

NH Ideas

2. New materials can inform our reading of earlier held views in any number of ways.

DONT FORGET TO QUOTE JOYCE IN FROST

get in Wood

Blair and Campbell

Needless to say, the student is not only memorizing text, the student is also memorizing values, moral codes, and ways of behavior in the study of "subjects proper for the improvement of youth of both sexes at school."

The equivalent of Walker's text on the college level is Blair's Lectures, a series of oral lectures "originally designed for the initiation of youth into the study of belles lettres and composition" (Preface, Lectures). Abraham Mills, the editor of the 1829 edition, wrote that they "deservedly occupy a place in our schools and universities, as an excellent elementary treatise on the studies of composition and eloquence" (p. x). As Connors notes, it is true that Blair stresses the practice of composition (REx, 201), but given that the work contains 47 lectures, the amount of space given over to the composing process is very limited, and occurs in a portion of Lecture XIX called "Directions for Forming a Proper Style."

In that section, Blair elaborates on six points which he believes will assure the writer of a proper style: studying clear ideas on the subject about which one is going to speak or write, composing frequently, becoming well acquainted with the style of the best authors, not falling prey to a servile imitation of any author, adapting one's style to the subject and to capacity of the hearers, and not letting concern with style distract the writer from concern with thought (pp. 212-215). The points that are most directly related to composing are the first and second; they are particularly interesting to scholars today because they stand in marked contrast to contemporary ways of understanding and teaching the composing process. In the first, Blair teaches that the writer must think closely on the subject, "till we have attained a full and distinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words" (p. 213); he is thus arguing for the separation of thought and writing.

In the second point, he is clear to say that frequent composing practice is "indispensably necessary" (p. 213). But he warns against "frequent, careless, and hasty composition," arguing that from that, "we shall have more trouble afterwards in unlearning faults, and correcting negligences, than if we had not been accustomed to composition at all" (p. 213). To be fair, Blair also cautions against spending too much time on every word, but the gist of his argument, following Quintilian, is to "write

slowly, and with anxious deliberation. . . . by hasty composition, we shall never acquire the art of composing well" (p. 213).

Walker, therefore, teaches writing through memorization and copying, Blair through practice, but with the caution that writers think before writing, and that when they do write, they do it slowly and deliberately. Both writers teach impersonal and abstract writing, and, writing that has the voice of a sophisticated, adult writer, not the voice of a beginner or a youth.

Primary examples of writers who follow this mode are Samuel Newman, Richard Green Parker, and G.P. Quackenbos.

emphasize original composition
often suggest student go on to more complex rhetorics, but
start with these

first books, books for beginners or young composers
short
often illustrated
less emphasis on rules, more on writing
writing from personal exp

my work is tentative, preliminary,

don't want to claim I've looked at all the books, but at a lot

any generalization is fraught with problems
some of better known followed Walker
lesser known broke patterns
students were writing personal essays

argument had been that students couldn't come up with original material

in breaking away from memorization
outlines
questions

Anon and Frost both give suggestions for finding material

some books break patterns in some ways, not in others

James Clifford: "Cultural *poesis*--and politics--is the constant reconstitution of selves and others through specific exclusions, conventions, and discursive practices."
p. 24, Writing Culture

frost, etc. are not discrete texts

history is partial, complex, problematic
constraints on writing history
polysemous
transparency of representation no longer possible

In "Deep Play," Geertz refers to culture "as an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulder of those to whom they properly belong" p.74 in Writing culture

elas

about history, Blair says: "The general idea of history is, a record of truth for the instruction of mankind" (p. 398b). Veyne argues, and for me rather convincingly, that history is "mutilated knowledge."

derivative from walker or Blair, in some cases with credit, some cases not, rarely specifically cited

essays in Walker are not kid essays; they are adult subjects, adult syntax, and they are designed to pass on a moral code

(what I'm going to say doesn't invalidate what other people have said or seen--it's just another trace, another layer)
NH IDEAS

"History is a city visited for the pleasure of seeing human affairs in their diversity and naturalness, without seeking it any other interest or any beauty. More exactly, we visit what is still visible of that city, the traces of it that remain; history is mutilated knowledge." (p. 13--Veyne)

History is a true novel. Veyne, x

what it is still possible to know about it
the traces that remain
feathers of a lost bird
danger is in thinking that there's only one bird
or that we'll ever know what the bird looked like
people make attempts at drawing it
some say it looked like this, others say, no, it looked like
that

Position I'm more comfortable with is we can catch glimpses of a tail feather, a wing feather here, an eye ring there

what birder sees depends on equipment, personal agility,
experience, background knowledge, willingness to wait

When I started tracking down little known 19th century
writing texts, I was enlivened by the thrill of the chase,
especially when I began to turn up texts that interrupted
the by now well-established patterns of thinking about 19th
century teaching. The temptation for me was to think that I
was feathering in the picture of a lost bird that Berlin,
Connors, Crowley, Halloran, Johnson, had already drawn.
What I now understand is the danger of thinking there's only
one bird, or of thinking that we'll ever know what the bird
looked like. Many people make many attempts at drawing the
bird; some say it looked like this, some say it looked like
that. Best I can say is that we're all gathering feathers
of lost birds.

collage

glimpse of birds in flight; but birds are different shapes,
sizes, colors--and they shift with the wind;
, or in the parlance of historians today, tracings.

Weltanschauungen: world views

Michael Stanford: "A historian and a recording angel are
two very different things." (p. 127)

History as event vs. History as account
History as document vs history as rhetoric

"Science is de jure incomplete; history alone can be allowed
de facto to have gaps--because it is not a fabric, it has no
weave" (Veyne, p. 18)

"History is an intellectual activity"

"Writing history is an intellectual activity" p. 71, venye

History is not langue, but parole

good work done in history so far

Connors

Berlin

Crowley

Johnson

Woods

As more material turns up, as we think about it in new ways,

Connors: no personal writing

Berlin: categories provide us with a way of talking,
undertanding, but they are rhetorical

Feathers of a lost bird

No picture of the bird

ever changing

Two people who had the most influence on the shape of writing instruction in lower and secondary schools were Blair and Walker

Blair:

Walker