

**READING AND WRITING  
INSTRUCTION IN THE  
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

*Recovering and Transforming the  
Pedagogy of Robert Scholes*

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## INTRODUCTION

Ellen C. Carillo

*I'm a teacher first and a critic or interpreter or semiotician or whatever second. And pedagogy is rooted in a certain amount of faith in the political process as it has been developed in this country: far from perfect, mind you, and based on assumptions about the ability of people to learn enough to make their own decisions, which are very idealistic assumptions. I'm still trying to help realize that enterprise by teaching reading and writing on a large scale at the highest possible level. My interpretive methods are based on their teachability more than anything else.*

—“An Interview with Robert Scholes”  
(Bagwell 1983)

Robert Scholes, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities Emeritus at Brown University, passed away on December 9, 2016, leaving behind an intellectual legacy focused broadly on textuality, which allowed him to impact a range of fields, including literary studies, composition and rhetoric, education, media studies, and the digital humanities. For more than four decades Scholes wrote prolifically on literary modernism, structuralism, semiotics, reading and writing pedagogies, the profession of English, and the future of the humanities.

Putting together this collection of essays to honor Scholes's memory and to explore and extend the continued relevance of his work exposed how impactful his scholarship was and is. Depending upon whom you ask, Scholes might be lauded as a die-hard semiotician, a pioneer in the digital humanities before such a thing even existed, a beacon of hope for those committed to humanities education, or an invaluable resource to those teaching writing and rhetoric at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

I came to know Scholes's work in that latter capacity as I was introduced to his scholarship as a graduate student of English in the early 2000s at the University of Pittsburgh. As far as I know Scholes did not

directly influence the creation of the degree there, which is actually a PhD in critical and cultural studies, but his philosophies about the work of English certainly influenced its curriculum where we studied broad questions about language and textuality as they apply equally across media and to everything from high literary modernism to fan cultures and from science fiction to archival textbooks. After earning my graduate degree, I ended up at the University of Connecticut teaching a course called Writing Through Literature, the subtitle of the third and following editions of Scholes's co-authored unorthodox textbook, *Text Book*. Both the textbook and the course encourage instructors to, in Scholes's (1985, 16) own words from *Textual Power*, "stop 'teaching literature' and start 'studying texts.'" Scholes's pedagogical philosophies, it would seem, have trailed me now for more than half my life.

My introduction to Scholes came at about the time he published the short commentary titled "The Transition to College Reading" in *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* in 2002—rather late in his career. This piece has become a profound touchstone in my own work in the field of writing studies, and my specific area of expertise, the teaching of critical reading at the postsecondary level. I rarely hold a workshop or deliver a presentation that does not include his remarkable insight in that piece about why reading largely gets neglected in the college classroom: "We normally acknowledge, however grudgingly, that writing must be taught and continue to be taught from high school to college and perhaps beyond. We accept it, I believe, because we can see writing, and we know that much of the writing we see is not good enough. But we do not see reading. We see some writing about reading, to be sure, but we do not see reading. I am certain, though, that if we could see it, we would be appalled" (2002, 166).

Invariably this quote elicits an audible gasp of recognition from audience members as they acknowledge the simple and seemingly obvious truth in Scholes's observation about the invisibility of reading, an observation that for decades has nonetheless escaped those of us teaching at the postsecondary level. It was this commentary that led me to track down Scholes's earlier award-winning book *Textual Power* (1985), as well as his other books, including *Protocols of Reading* (1989), *The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English as a Discipline* (1998), *English After the Fall: From Literature to Textuality* (2011), and *The Craft of Reading* (2008). While I also came to know and admire his work on literary modernism, structuralism and semiotics, periodical studies, and the many other areas in which he published, it was Scholes's pedagogically inflected scholarship that I found especially compelling. It turned out that I was not alone.

As I shared the news of Scholes's death with colleagues in and beyond English, it was remarkable to hear about the multitude of ways Scholes's work impacted others. And so, I began thinking about what a collection that would honor this impact might look like. While it would be impossible to offer anything more than a glimpse into Scholes's legacy it ultimately seemed fitting that the glimpse would be of his pedagogical scholarship. Scholes consistently underscored his commitment to teaching and its priority above all else, to which the epigraph that opens this introduction attests: "I'm a teacher first and a critic or interpreter or semiotician or whatever second," Scholes explains. Scholes's chosen subjects were reading and writing, and his "interpretive methods" were "based on their teachability more than anything else" (Sean Latham, personal communication, May 5, 2019). Describing Scholes's priorities similarly, longtime friend and regular collaborator Sean Latham noted:

I think that's what it all came down to for Bob: giving students the tools they needed to be both good readers and good writers . . . Bob believed our job is to teach writing and reading of all kinds while meeting the students where they are in order to connect their interests to a larger more complex set of histories and traditions. Science fiction, video games, magazines—these were all interests that led him closer to what he thought the students themselves were reading and what they wanted to do with texts.

Scholes's commitment to giving students the tools they needed to pursue their interests even if those interests didn't align with how English defined itself at the time seems paramount to understanding Scholes's investment in his students and in teaching. Of course, in the decades since Scholes began working with students on science fiction, magazines, and video games these artifacts have become more acceptable objects of study, but to undertake this work when he did was revolutionary and helps explain why his scholarship is still relevant today.

#### THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF SCHOLES'S SCHOLARSHIP

Scholes's scholarship remains not just relevant, but a great deal of his pedagogical scholarship is eerily prophetic in how it anticipated the teaching challenges that have emerged as a result of our highly divisive climate. Shortly after 9/11 and writing about the English teacher's responsibility to challenge xenophobia, for example, Scholes (2002, 167–68) explained the importance of giving students the opportunity to consider themselves and their experiences in relation to others, an ability he believed Americans lack: "After 11 September 2001 we have begun to learn, perhaps, that this deficiency is serious." He goes on to describe

how English instructors must help students develop reading practices “in which strength comes, paradoxically, from subordinating one’s own thoughts temporarily to the views and values of another person.” In a time when fear is used to encourage divisiveness and we have seen an increase in hate crimes against marginalized groups, Scholes’s call for English instructors to take the lead in helping create more empathetic student-citizens could not be more relevant or important.

In addition to arguing that reading should be conceptualized as a tool to cultivate openness and related dispositions, the subject of the second part of this collection, as many as three decades ago, Scholes (1985, 15) recognized the role of education in teaching student-citizens how to push back against the nefarious powers of texts: “The students who come to us now exist in the most manipulative culture human beings have ever experienced. They are bombarded with signs, with rhetoric, from their daily awakenings until their troubled sleep.” “The worst thing we can do,” warned Scholes, “is to foster in them an attitude of reverence before texts” (1985, 16). In a culture where the very concept of “alternative facts” exists and in which disinformation and “fake news” move at warp speed, a reverence before texts is especially dangerous not only for individual students but for a healthy democratic society that depends upon its citizens’ abilities to read, write, and think critically.

Unlike other scholars who were circulating theories of literacy around the same time, Scholes was thinking about students’ literacy practices in relation to their roles as citizens in a democracy. He was concerned, in other words, about the challenges that American culture posed for students as democratic citizens. It is perhaps this specific context that has allowed Scholes, rather than other scholars, to become the touchstone on this issue. The publication of David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky’s *Ways of Reading* was certainly an important moment in the history of literacy instruction, as was Christina Haas and Linda Flower’s study on the reading practices of graduates and undergraduates. Peter Elbow’s “Doubting/Believing Game” and Geneva Smitherman’s *Talkin and Testifyin* were also important contributions to discussions surrounding literacy. But in our current moment in which our democracy has been threatened, Scholes, who was thinking about literacy within the context of democracy, has emerged as the touchstone. Still, readers will find in this volume references to some of these contemporaries of Scholes who were writing about similar subjects. For example, Kelsey McNiff describes her use of Elbow’s Believing/Doubting Game in her classroom, and Robert Lestón looks closely at Bartholomae’s 1993 essay “The Tidy House: Basic Writing in the American Curriculum.”

Scholes's scholarship has by no means eclipsed that of these equally important scholars, also evidenced by Jason Maxwell's discussion of Scholes alongside Wayne Booth and Peter Elbow in *The Two Cultures of English: Literature, Composition, and the Moment of Rhetoric*, addressed below. But the context in which Scholes offered his pedagogical scholarship perhaps resonates at this moment more than similar scholarship from the same time because of the recent attacks on democracy, including the insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Because so much of what Scholes discussed in his pedagogical scholarship—including his work on the English curricula—continues to resonate, contemporary writing instructors and administrators have found themselves compelled to return to his scholarship. For example, shortly after the Association of Departments of English (ADE) released its report titled “A Changing Major: The Report of the 2016–17 ADE Ad Hoc Committee on the English Major,” subscribers to the writing program administrator's listserv (WPA-L), including prominent figures in the field, invoked Scholes's ideas as they discussed the report. Doug Hesse (2018), who has contributed the afterword to this collection, wrote:

There is an important distinction between “what ADE says” and “what individual English departments believe/do.” There are certainly enlightened/progressive English department [*sic*] and there are certainly calcified ones, and for several of the former, enlightenment came years ago, even if many ignored their efforts. The example I know best was Illinois State University, in the period from 1985 to 2005, which had a robust English Studies perspective that embodied ideas given widest voice in the work that Bob Scholes was publishing. . . . If I were inventing an English department today, I'd build it around text-making: having students practice how texts are made and analyze how texts make readers, ideas, social formations, all of this informed (informed, not dominated) by how making has happened historically out of different kinds of stuff and circumstance, toward different purposes and consequences, all with a focus on students as text-makers for the present and future.

Joel Wingard (2018) responded to Hesse with the following: “I hear Bob Scholes in your coda, Doug, about building an English department from scratch. A department that is about the consumption and production of texts, aka literacy.” Similarly, Andrea Lunsford (2018) commented, “This discussion sends me back to Bob Scholes's work—especially *Textual Power* and *The Rise and Fall of English*.”

This return to Scholes's ideas from decades ago as English currently tries to imagine a place for itself and its major in the twenty-first century suggests just how pioneering Scholes's thinking was. Decades ago,

Scholes recognized the importance of thinking broadly in terms of both teaching and scholarship, regularly warning colleagues in English of the risks of specialization: “Every move toward greater specialization leads us away from the needs of the majority of our students and drives a larger wedge between our professional lives and our own private needs and concerns” (1998, 82). Now, as English departments across the country continue to face huge drops in the number of majors, Scholes’s (1985, 16) ideas about reorganizing English departments around “all kinds of texts, visual as well as verbal, polemical as well as seductive” are being invoked as possibilities. “The exclusivity of literature as a category must be discarded,” Scholes (1985, 16) wrote in *Textual Power*. A little more than ten years later, Scholes (1998, 36) would further explain the need to “deconstruct our traditional organization [and] . . . to reconstruct our efforts as students and teachers of English around the notion of textuality. Under this sign,” explained Scholes, “there is no difference between the theory of composition and the theory of literature—and there is precious little difference between theory and teaching at all, since the practice of teaching is based upon the teaching of theory, and this theory itself rests upon the shared stance of students and practitioners of reading and writing—textuality.” The expansive conceptualization of the work of English that Scholes proffered, one founded on a theory of textuality that encompasses both literature and composition (including creative writing) and involves the study of all texts as opposed to just literature, would seemingly hold great promise, but as Emily J. Isaacs points out in this volume, Scholes’s vision never really came to fruition and now, with the rise of independent writing studies departments, is not likely to gain much traction.

Disciplinary issues aside, Scholes has also remained an important reference for those teaching writing and literature. In an October 2018 thread on the WPA-L about Scholes’s *Text Book*, which Scholes co-authored with Nancy Comley and Gregory Ulmer, subscribers to the WPA-L detailed how they have used this book. Stephen Fox (2018) noted, “I used *Text Book* in our first-year literature course several times. I thought it was a smart book, and the students responded pretty well as I recall. I like the way it has students writing in genres as part of understanding those genres as readers.” Matt Hollrah (2018) added, “I’ve never used it in a traditional Comp class, but I have used it several times in our English Cornerstone course as a way to frame the field as one focused on texts, their production and interpretation.”

Scholes is also regularly invoked in scholarly monographs and professional journals. Most recently, in *The Two Cultures of English: Literature,*

*Composition, and the Moment of Rhetoric*, Jason Maxwell (2019) situates Scholes as a key actor in the theory revolution and one of the prominent figures, alongside Wayne Booth and Peter Elbow, who sought to unify composition and literature in meaningful ways in the late twentieth century, helping to create the parameters of what would come to be the “comp-lit wars,” which still characterize English today. In *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, one of the few journals that publishes articles of interest to those teaching both composition and literature (among other subjects), Scholes’s scholarship is regularly cited. In two pieces in separate issues of *Pedagogy*, Paul T. Corrigan (2017, 2018), whose chapter opens this volume, calls on Scholes as he reviews books about teaching literature as well as when he considers what the scholarship on the teaching of literature tells us about the state of the discipline. In her recent article in *Pedagogy*, Laura Schechter (2018, 65) invokes Scholes’s scholarship on close reading to help support her argument for teaching multiple English translations of the same text in order to allow students to “consider the multiple hands—author, translator, editor, printer, publisher, and reader—that shape and mediate each work.” In their introduction to a special issue of *Pedagogy* on reading, guest editors Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori and Patricia Donahue (2016, 7) connect their impetus for developing the special issue to the dearth of scholarship on reading and directly to Scholes’s point “that in English studies, a discipline based on reading, ‘we see some writing about reading, to be sure, but we do not see reading.’” In that special issue, Tara Lockhart and Mary Soliday (2016, 23–24) describe Scholes as the inspiration for their multiyear study of seventy-six undergraduate students’ reading practices across disciplines and Stephanie Moody (2016, 120) similarly invokes Scholes to argue for the need to make the affective reading practices of readers of romance novels more visible in order to allow for an exploration of these readers’ moments of critical engagement. Even more recently, editors Victoria Bazin, Sue Currell, and E. James West of *Radical Americas* (2018), a peer-reviewed open-access journal published by the University College of London, introduce their special issue by pointing to Scholes and Latham’s pioneering work that helped to make the very field of periodical studies, the subject of the special issue, both visible and legitimate.

The essays in this volume, including La Casse’s own chapter that draws on Scholes’s work in periodical studies, contribute to these contemporary discussions inflected by Scholes’s scholarship. This collection is intended to serve as both a tribute to Scholes and a resource for contemporary secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators.

Those teaching writing and critical reading at the postsecondary level will find guidance for doing so as the contributors in parts 1 and 2 draw on and extend Scholes's scholarship to meet our present needs, and in Scholes's (1998, 68) own words, to "offer our students . . . the cultural equipment they are going to need when they leave us." Those in education will find support for preparing preservice teachers in these pages as well. Department heads, administrators, and English faculty will find chapters about the future of English generally, and writing studies specifically, as contributors in part 3 think alongside Scholes about disciplinary issues.

### GIVING VOICE TO CRITIQUES OF SCHOLES'S WORK

While a tribute to Scholes and a source of support for contemporary instructors and administrators, this collection also addresses the areas in which Scholes's theories fall short. As with any scholar, Scholes was writing within a very specific period, and it would be unwise to assume that Scholes's ideas and theories could simply be imported into our contemporary moment, no matter how relevant. Emily J. Isaacs, for example, laments the impossibility of achieving Scholes's vision of unified English departments in light of the rise of independent writing studies departments. Scholes, of course, could not predict how this shift would challenge his visions of unification. Nor could Scholes predict that specialization would reach new heights *within* the factions he was seeking to unify. If the desire to reconstruct English still exists, we will need to look beyond what Scholes offers us because the landscape of English has changed so drastically since he was writing.

The methods we must help our students cultivate for engaging texts have also necessarily changed. While Scholes was ahead of his time with his focus on media and interdisciplinarity, there are moments in his scholarship that suggest a short-sightedness that one might not expect. In calling for the development of a canon of methods to share with students, for example, Scholes describes the need to turn to "the ways of reading we have already learned to use in our studies of English literature and culture" (Scholes 2001, 215). Scholes's reliance on English as the sole source of methods for engaging texts, as well as his neglect of key scholars on reading, such as Louise Rosenblatt, is problematic. Paul T. Corrigan considers these shortcomings in the opening chapter in this volume.

Like Corrigan, contributor Kelsey McNiff finds herself needing to extend Scholes's scholarship, which simply calls for helping students to

develop “the rhetorical capacity to imagine the other’s thought, feeling, and sentiments” (Scholes 2002, 168), but does not offer a plan for doing so. What Scholes fails to give us in “The Transition to College Reading” McNiff outlines in her chapter.

While McNiff takes up one of Scholes’s calls, Robert Lestón warns us about heeding another one of Scholes’s calls, this one to our profession. Scholes advocates for “developing better bourgeois subjects—better than ourselves, that is, as well as better than they might be without our teaching” (1998, 67), while Lestón challenges us to “find ways to allow those students who will never be bourgeois to transform it into something more accommodating.”

Returning to Scholes’s scholarship with the kind of critical eye modeled by these and other contributors is an important step toward making visible some of the shortcomings of Scholes’s ideas and thereby creating a path toward expanding and extending his ideas to address the current needs of our students and our profession.

#### SCHOLES’S CONTRIBUTIONS: A BROADER OVERVIEW

Because this collection is limited to considerations of Scholes’s pedagogical scholarship, I want to spend some time detailing Scholes’s varied contributions—both scholarly and professional—in order to create a fuller picture of Scholes’s work than the chapters herein allow.

Scholes authored or edited some forty books (Latham 2015, 257), including scholarly monographs, textbooks, and essay collections. His scholarship has appeared in roughly fifty different journals and edited collections over the years, including such diverse publications as the *Yale Review*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *PMLA*, *Quarterly Review of Film*, *Iowa Review*, *College English*, *American Journal of Semiotics*, and *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*. While Scholes’s contributions might seem eclectic—he worked across media, historical periods, on so-called “low” and “high” cultural artifacts, and on disciplinary and professional trends—Latham recognizes a thread connecting all of these interests: “[Scholes] remained a semiotician and maybe even a kind of structuralist all his life. To him, there were interesting things to read and interpret everywhere, from the pages of great books like *Ulysses* to his famous reading of a crude bumper sticker in *Semiotics and Interpretation*.”

Throughout his scholarship, Scholes used semiotics and structuralist theories of language to study (and to invite students to study) texts, very broadly understood. As early as 1966, just about five years after

finishing his PhD at Cornell, Scholes, with co-author Robert Kellogg, began demonstrating what that expansive notion of “text” meant for literary studies. Challenging more traditional conceptions of “capital L” Literature, *The Nature of Narrative* studies, among other genres, science fiction. Of course, in the decades since the publication of this foundational study of narrative history, science fiction has emerged as a legitimate genre within literary studies, but that was not the case in 1966. As Latham (2015, 259) points out in his tribute to Scholes in the *James Joyce Quarterly*, Scholes did something similarly bold shortly thereafter in *The Fabulators* (1967) and *Structural Fabulation: An Essay on Fictions of the Future* (1975) in that he “placed science-fiction writers like Vonnegut alongside postmodern experimentalists like Barth and Iris Murdoch. He was among the first to treat a genre many still considered pulpy trash as a serious imaginative literature.”

While Scholes was modeling through his scholarship and his talks on science fiction what an expansion of the work of English might look like, he was also becoming a leading theorist of structuralism. In *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction*, Scholes (1974) outlines the evolution of structuralism, presenting American readers with the first full-length discussion of this intellectual framework and method of criticism (Editors’ Bookshelf 1975). Structuralism, as Scholes details, is at its center concerned with relationships. Scholes (1974, 11) explains that structuralism “seeks to explore the relationship between the system of literature and the culture of which it is a part,” the “relationship between the language of literature and the whole of language” (1974, 13). Having received positive reviews in at least ten publications, including the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, *Modern Language Quarterly*, and the *French Review*, this book secured Scholes’s position as a major literary theorist and critic, and his next book, *Semiotics and Interpretation*, which was similarly lauded for its accessibility, offered an introduction to semiotic theory and led Martin Green of *The Literary Review* (1982) to hail Scholes as “among our best interpreters of literary theory.”

The lucidity with which Scholes wrote about complex subjects such as structuralism and semiotics became a hallmark of his work, and he regularly reminded his readers of the value of accessibility. “We make a mistake,” wrote Scholes in *The Crafty Reader*, “if we equate the difficult and the obscure with the valuable—a mistake frequently made, especially by teachers and professors of literature” (2001, xvi). This sentiment apparently informed his teaching as well. Latham, whose first introduction to Scholes was as a graduate student at Brown, explains that Scholes “wrote to be understood—and taught me to do the same. I came to grad school

as a bright-eyed theorist eager to write the densest, most complex prose I could. To his great credit, Bob suggested I could do better by writing things people could actually read and understand.”

In fact, one of Scholes’s many inventive projects came about in an effort to help students understand one of the most difficult genres for students: poetry. In 1976, decades before digital humanities emerged as a field, Scholes worked with computer scientist Andries (Andy) van Dam on an early digital humanities project. The NEH-funded project titled “An Experiment in Computer-Based Education Using Hypertext” involved exploring how hypertext could be used as a pedagogical tool to help teach poetry to undergraduates at Brown University where Scholes began teaching in 1970 after a short stint at the University of Virginia and a longer one at the University of Iowa.

While in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Brown, Scholes helped create the semiotics program that went on to become the Department of Modern Culture and Media, of which he served as the first chair. In addition to his 1976 project on hypertext, at Brown he founded the Modernist Journals Project with Latham and Mark Gaipa in 1995. The Modernist Journals Project, the first digital archive of the little magazines of literary modernism, continues to be used by students and scholars worldwide.

While at Brown, Scholes began thinking more broadly about the discipline of English and its need for restructuring. In the mid-1980s, Scholes began writing extensively about English as a discipline. As Thomas P. Miller and Emily J. Isaacs both note in their chapters in this volume, he did so largely from outside English, as he had by that time founded and moved into the Department of Modern Culture and Media. As discussed earlier in this introduction, in *Textual Power* Scholes (1985, 16) develops a theory of textuality that sought to reunite the fields of literary studies and composition. Scholes had hoped that textuality could serve as a larger umbrella under which all in English could reside “with the consumption and production of texts thoroughly intermingled.” He enacted the pedagogy that emerged from this theory in *Text Book* and further developed his ideas about how textuality could be used to reorganize the discipline of English in *The Rise and Fall of English* and then *After the Fall*. In *The Crafty Reader*, published just a few years after *The Rise and Fall of English*, Scholes develops his idea that reading can be taught because it is a craft rather than an art, and in that book Scholes models what “crafty reading” looks like. Scholes’s ideas about texts—“valuable texts are to be found in all media, and in many genres within those media” (2001, xv)—infuse his model readings, including of

works by Norman Rockwell and J. K. Rowling. Alice S. Horning's chapter in this volume focuses on this lesser-known book, arguing that "the need for crafty readers continues to expand as more information comes at all of us from more sources at ever higher speed."

Although Scholes's work continues to resonate today, it registered as pioneering when it was written, earning Scholes both the Modern Language Association's Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize in 1986 and the National Council of Teachers of English David H. Russell Research Award for *Textual Power*. He received the Francis A. March Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession of English from the Association of Departments of English (ADE)/MLA in 2000 and was awarded the Research Society for American Periodicals Book Prize for his final book, *Modernism in the Magazines* (co-authored with Clifford Wulfman) in 2011. Among other support for his research, Scholes earned three National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grants, a Mellon grant, and served as a Guggenheim fellow from 1977 to 1978.

During his long career, Scholes also took on various leadership roles in professional organizations relevant to his expansive interests. He served as president of the Modern Language Association in 2004, and his presidential address "The Humanities in a Posthumanist World" (Scholes 2005), in which he reflects on the state of the humanities and proposes a plan to move ahead, is included in part 3 of this volume. He also served as president of the Semiotic Society of America from 1989 to 1990 and was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Art and Sciences in 1998.

A year later, in 1999, Scholes officially retired from teaching formal classes but continued to work with graduate students and regularly published articles and full-length monographs. In fact, the majority of Scholes's scholarship to which authors in this collection refer was written during his "retirement."

#### AN OVERVIEW OF THIS COLLECTION

Divided into three parts, this volume seeks to illuminate the contemporary relevance of Scholes's pedagogical scholarship while extending and transforming it so that it is even more relevant to those with a stake in teaching, and specifically teaching students in English, English Education, and Writing Studies at the postsecondary level.

Part 1, "Transforming Scholes's Canon of Methods," explores how practices and methods, and particularly methods for reading, are a centerpiece of Scholes's pedagogical scholarship. Reflecting on his role as

an educator, Scholes explains in *The Crafty Reader*, “As a teacher I have for years seen a major part of my task as helping students see reading as a craft, a set of methods or practices that can be learned, a skill that can be improved by anyone willing to make an effort” (2001, 139). The chapters in this section speak to the continued relevance of those methods while also exploring how they can be adapted to meet the needs of twenty-first-century students.

Paul T. Corrigan’s chapter opens the section by cataloging “the many ways of reading Scholes advocates,” as well as “the tenets grounding his work.” Alice S. Horning considers how some of the methods and practices that Corrigan catalogs provide a guide for instructors who must help students become “crafty readers” so they can “find, understand, and evaluate sources for use in their own writing” as “more information comes at all of us from more sources at ever higher speed.” Like Horning, Christopher J. La Casse explores how Scholes’s scholarship can be used to support students’ reading abilities. La Casse details how he uses Scholes and Clifford Wulfmann’s book *Modernism in the Magazine* to ground a first-year writing research assignment focused on interpreting periodicals, which creates many opportunities for students to hone and practice their critical reading skills. The final chapter in this section shifts our attention away from teaching undergraduates a canon of methods for approaching texts and toward teaching graduate students, and specifically preservice teachers, a canon of methods. Jessica Rivera-Mueller extends Scholes’s argument in his article “Learning and Teaching,” and, drawing on her own work as an English teacher educator, describes how she has adapted his argument to create a heuristic for prioritizing teacher-learning in English Education. Scholes’s own “A Fortunate Fall?,” chapter 5 from *The Rise and Fall of English*, closes the chapter with a look at precisely how Scholes conceptualized this canon of methods and its role in the restructuring of English around his theory of textuality.

Part 2, “Extending Scholes’s Scholarship on Dispositions and Habits of Mind,” is comprised of chapters that consider how Scholes’s scholarship speaks to the field of writing studies’ current interest in habits of mind and dispositions. In 2011, representatives from the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project jointly developed *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, which lists eight habits of mind—curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition—described as “ways of approaching learning” that are “essential for success in college writing.” Since

then, scholars have been paying more attention to the qualities that students need, in addition to the cognitive abilities, to be successful in their academics and beyond. As the chapters in this section invoke Scholes, they consider a range of affective qualities that he promoted alongside the more “intellectual” practices and methods he encouraged instructors to teach their students.

In the opening chapter, Kelsey McNiff explores how Scholes’s work prompted her to “meditate on the relationship between the composition classroom and citizenship education,” including the place of “empathy as a civic virtue.” In doing so, McNiff extends Scholes’s scholarship by considering how to encourage empathy through the practices of reading and writing. Also concerned with the ethics of reading, Christian Smith considers Scholes’s work on reading within the context of contemporary discussions of contemplative pedagogies in composition studies. His exploration emphasizes “the ethical questions of literacy instruction in the face of a ‘post-truth America.’” Kenny Smith is similarly invested in helping students meet the challenges posed by the circulation of disinformation. Smith’s chapter discusses how Scholes inspired the revision of his approach to teaching civic literacy, especially his teaching of journalistic discourse. His revised approach is inflected by Scholes’s criticism of poststructuralist theory and the limitations of its ideas about referentiality, which Smith argues are necessary for understanding journalism in the post-truth era. Scholes’s “The Transition to College Reading,” a touchstone for many of the chapters in this section, closes out part 2.

Part 3, “Thinking About Disciplinary Issues Alongside Scholes,” opens with Thomas P. Miller’s chapter, which provides important historical context for understanding Scholes’s contributions and their continued relevance, including the ways in which “the integrated forms of literacy and learning that Scholes helped to articulate have become a vital part of current educational reforms.” Specifically, Miller details how “reading and writing have become interactive processes that integrate data, images, and other media and information” resulting in literacy becoming “redefined as information literacy, media literacy, digital literacies, and technological literacies.” Miller maintains that Scholes’s “work can help us engage with the integrated forms of literacy that we need to plug into if we are to make productive use of the historic changes that are unfolding before us.” Also looking ahead, but perhaps a bit more pessimistically than Miller, Emily J. Isaacs’s provocative chapter on the future of writing studies recognizes Scholes’s vision for unifying composition studies and literary studies as theoretically compelling

but explores the implications of the failure of his vision—namely the development of writing studies and stand-alone writing studies departments. Although Scholes’s vision centered on rebuilding English studies as a discipline “devoted to textual studies, with the consumption and production of texts thoroughly intermingled” (1985, 16), Isaacs maintains that “consumption (literary analysis) and production (composition) never arrived at equal footing within English departments.” She wonders, then, “on what grounds would anybody think the new discipline [of writing studies] and accompanying academic departments would be different?” While Isaacs’s chapter considers stand-alone writing studies departments, in the chapter that follows, Lynée Lewis Gaillet and Angela Christie return us to the English Department to explore a college-to-career quality enhancement plan inspired by Scholes. They describe how the quality enhancement plan (QEP) they developed for their institution is inflected by Scholes’s theories of learning, including the “commonalities across the diverse concentrations of literary studies, creative writing, and rhetoric and composition divisions” that Scholes so desperately wanted to bring together. Robert Lestón’s chapter, “Attending to the Tactical: Robert Scholes and the Legacy of White Language Supremacy,” on the other hand, contends that Scholes’s theories of learning do not meet all of our current needs. He notes that “even if Scholes’s rhetorically-oriented curriculum continues to address the needs students face in particular contexts . . . the fact of the matter remains that Scholes does not go nearly far enough for the current environment.” As such, Lestón advocates for a “tactically-oriented” approach to teaching that finds ways to allow students to transform the curriculum and, by extension, the institution, into something more accommodating. This section on disciplinarity closes with two of Scholes’s pieces that address disciplinary trends in English. His earlier work, chapter 1 from *Textual Power*, “The English Apparatus,” lays the groundwork for his argument for restructuring English that he would develop over the next two decades. In his 2004 MLA presidential address, “The Humanities in a Posthumanist World,” the final piece in this section, Scholes makes this point even more forcefully, telling his colleagues in English, “We should seek to broaden the range of our studies instead of allowing that range to shrink to a specialization. . . . We teachers of language and literature need to be less narrowly focused on particular periods or genres and broader in our grasp of literary and linguistic history. And also, for good practical reasons, we need to become broader in our grasp of other cultural fields, starting with those closest to us, such as philosophy and the visual arts and media.”

It's hard to say if each chapter in this volume goes as far as Scholes would have liked in terms of integrating "other cultural fields," although Gaillet and Christie share a compelling model of this kind of interdisciplinary work in the form of their quality enhancement plan, and many of the other chapters draw on a range of fields beyond English including communications, philosophy, psycholinguistics, and education. Collectively the chapters also showcase pedagogies that deliver "a better balance between production and consumption" (Scholes 1998, 149). In the spirit of Scholes's own scholarship, then, this volume aims "to open up possibilities, to empower" (Scholes 1998, 149) as we pursue "a more spacious idea of literacy" (Scholes 2011, 139), continuing to remind ourselves all the while that "the business of English departments is to help students improve as readers and writers" (Scholes 2011, 84).

More than two decades ago, Scholes (1998, 84) also reminded us "that to function as a citizen of these United States one needs to be able to read, interpret, and criticize texts in a wide range of modes, genres, and media." "What our students need to function in such a world, then," explained Scholes, "is an education for a society still struggling to balance its promises of freedom and equality, still hoping to achieve greater measures of social justice, still trying not to homogenize its people but to allow for social mobility and to make the lower levels of its economic structure tolerable and humane." The chapters in this volume explore what this work might look like in our contemporary culture that is "more fully and insistently textualized" (1998, 84) than that which Scholes was describing in the late twentieth century. "To understand the needs of our students we shall have to face more squarely than we usually do our present cultural situation" (1998, 84), wrote Scholes. The contributors to this volume take up this important work.

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