Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice

Volume 8 | Issue 1 Article 6

9-1993

Decoding Teaching: The Rhetoric and Politics of Narrative Form

Robert J. Graham

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.und.edu/tl-nirp-journal

Part of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons

Recommended Citation

Graham, Robert J. (1993) "Decoding Teaching: The Rhetoric and Politics of Narrative Form," *Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 6.
Available at: https://commons.und.edu/tl-nirp-journal/vol8/iss1/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice by an authorized editor of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact und.commons@library.und.edu.

Decoding Teaching: The Rhetoric and Politics of Narrative Form

by

Robert J. Graham

As educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1991) has recently observed, at all levels of education "the sounds of storytelling are everywhere today" (p. ix). One commonly voiced justification for this narrative outpouring is that educators, dealing as they do with the development and nurturing of young minds, ought at least to have more than a rudimentary understanding of who they are and how they have become who they are. These basic ontological concerns with being and becoming, with growth and change, are inevitably implicated in matters of personal and professional identity, a situation which, especially for many women in education, links the use of narrative to the recovery or discovery of their personal and professional voices (Pagano, 1990). Yet developing self-understanding and an image of oneself as an individual-in-process is neither instantaneous nor without its risks. We all require, as Taylor (1989) puts it, "time and many incidents to sort out what is relatively fixed and stable in [our] character, temperament, and desires, from what is variable and changing" (p. 50). And as Taylor goes on to point out, "[Self]-understanding necessarily has temporal depth and incorporates narrative" (p. 50).

However, in spite of the difficulties incurred by biographical and autobiographical approaches to teaching (Graham, 1991), and by narrative inquiry as a research methodology (Connelly & Clandinin, 1987; 1991), a link has been clearly established between the telling of stories and the exploration and development of personal and professional voice and identity. And yet what too often gets overlooked in discussions on the place of narrative in education is that the stories and images of teaching that reach public consciousness and that draw the greatest critical attention are not the cautionary anecdotes related in the staff room, but written accounts of teaching, "frozen texts" constructed in particular ways and for specific purposes by human acts of intention. The contours of this public textual territory and the stories and images of teaching it contains have been shaped over time by a variety of forms: novels, films, ethnographies, biographies, autobiographies, and the stories of "new journalists." Whatever the forms are, however, they engage in a process of representing experience in text, a process that calls into play a battery of complex narrative and rhetorical considerations. Consequently, to evince a concern for *how* the multiple images and stories of teaching that circulate in our culture have been constructed by writers both inside and outside the academy is to show an interest in a rhetoric of inquiry. It is, in Sirotnik's (1991) words, to become engaged with "the gestalt created through considerations of ... our methods of sense-making, our metaphors and other figures of speech, and our ethical, moral and political interests" (p. 253).

Now this concern with the uses and potential of narrative in education can be linked to more general intellectual currents in the humanities and social sciences for becoming more self-reflexive over how rhetorical and narrative conventions inform the writing of what White (1978) has called "fictions of factual representation" (p. 121). For if it is true as Nelson, Megill & McCloskey (1987) believe that "the social sciences float in warm seas of unexamined rhetoric" (p. 16), then educators must pay greater attention to the specifically literary, rhetorical, and ideological features of the growing number of published case studies, ethnographies, and narratives by and about teachers that make up the corpus of texts that educational theorists Schubert and Ayers (1992) have taken to calling teacher lore. In other words, we need to supplement our understanding of the kinds of stories of teaching that enter into the public discourse on education and do the cultural work of shaping teachers' own perceptions of their craft even as they shape the general public's perception of teachers and teaching. Consequently, in an attempt at understanding how various stories of teaching have helped at specific historical moments to reaffirm, create, or transform particular images of teaching, I have elected to take as my working examples two stories from the annals of teacher lore, stories written and published at quite different historical junctures and for an audience larger than a dissertation committee, the kind of texts that as Schubert (1992) notes have "[made] it out of specialized, intellectual bookstores and into regular bookstores" (p. 141). I want to consider Jonathan Kozol's autobiographical story of teaching, *Death at an Early Age* (1967), and new journalist Samuel G. Freedman's recent investigative biography, *Small Victories* (1990). My effort at uncovering the literary and cultural codes and conventions that these writers have drawn on will be repaid by demonstrating how these stories go about representing both the possibilities and the constraints that make up the institutional world of teaching. For I am convinced that a concern with *how* various writers have elected to inscribe in the public consciousness images of teachers, students, and schools is an issue of more than passing academic importance. If storytelling is as central to the conduct of life as is often claimed, and if story is the medium through which personal and professional lives are constructed and understood, then it clearly matters how stories of teaching are told, which stories are told, and who gets to tell them.

Teaching as Tragedy: Working Between Good and Evil

In the course of discussing some of the books which appeared in the late 1960s criticizing the state of American public schools, Ravitch (1983) devotes a scant sentence to summarizing Jonathan Kozol's contribution to that debate, *Death at an Early Age*. She writes, "Kozol, whose book won the National Book Award, recounted a year in a school where the teachers were racist, cruel, and contemptuous of the children" (p. 236). As a verbal brush stroke this is accurate enough, but it declines to elaborate on the fact that a major source of the book's success at putting a human face on the inequities of a segregated system of public education can be directly attributed to the book's specifically literary qualities. In particular I believe Kozol's autobiographical testimony achieves its effectiveness as literature by relying primarily on what White (1973) calls "explanation by emplotment" (p. 7), emplotment defined as "the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story *of a particular kind*" (p. 7, emphasis added). Therefore, in order to transform the autobiographical facts of his experience into text, a writer must first engage in a prefigurative act of imaginative consciousness, an act in which in White's (1973) view the writer "both creates the object of his analysis and predetermines the modality of the conceptual strategies he will use to explain it" (p. 31). Kozol alludes to this process in the foreword to his book. There, he tells us that after he had made an initial attempt at putting his handwritten and random jottings "into some sort of shape and sequence" (1967, p. xi), he "began to see for the first time the overall outline of this book" (p. xi) as subsequent and unexpected events took place at his school. As I will show, Kozol's allegory of the besieged liberal conscience constructs an image of the teacher as ethical Manichean, a person continually suspended between good and evil, caught between the guilt of helping to maintain the existing conditions of oppression within the school, and the fear of speaking out against the entrenched racism of a segregated system of public education.

In his prefatory note "To the Reader," Kozol provides a broad hint which invites us to consider his book as a mixture of fact and fiction, part reportage, part literary allegory: "With the exception of certain named public figures, characters in this book do not have counterparts in real life" (1967, p. x). Thus we meet the historically identifiable members of the Boston Education Committee: Mrs. Hicks, Walter Ohrenberger, and Joseph Lee, but we also meet the Art Teacher, the Math Teacher, and the Reading Teacher, emblematic characters in Kozol's local morality play of racism and prejudice, a narrative which only begins to take on an expanded symbolic significance when read against the contemporary political background of the civil rights movement in the United States, the slaying of the Reverend Reeb in Selma, Alabama, and the visit to Boston by Martin Luther King.

On one level, then, Kozol's autobiographical act of transforming experience into text constitutes what Hart (1970) has termed "a drama of intention" (p. 492), an autobiographical narrative which consists of a "fluctuating mixture of confession, apology, and memoir" (p. 488). In addition, a narrative like Kozol's which explores the dialectical interplay between biography and situation also directs attention to the figurative force of its incidents as synecdoche, a rhetorical strategy in which the characteristics of the whole may be discovered or thrown into relief in the specifics of the part. In other words, by centripetally evoking the microcosm of his school and describing how existing hierarchies of power are discursively maintained in everything from the portrayal of race in the textbooks to the rationalizing of an inhumane system of punishment, Kozol also evokes the other world of society at large where the differences between "here" and "there" are only differences in degree not in kind.

One immediate implication of Kozol's narrative construction of events is that the scenes that are being enacted daily on the smaller stage of Kozol's segregated elementary classroom are being simultaneously played out with a different cast of characters on the larger stage of the national theater of events. As the drama in his own school and classroom unfolds, Kozol discovers to his chagrin as a liberal white male that he not only shoulders personal responsibility for keeping in place an unequal form of education, but that he and his black students are in fact both prisoners and victims of "the system" itself. In this way Kozol's literary antecedents and borrowings are at the same time both Sophoclean and Shakespearean. With appropriate irony, it is not Kozol's gross act of civil disobedience that is responsible for his dismissal from the school but an act of pedagogical *hubris*: Kozol challenges the system by teaching black poet Langston Hughes' "Ballad of the Landlord" to his class of predominantly Negro children. In the furor that follows Kozol's dismissal for not teaching from the prescribed course of study, for not teaching poetry that "accentuates the positive" (1967, p. 202) and does not dwell with honesty on the suffering of blacks, Kozol literally becomes the scapegoat, an outcast on whom his fellow teachers and the representatives of the all-white Board of Education heap their collective wrath.

Thus Kozol pays a heavy price for letting the world inside the classroom and for getting the word outside into the world. In several key chapters Kozol's narrative explores the contradictions of trying to teach in an ethically defensible manner when confronted daily by the cynicism and doublespeak of administrators and the genteel racism of his colleagues. As ethical Manichean, Kozol is compelled to rationalize a course of action for himself in the space created between acknowledging the pervasiveness of the institutional forces at work in the school and his developing feelings of responsibility for his students. As White (1973) points out, the ethical Manichean is compelled to "turn whatever talent he has ... to the service of the good *as he sees it*" (p. 228, original emphasis). The good as Kozol (1967) sees it is to replace the "cheery," "hopeful," and "optimistic" (p. 174) sentiments of the literature his students were previously required to read with stories and poems which might evoke an "honest reaction" (p. 176) rather than replicate the canned responses from a list of adjectives pre-selected and approved by the teacher.

To this point I have been claiming that in making the transition from experience to text Kozol prefigured his autobiographical narrative as a story of a particular kind, in this instance as a tragedy, an allegory of good and evil in which as the fools and prisoners of time and circumstance both Kozol and his students share a common identity and fate. Kozol's story of teaching emplotted as tragedy is a story whose outcome appears to support the conclusion that individual action might seem to count for little in the face of such overwhelming and ineluctable forces and odds. And certainly, Kozol neither minimizes the risks involved nor underestimates the depth and strength of the resistance to individuals who choose to work outside the approved curriculum. But the bureaucratic effort at placing moral blinkers on its teachers ironically becomes a source of insight for a teacher like Kozol. In discovering who he is or might be as a teacher, Kozol risks one publicly approved version of himself and in the process discovers a more authentic source of selfhood. The outcome of Kozol's story is designed to evoke both pity and fear; it interrogates the grounds upon which education as a project of human transformation is built and asks us to justify our attitude towards it and our position in it. And while for some it may appear extravagant to begin thinking about teachers and education in these dramatic terms, for others, as one of the exemplary narratives that educators have inherited from the literature of teacher lore, the image of schools, teachers, and teaching enacted in Kozol's story retains a considerable power to disturb, challenge, and inspire.

Teaching as Romance: Rewriting the Quest

In the same way that Kozol constructed out of the facts of his own experience a story of teaching emplotted as tragedy, I believe Freedman's story of teaching from the age of Reagan and Bush deploys the structure of romance to different representational but quite similar ideological effects and ends. My analysis will show how a major source of his story's rhetorical power is derived from the structural features of romance as a form of quest myth. Thus, as Kozol appropriated many of the features of tragedy in order to endow his experiences with ideological currency and narrative significance, Freedman has turned to the structure of romance in order to shape his observations of his subject's life inside and outside the classroom into a culturally familiar and equally recognizable story form.

When making his case for considering the structure of romance as central to an understanding of literature as a whole, literary theorist Northrop Frye proposed that there were only four narrative movements possible in all of literature. "First, the descent from a higher world; second, the descent to a lower world; third, the ascent from a lower world; and fourth, the ascent to a higher world. All stories in literature are complications of, or metaphorical derivations from, these four narrative radicals" (1976, p. 97). For romance in particular ascent and descent are already foregrounded, since a romance typically begins with a break in consciousness, often signaled by sleeping, dreaming, or forgetting. It is not surprising, then, that Freedman begins his own romance of his teacher-subject Jessica Siegel's journey through the school year with her literally awakening from a bad dream at 4:30 on the first morning of school. Jessica suffers from the kind of free-floating anxiety experienced by many teachers as they mentally rehearse the start of the new school year and as they imagine into being a sequence of different plots and outcomes derived from their interpretation of previous experiences of teaching. As another chapter in her life as a teacher begins while her classroom fills up with a new cast of characters whose individual autobiographies she will come to know (and will help to rewrite), Jessica is portrayed as a woman who has written and revised roles for herself from the raw material of her own autobiography.

For Jessica Siegel, it took "years to develop a classroom presence that felt organic ... [S]he created from pieces of herself a persona that might best be called The Tough Cookie" (1990, p. 29). The classroom persona that Jessica has constructed for herself by drawing on a reservoir of past experience, knowledge, and beliefs is a response to the realities of surviving as a woman in classroom situations which all too often are uncomfortable and threatening. At five foot three, Jessica is physically small in stature and has learned to develop alternative approaches for maintaining order and for holding her students' attention by becoming a skilled reader of her students' moods. And although it is clear that these expressions of practical knowledge can be found in teachers everywhere regardless of gender, their importance here derives from their function in the narrative as reminders that in reading about how this woman has responded bodily and psychologically to her experience, we are also reading a particular kind of story.

Jessica has been compelled to incorporate into her gestural repertoire techniques and ways of behaving that do not come naturally in an effort to compensate for the "natural" authority some men are said to command by virtue of their physical stature. Frye (1976), drawing on the distinction he finds in Dante between force and guile (*forza* and *froda*), argues that women in romances often have to rely heavily on the latter characteristic in order to survive. As Balfour (1988) puts it in discussing Frye's conception of *froda*, "This distinction in genre ... turns on part on a distinction in gender. Since female characters typically have less force at their disposal ... they are forced to rely on fraud, guile, craft, and cunning" (p. 58). While none of these characteristics are exclusively female, they are foregrounded in romance, where unlike the women in tragedies who tend to be victims, in many romances women generally play more forceful roles. And yet, as Balfour (1988) rightly goes on to point out, romance itself "is by no means a monument to women's liberation. Romance is ... very much the product of a 'male-dominated world,' with all its attendant double standards and strategies of oppression" (pp. 58-59).

Nevertheless, what portraying Jessica as the heroine of this romance does accomplish is to draw emblematic attention to the well-established fact that the teaching profession by and large is still the particular province of women. In this respect Freedman creates some of his story's most memorable scenes by showing how Jessica's imaginative descent into the often nightmarish world of her students' life histories laid out for her in their journals and autobiographies is also the occasion for some serious acts of self-appraisal. These descents into knowledge of her students' fractured lives are mirrored in the narrative by parallel descents into reflections on the romance of her own biography. As Balfour (1988) puts it, "all romances hold up a broken mirror, a mirror in which a reader glimpses ... him- or her-self caught in a romantic act" (p. 65). For if, as Jessica reminds her students, "Memory plus distance equals true autobiography" (Freedman, 1990, p. 51), then Jessica herself takes part in a similar kind of romantic quest as her students in the pursuit of self-knowledge.

And yet discovering an appropriate form in which to represent these tensions and contradictions often causes writers to construct stories whose resolutions involve readers in making some subtle and difficult distinctions. For example, if a story is narratively encoded as a romantic comedy it foreshadows a comic resolution, that is, a resolution where an individual's quest results in the recognition of a new identity. Yet even with this new identity there is the residual feeling that the individual will remain enclosed within the strictures and structures of society as it currently exists. If, however, stories are encoded as comic romances, if their protagonists are represented as empowered through having ascended from the quest for self-knowledge, this narrative movement encodes a concern for the transformation of consciousness as a necessary condition for all future action. In Hamilton's (1991) words, "Comedy remains within the cycle of nature; romance transcends it, for in escaping from ordinary reality, the hero and heroine return to a higher reality" (p. 142).

The route to this higher reality, the route that represents "a kind of Grail" (Freedman, 1990, p. 295) for her student questers is to gain a scholarship and admission to a college or university.

Thus Jessica finds herself thinking as she prepares to accompany four of her students on an odyssey to upstate New York and a meeting with a university admissions officer, "*How many ... Can you save*? (p. 335, original emphasis). Jessica perceives her job as one of "salvage and reclamation" (p. 337); she believes strongly in the part she must play in this social rescue mission and in the necessity of making sure her students do go on to university. Jessica's espousal of the solution of higher education derives less from any abstract philosophical position and more from her response to the harsh pragmatics of urban life. "The only choices that awaited her students, if she could not hurl them into college, were the menial rungs of the service economy ... garment sweatshops, or the lucrative trade of selling drugs" (p. 354). The grail of a university education may be chimerical and hard to achieve as ever, but for Jessica it is still the only goal worth striving for. If she must deal in "selective truth" (p. 337), or indulge in creative circumlocution when pleading her students' case with the admissions officer, for her these are simply the necessary actions in a situational ethic where responsibility to her students is its first operating principle.

Conclusion

These analyses of Kozol's and Freedman's narratives have taken it as axiomatic that as writers each has derived the form and shape of their stories of teaching from the structures of tragedy and romance respectively. As organizing principles around which the central features of their stories are crystallized, I have shown how both writers have persuaded us of the plausibility of their portraits of teaching by evoking archetypal images deeply embedded in our psyches as readers. As part of their rhetoric of reaffirmation, Kozol and Freedman have relied on a reader's awareness of these archetypal images in order to reinforce the perception that they are also telling particular kinds of stories, stories whose social function is to revitalize a particular image or concept of teachers and teaching. It would seem pertinent, then, to conclude by inquiring briefly into the extent to which Kozol's and Freedman's aesthetic choices are also the most effective rhetorically for enacting their various moral and political commitments and intentions. Fittingly enough, much of the interest of inquiring into the degree of congruence between rhetoric, genre, and politics will also help us gain some clearer notion of the ideological ramifications of emplotting stories of teaching as tragedy or romance.

In offering a way to begin classifying and thinking about the ideological implications of historical texts, White (1973) draws on the distinction he finds in Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* between "situationally congruent" and "situationally transcendent" ideologies (p. 68). The former are "generally accepting of the social status quo" (p. 68), while the latter are "critical of the status quo and oriented towards its transformation or dissolution" (p. 68). In this respect the resolutions of both Kozol's and Freedman's stories are situationally transcendent, although the final mood or tone of each is in keeping with the overall atmosphere developed throughout the course of the narrative. Jessica voluntarily resigns from her school as a way of allowing her to concentrate her energy into finding alternative ways to help students succeed. In Freedman's (1990) words, "she feels a twinge, but not a big one. She never wanted to be the solitary heroine; she never wanted to be the last of the just. She only wanted to be part of something" (p. 418). Jessica's desire to be part of something is in particular to be part of a larger movement for social justice. The sites of Jessica's activities may have altered over the years, but she cannot shake her commitment to getting her students to conceive of their lives as a continual process of self-renewal, to conceive of themselves as capable of writing themselves into, and hence of rewriting, the social text. However, Kozol's story ends with his return to the black ghetto, chastened by his experiences but still committed to working to transform existing social relationships. His final words are eerily prophetic in the light of the subsequent racial disturbances of the late 1960s, and more recently of the riots in Los Angeles in the wake of the Rodney King verdict: "There has been an increasing growth of black nationalism in the Roxbury ghetto ... It is not difficult to understand why this would seem desirable, and it is very hard for someone who lives among the Negro people to argue against it, much as he might consider it unwise" (1967, p. 214).

Throughout I have been intent on showing that a concern for *how* writers have elected to represent teachers and teaching is an aesthetic undertaking that entails an inquiry into both the rhetoric and politics of narrative form. To this end I have shown, for example, that an awareness for the structure of romance makes plausible a reader's acceptance of the pathetic fallacy where the cycle of nature is analogous to the movement of descent and ascent, disappointment and recovery, that often makes up a teacher's bodily and psychological experience of the teaching year. Similarly, teaching encoded as tragedy creates an image of the teacher as ethical Manichean, an individual caught between good and evil, committed to doing the right thing as he or she sees it although never entirely certain of its outcome nor fully aware of the forces ranged against its success. In addition, romance allegorizes teaching as a quest; in particular, it foregrounds its spiritual and moral dimensions as a human endeavor whose ultimate direction lies in liberation from oppression or repression. In narrative terms, a romance plot characterizes the drive towards human fulfillment and in this sense is implicated in matters of identity-creation. Understood this way, an awareness for teaching narratively encoded as romance assists in reconfiguring the utopian impulse within education as a human project, helps to cast fresh light on the Socratic prescription regarding the benefits of the examined life, and draws attention to the aesthetic aspects involved in acting upon the idea of teaching as a moral craft. Thus, Kozol's and Freedman's literary and rhetorical strategies are effective to the extent that we are willing to concede that tragedy and romance are well suited to dramatizing issues of moral uncertainty, self-questioning, and social critique since they are two of the more powerful narrative forms that have evolved in Western culture for representing many of our enduring personal and social concerns. Therefore, as educators, we must begin to re-examine how these archetypal images of teaching have been altered or maintained over time, how they form part of the deep structure of the stories of teaching passed on as part of the professional lore of education, and how they both enable and constrain what can be said and thought about teaching as a caring profession.

Consequently, I believe that through cultivating a greater understanding for how certain literary forms have been mobilized to reinforce, as well as to challenge and oppose, discursively constituted images of teachers and teaching, we may thereby develop a greater awareness for narrative as a powerful ideological force in society, one that contributes for good or ill to the public's perception of the teaching profession and to the profession's perception of itself. In this respect, then, the existence of tragedy and romance as major cultural forms of storytelling ought to remind us that education is at once a narrative and political enterprise and that the more we know about narrative and its many forms, the more we will also come to know about the storied nature of the politics of personal experience.

References

Balfour, I. (1988). *Northrop Frye*. Boston: Twayne.

Connelly, M. F., & Clandinin, D. J. (1987). On narrative method, biography and narrative unities in the study of teaching. *Journal of Educational Thought, 21*(3), 130-139.

Connelly, M. F., & Clandinin, D. J. (1991). Narrative inquiry: Storied experience. In E. C. Short (Ed.), *Forms of curriculum inquiry* (pp. 121-153). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Freedman, S. G. (1990). *Small victories: The real world of a teacher, her students and their high school*. New York: Harper & Row.

Frye, N. (1976). *The secular scripture: A study of the structure of romance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Graham, R. J. (1991). *Reading and writing the self: Autobiography in education and the curriculum*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (1991). Foreward. In C. Witherell & N. Noddings (Eds.), *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education* (pp. ix-xi). New York: Teachers College Press.

Hamilton, A. C. (1991). *Northrop Frye: An anatomy of his criticism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hart, F. R. (1970). Notes for an anatomy of modern autobiography. *New Literary History*, *1*, 485-511.

Kozol, J. (1967). *Death at an early age: The destruction of the hearts and minds of Negro children in the Boston public schools*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Nelson, J. S., Megil, A., & McCloskey, D. N. *The rhetoric of the human sciences: Language and argument in scholarship and public affairs*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Pagano, J. (1990). *Exiles and communities: Teaching in the patriarchal wilderness*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Ravitch, D. (1980). *The troubled crusade: American education 1945-1980*. New York: Basic Books.

Schubert, W. H. (1992). Readings as resources for teacher lore. In W. H. Schubert & W. C. Ayers (Eds.), *Teacher lore: Learning from our experience* (pp. 140-147). New York: Longmans.

Schubert, W. H., & Ayers, W. C. (1992). *Teacher lore: Learning from our experience*. New York: Longmans.

Sirotnik, K. A. (1991). Critical inquiry: A paradigm for praxis. In E. C. Short (Ed.), *Forms of curriculum inquiry* (pp. 243-258). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

White, H. (1973). *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

White, H. (1978). *Tropics of discourse: Essays in cultural criticism*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Research Grant #410-1964-91 from the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada in the preparation of this article.