Other in psychoanalytic dialogue is occupied by both the analyst and the unconscious of both patient and analyst, this position, pedagogically, would be occupied by the teacher and by the unconscious of both student and teacher (the Other representing the bringing to conscious dialogue of the unconscious thoughts of each). What Lacan has seen as "only apparently two-way" (qtd. in Felman 126) in the analytic dialogue should be "only apparently" dual in a reading pedagogy. In Felman's theory
of reading, a "revolving reflexivity" emerges from the dynamic of teacher, student, and Otherness.

The Subject

In Willinsky's model, the subjective response of an autonomous reader is directed to a community of others where it is, theoretically, shared and works to connect reader and community. However, his reader's autonomy and freedom emerge from the duality of self-reflection (self reflecting self) and from the dualism of a self he sees as merging with community. Any unity recognized by Willinsky as originating from these dualities is, however, metaphysically, not genuinely, realized. An organic theory of interpretation fails to acknowledge language and the discursive inscription of subjects (in Willinsky's ironic phrase) in "their place in the scheme of things" (NL 108). In his eagerness for connection, Willinsky ignores the implication of language and its role in producing the social, political, and economic positions we occupy in the "scheme of things": Ironically, he says, "... [R]eaders need to see how that reading connects not just with themselves, but with their place in the scheme of things" (NL 108). In fact, language works with ideology to inscribe us in the scheme of things, but Willinsky's own reading model is oblivious to the implication of language in this inscription.
Derrida has said that the subject "is inscribed in the language, that he is a 'function' of the language" (qtd. in Belsey 59). Speaking of the "oppositional relation" of the metaphysical notion of "self-identity" to "otherness," Derrida believes that the "other, as the other than self, the other that opposes self-identity, is not something that can be detected . . . with the aid of a philosophical lamp" (Interview, Kearney 117-19). However, reading literature "as language" will allow us, says Derrida, "to interrogate the covert philosophical and political presuppositions of institutionalized critical methods which generally govern our reading of a text" (original emphasis) (Interview, Kearney 1125).

But Willinsky's organic reading model ignores the close textual analysis required to examine language and the critical methods that guide and determine our thinking. In fact, Willinsky's theory stresses "the literary experience" of reader and text "rather than an analysis of the artifact" (NL 95). Inasmuch as his organicist philosophy predisposes him to search for identity and similarity, Willinsky's reading theory overlooks the difference and Otherness in language. Belsey has said that "[w]ithin the existing ideology it appears "obvious" that people are autonomous individuals, possessed of subjectivity or consciousness which is the "source of their beliefs and actions"; it is what she says Althusser specifies as "the
elementary ideological effect" (58). In Willinsky's "teacherless" reading model, the idea of student autonomy is what he assumes to be natural and obvious:

... the autonomy of the student is encouraged
... the principal thing about reading is that you are to read for yourself, for the sense which books can make of, or add to, your own experience and understanding, which you then have a responsibility to share with others. (85)

Willinsky's repeated appeals for students to read for "personal meaning" and for students to connect a text with their "personal history" attest to his succumbing to the "elementary ideological effect." Both Derrida's view of language as a means of calling to question the ways critical schools govern our reading of literature and Belsey's reminder of how existing ideology promotes the idea of an autonomous subject point to the ingenuousness of Willinsky's assumptions about language, reading, and the reader.

"The Subject Presumed to Know"

It is, in other words, as of the moment the student recognizes that learning has no term, that he can himself become a teacher, assume the position of teacher. But the position of the teacher is itself the position of the one who learns, of the one who teaches nothing other than the way he learns [original emphasis]. (Felman, JL 88)

What Felman emphasizes about an analytically informed reading pedagogy is both the interminable apprenticeship of learners--student and teacher--and the dynamic nature of
the "revolving reflexivity" of the triad of student, teacher, and the unconscious—its dynamism driven by the shifting and revolving of the learning and teaching roles of teacher and student. Although both Felman and Willinsky propose the elimination of the authoritative teacher, their rejection of authority results in very different proposals. Felman's literature teacher presumes no mastery; she or he, in fact, is "one who learns." Using Lacan's own teaching as an example, Felman tells of his efforts "to learn from the students his own knowledge" (JL 83); this, Felman suggests, may be accomplished in the classroom through accessing Otherness. Knowledge is not owned, and mastery is, says Felman, an "illusion," "a mirage" (83-84).

The primary deterrent to the interminable apprenticeship which Felman conceives is transference, the student's identification with the "subject presumed to know" (JL 84). With transference, the student is relieved "of any responsibility for the production or effects of knowledge" (Jay 785). He or she reflects (mirrors) what the teacher desires; the relationship becomes, argues Jay, "a relationship of identification instead of analysis," one which "fixes the positions of knowledge rather than questioning their assumptions or displacing their privileges" (785).

For Willinsky the chief obstacle to student autonomy is the authoritative teacher, though he posits that texts
and literary critics also imperil autonomy. Willinsky suggests equipping students with reader-response techniques to replace teacher-dominated interpretation of texts. He believes his "New Literacy" formula best exemplified in David Bleich's idea of a reader-response oriented classroom (NL 105). He especially admires Bleich's practice of writing his own responses to a text at the same time that his students write theirs. Thus the teacher becomes, in Willinsky's attempt to abolish authority, a "source of inspiration [my emphasis]" (NL 106): she or he functions in a modeling role.

However, Willinsky's attempt at establishing an egalitarian atmosphere with teachers as sources of inspiration provides an occasion for the transference Felman believes detrimental to education. Lacan says, "As soon as there is somewhere a subject presumed to know, there is transference" (qtd. in JL 85). Because Lacan has defined transference to be "the acting-out of the reality of the unconscious" (JL 85-86), Felman believes teaching is not a "purely cognitive, informative experience . . . [but] also an emotional experience" (JL 86). According to Lacan, transference is "love directed toward, addressed to, knowledge" (qtd. in JL 86). Though Willinsky theoretically moves the literature teacher to the margins of the classroom, he speaks of the teacher as a source of inspiration, and thus, potentially, the recipient of "love
directed toward, addressed to knowledge." Gregory Jay maintains that a "teacher . . . must take up the position of authority in order to displace it, and thus to teach the student how to doubt Mastery" (789). Willinsky praises Bleich's practice of sitting among his students, modeling responsive writing for them, and serving as a source of inspiration. But in no part of his interpretation of Bleich nor in the explanation of his own theories does Willinsky address preparing students to "doubt Mastery," to focus on the language of the text, or to examine what Belsey calls "the unspoken in the text" (138). Bleich's student "'knows' by virtue of identification with the position of the teacher as the subject who knows," and when this happens, Jay states, "then there is no knowing in any productive sense" (789).

Lacanian Interpretation

A reading pedagogy following the Lacanian model Shoshana Felman has described would emphasize a number of practices which Willinsky's organicism ignores or treats very differently. Analytic interpretation would insist on a close examination of texts, would orient the student toward production rather than consumption of meaning, would attempt to develop genuinely critical reading habits in students, and would emphasize what is obscure, unreadable,
and contradictory in texts instead of stressing a text's meaningfulness and organic unity.

After rejecting reader-response theorist Stanley Fish's "Model Reader" or "super reader" and Louise Rosenblatt's reader-response theories for slighting the "'social' function of literature" (NL 102), Willinsky recommends Bleich's subjective variety of reader-response criticism in which the reader takes "ownership" of "new knowledge," re-creates his or her original feelings when reading the text and bonds to the work, and, finally, "brings the work into [his or her] history" (NL 105). According to Willinsky, Bleich believes that "critical judgements are implicit in emotional reactions" (qtd. in NL 105), that finding "personal meaning" is essential, and that intersubjectivity ("thought collective") results from "recognizing the community . . . in which individual readings take place . . ." (NL 107). In Willinsky's view Bleich's reader-response model values "emotional reactions" and personal responses to a text rather than a New Critical search for a single, definitive reading.

Willinsky thus sees in Bleich and other reader-response theorists "the undoing of the New Criticism" (NL 95). However, Belsey, Jonathan Loesberg, and Jane Tompkins have all pointed out that the two critical schools hold some basically identical views. Willinksy rejects Fish's "Model" or "super" reader because he believes "the
New Literacy has a need for a reader-response grounded in the practices of mortal readers" (NL 98). Calling Fish's reader-response "a sophisticated form of New Criticism," Belsey concludes that reader-response interpretation has become "the literary equivalent of populism, challenging the privilege of the author but offering instead the reader's intuition as a new source of authority" (34). No characterization of Willinsky's vision of the reader seems more appropriate than the description Belsey has drawn of "reader-power." Both his desire that readers find personal meaning in texts and his endorsement of Bleich's belief that critical judgments issue from emotional reactions to texts establish in his theory the primacy of reader intuition. This valuing of student intuition—coupled with his attempts to remove the authoritative teacher from the environment of the reader—becomes, in Belsey's words, "the literary equivalent of populism."

In Willinsky's pedagogy, reading is "self-exploration," the "principal thing about reading" being the idea "that you are to read for yourself, for the sense which books can make of, or add to, your own experience and understanding ..." (NL 85). Derrida, however, says that "[m]eaning is not personal. It does not depend on the subjective identity but on the field of different forces, the conflict of forces, which produces interpretations" (Interview, Kearns 21). Belsey has pointed out that the
meanings of a single sentence "vary from one political discourse to another . . . and to the extent that the hearer participates in these political discourses, he or she finds in the sentence one or more possible meanings" (53). But, Belsey argues, these varied interpretations are not subjective readings:

To posit an individual subject as an authority for a single meaning is to ignore the degree to which subjectivity itself is a discursive construction. To find a guarantee of meaning in the world or in experience is to ignore the fact that our experience of the world is itself articulated in language. (53)

Felman's Lacanian theory of reading would concentrate on the "field of forces" that Derrida refers to, focusing on what Willinsky derisively calls "an analysis of the artifact" (NL 95) "by scrutinizing the words on the page harder than the New Criticism ever had . . . ." (Felperin 255). A Lacanian reading pedagogy would not regard words as "translucent" and autonomous, nor would it strain to find "the organic unity that binds together irony, paradox, and ambiguity in a privileged . . . language . . . ." (Felperin 255-56). Instead, it would disseminate, in the words Felman uses to describe de Man's teaching, "a lesson of suspicion" ("Postal" 54).

De Man himself has described the kind of close reading which would be required in what he calls rhetorical criticism. In "The Return to Philology," de Man tells of a class, "The Interpretation of Literature," taught in the
1950s at Harvard University by Reuben Brower. He reveals how Brower focused interpretation "on the way meaning is conveyed rather than on the meaning itself" (23). He characterizes Brower's insistence on close reading as "an entirely innocuous and pragmatic precept" which resulted in the transformation of students:

Students, as they began to write on the writings of others, were not to say anything that was not derived from the text they were considering. They were not to make any statements that they could not support by a specific use of language that actually occurred in the text. They were asked, in other words, to begin by reading texts closely as texts and not to move at once into the general context of human experience or history. (my emphasis) (RP 23)

Brower's students, in other words, were interpreting literature by paying close attention "to the philological and rhetorical devices of language," which, de Man concludes, "is not the same as aesthetic appreciation . . ." (RP 24).

Willinsky's readers, however, are urged to connect their reading with their life experiences and to "see how literature and life go together" (NL 113). In requiring close reading of the text, both de Man and Felman deny the interpretive value of an aesthetic response. Felman says,

To read is then to read, specifically, the difference between life and language. The necessity of reading stems from the discrepancy between thought and life, between act and understanding, between the urge for freedom and the bondage in which language keeps us. Reading is an attempt to cancel this discrepancy, to set ourselves free of the signifying chain--of our entrapment in linguistic structures, to catch up
with, and cancel out, the foolishness unwittingly exhibited by living [original emphasis].
("Postal" 55)

De Man contends that close reading can be "deeply subversive" because it "respond[s] to structures of language which it is the more or less secret aim of literary teaching to keep hidden"; this close attention to "the philological and rhetorical devices of language is not the same as aesthetic appreciation . . ." (RP 24).

However, Willinsky contends that emotional responses to literature culminate in critical judgments and argues that "students should experience the text in an aesthetic manner . . . [original emphasis]" (NL 103). Indicating that aesthetics derives from "philosophers of nature and of the self rather than [from] philosophers of language," de Man concludes that

[i]t is because we teach literature as an aesthetic function that we can move so easily from literature to its apparent prolongations in the spheres of self-knowledge, of religion, and of politics. (RP 25)

Literature, in de Man's view, should be taught "as a rhetoric and a poetics," its justification being not the dispersing of "cultural excellence" but the cultivation of a "principle of disbelief" (RP 25).

A Lacanian reading model which insures the triadic relationship of student, teacher, and Otherness would concentrate not on the similarities and connections organicists strain to effect but on difference, on
Otherness. While Willinsky appears to recognize gaps and inconsistencies in texts, he offers an organicist's remedy:

> We cannot thoroughly render or articulate the experience of reading; we can only sketch out parts piecemeal with perhaps a little imaginative filling-in for what goes missing. (my emphasis) (NL 98)

This urge to "fill in," to smooth over, to pull together, and to connect characterizes organicist philosophy. Barbara Johnson, however, says that a text should not be "read solely in function of intentionality, meaningfulness, and representativity" but that what readers have "traditionally been trained to disregard, overcome, explain away, or edit out--contradictions, obscurities, ambiguities, incoherences, discontinuities, ellipses, interruptions, repetitions, and plays of the signifier" should become the very objects of interpretation ("Rigorous" 74). Nonetheless, Willinsky prescribes "imaginative filling-in for what goes missing."

Traditional pedagogy emphasizes self-reflection and dialogue. However, Felman demonstrates that self-reflection is a kind of mirroring narcissism that cannot encompass that which is Other to the self. Since this Otherness is not available to us in self-reflection, Felman repeatedly refers to the "radically intersubjective" nature required of a pedagogy sensitive to accessing "new knowledge." What is needed, Felman maintains, is a new mode of reflexivity--
the process through which something turns back upon itself: a new mode of reflexivity that necessarily incorporates a passage through the Other, not as a reflection of the self but as a radical difference from the self . . . . (JL 60)

The self which returns is different from its former self; ignorance, then, has become "structurally informative, in an asymmetrically reflexive dialogue in which the interlocutors--through language--inform each other of what they do not know" (JL 60).

An organicist like Willinsky regards the reader as autonomous and centered, and he calls for students to see how reading connects them with the world and their place in the world. But Derrida and Belsey have shown that the subject is inscribed in language: "subjectivity itself is a discursive construction . . . [and] our experience of the world is itself articulated in language" (Belsey 53). To insure student autonomy, Willinsky envisions the teacher's role to be that of inspirational leader. This "teacherless" structure, however, does not guarantee autonomy, for Felman demonstrates that transference--an identification with the "subject presumed to know"--thwarts autonomy.

Reading, then, should introduce Otherness to students, the experiencing of that which is outside the self. A postmodern theory of interpretation would also encourage close reading of texts, the student's active production of meaning, the incorporation of genuinely critical reading
habits, and a search not for unity but for seams, junctures, obscurities, ambiguities, and contradictions in texts.
Notes to Chapter 5

1. Willinsky acknowledges his use of Peter Elbow's well-known description of "writing without teachers" (*The New Literacy*, p. 85).

2. Willinsky dismisses Stanley Fish's immense influence in reader-response theory, saying that the New Literacy focuses on "real readers" and "mortal readers" rather than on the "model" or "super reader" of Fish. What he appears to avoid is Fish's insistence on close reading. Willinsky argues that actual readers are "too busily engaged" in reading to practice this close reading. See *The New Literacy*, p. 98.

3. Felman quotes Lacan as specifying that the unconscious is "transindividua1" and "not at the disposal of the subject." *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight*, p. 126.

4. Jasper Neel says the idea of teacher as "medium" or "unscrambling device" is a "scary idea" but that "... anyone who enters a high school classroom has assumed it--willy-nilly, ready or not." Neel believes high school teachers "literally define the reading process for most Americans, who, throughout their adult lives, will continue to 'receive' what they read through the scrambling device they were given in school" (p. 63, "Writing about Literature (or Country Ham)").

5. Willinsky finds New Critics Wimsatt and Beardsley's explanation of the "affective fallacy" especially offensive because he believes that the effect a work of literature has on a reader is of primary significance.

6. Tompkins has spoken of how both New Critics and reader-response theorists "assume that to specify meaning is criticism's ultimate goal" (qtd. in Loesberg 23). Loesberg links reader-response methods with intentionalism, saying that in attempting "to locate where and how specific meanings are produced, one will turn either to authors or to readers, either intention or response . . . " (p. 22, "Intentionalism, Reader-Response and the Place of Deconstruction"). Belsey thinks "a kind of implicit intentionalism" (p. 16) survived in the New Criticism while the New Critical emphasis on a single meaning remains a part of the interpretive communities of reader-response criticism (p. 29). See Belsey's *Critical Practice*. 
CHAPTER 6  
CONCLUSION

Much of what has been called "Romantic" in twentieth-century American education is actually organic. While the Romantic poets and philosophers of the nineteenth century employed organic metaphors to express their longing for unity, another voice—a dominant voice—told of the reality of their separation and alienation. In labeling pedagogy as "Romantic," educators follow a very traditional reading of the Romantics, one fostered by literary historians and the New Criticism. The Romantics recognized consciousness or language as the origin of their separation: language allowed them to think the difference between nature and human beings. Unselfconscious nature lacks temporal awareness, but the Romantics repeatedly demonstrated their own recognition of time and mortality.

This Romantic recognition and the revisionist readings of the 1960s and 1970s which first identified alienation as the primary Romantic experience have been entirely overlooked by educators who cling to old definitions and traditional conceptions of Romanticism. The Romantics were, according to de Man, "the first modern writers to have put into question, in the language of poetry, the ontological priority of the sensory object" (IS 16); they
are, however, still being regarded by American education as nature worshipers who reconcile the division between nature and humankind.

It is, however, educators who insist on identification with nature—identifying desirable reform with natural living things. They pair student thinking with seed germination, the developing essay with the growth of the plant, and the movement of creative process with the onward motion of sea waves. They metaphorically identify their reform proposals with nature and life while simultaneously coupling the status quo with the machine and death. Their organic metaphors reveal an ontological urge inasmuch as their use of the natural image, "the expression most apt to gain our immediate acquiescence," reflects their attempts "to draw closer and closer to the ontological status of the object . . . " (de Man, IS 7). In employing natural images, they link their reform with eternal life, with organic nature which is atemporal and unaware of death; the tradition they wish to eradicate, then, becomes death, the force opposing their living reforms.

Emerson is the Romantic whose thinking has most dominated American education. As do other educators, Dewey reads Emerson as the great unifier, a reconciler of subject and object, an advocate of continuity and integration. Dewey's interpretation of the transparent eyeball passage in Nature defines an organic Emerson, who surrenders to
"ecstatic communion," an act which Dewey believes illustrates the "natural continuity" between human beings and nature (AE 28-29). Perhaps the reading most typical of the way Emerson is misread by educators is Grant's interpretation of the roses in "Self-Reliance." Grant believes the roses indicative of Emerson's belief that humankind and nature are unified; however, in the rose passage Emerson laments the disunity of humanity and nature, for the rose lives above time while human beings are bound by time.

Emerson knew that language could not bridge the gap between subject and object, that language, in fact, created the gap (Kronick 61); but Dewey subscribed to a symbolic theory of language: words are instruments of communication which can be easily used and understood by communities of language users. Especially is Emerson's philosophy appropriated by organicist rhetoricians. Two schools of process theorists—expressionists and transactionalists—consider Emerson's philosophy (as well as Dewey's) foundational. Theorists such as Willinsky, Berlin, Wiley, Berthoff, Rohman and Wlecke, and Knoblauch and Brannon identify composing with the natural growth of a plant. When Dewey defined his aesthetics, he too endorsed internal organization and organic form: the poem would determine its own movement, "meaning and medium fusing as by a preestablished harmony" (AE 242). Creativity, then,
becomes with organicist theorists an act of unfolding and not an act of conscious reflection.

What organicists disregard is language. They view language and the imagination as implements of mediation. Metaphysically, they assume language connects. Language, in their view, is communication: writing and reading result, they argue, in shared meaning. What they do not recognize is difference or Otherness. In literature, Willinsky asks students to interpret on the basis of their emotional and personal responses to a text—responses which, when shared with a community of readers, will connect the individual with the larger community. His is a reading theory of connection and integration, a theory which fails to incorporate any idea of language and its significance in constituting subjectivity. Shoshana Felman's proposal of a dialogic triad of student, teacher, and Otherness, however, breaks down the mirroring, dualistic association of teacher and student and introduces the unconscious as an access route to new knowledge.

The organicists' insistence on connection, wholism, and unity is established through metaphor, but these educators "fail to realize that the very fact that the relationship has to be established within the medium of language indicates that it does not exist in actuality" (de Man IS 8). J. Hillis Miller tells of how the conclusion of Wuthering Heights leaves readers unsatisfied at the "state
of unappeased desire"; therefore, critics have attempted to "explain" the novel, to smooth over the difficulties, and to close the text in a definitive fashion. Miller says that the metaphoric language used to describe the "satisfying state of unity for which Cathy and Heathcliffe yearn" is "by its very nature the thing that makes such unity impossible" (67-68). Education suffers from a similar desire to explain disunity, to smooth over the difficulties. Language, however--even green images of plants or blooming roses or waves of the sea--cannot make two one. Miller says:

... the intuition of an original state of unity ...
... is a projection outward of a oneness, a unity which never was nor could be, from the state of twoness within. This duality is within the self, within the relation of the self to another, within society, and within language. The sense that there must at some time have been an original state of unity is generated by the state of division itself as a haunting insight, always at the corner or at the blind center of vision, where sight fails ... "it" exists only in language. It exists in the experience of things as traces of something absent, something that never was or could be present. (68)
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