

Hamilton Senior Campus, SA

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## ***Teaching and Learning Commercial Writing - What Matters?***

*There are three rules for writing the novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.* (attributed to W. Somerset Maugham)<sup>1</sup>.

Somerset Maugham told us of three writing rules each novelist should know. A masterful teacher, he left each of us to discover these rules. For me, teaching commercial writing turns about challenging writers to grasp their *language*, their *content-in-language*, and their *audience*, in and through *performance*. Writers must engage people - who become readers. Furthermore, I stand in that wood-yard where people claim the merits of a sharp axe: writers must claim *the how* of writing they admire. If you accept these conjectures for the moment, what matters? Here I propose three interwoven *policies* (not *rules or laws*) that might have humoured Maugham: (1) harness the abstraction inherent in language, (2) resonate the linearity of language, and (3) tune writing toward a single ear. But, as teacher and writer, I cannot leave these policies in such broad terms, as my writers cannot understand them. I must take up the hickory and steel, and the fallen redgum bough, and begin to risk everything, to do solid work. I draw on analyses of commercial writing (examples and theory) I admire to illustrate how I teach toward what matters, how I engage my writers, what I hope they attain.

Commercial writing, to my mind, is writing that must win an audience. I must read the papers my students write. I will mark their exams. I read professional papers for the regulations, and theories, and reflections they promise. In short, in all these cases I am captured as a reader. But when I write a public relations pamphlet, a news release, a poem, an instructional text for the market place, I must win my audience. If I don't snare the attention of people who read this work, and then hold their gaze, I lose my readers.

Maugham's statement, for I take it to be his, raises key topics in my mind. Can any list of *dos* and *don'ts* serve the writer? Maugham seems to scorn such lists.<sup>2</sup> Immediately I'm divided. Part of me says *painting by numbers* doesn't work, and so why should anyone expect to write because he or she has followed rules "one to eight"?

Can I simply teach all ten of Bates's principle<sup>3</sup>, or Barzun's twenty<sup>4</sup>, or Strunk and White's twenty one?<sup>5</sup> Will that make me a writing teacher? More to the point, will that make my students writers?

I should like to say, no, of course it won't make me a teacher and it won't make them writers. But I am reluctant to say this too quickly. Much as I dislike the "write by numbers" theory, I cannot ignore the craft fine writers caught in little maxims. Indeed, I wonder if Mr. W. Somerset Maugham would entertain a few of Guthrie's maxims<sup>6</sup>, for example.

Now my dilemma hangs like thick smoke. No rules for number work, please; but I will listen to tight statements through which skilled writers offer hard-won perceptions. Ah well, life provides us many such contradictions.

But I might misread Maugham badly: did he even allow a craft?

Let me save time, here: I allow a craft, and for my students that matters.

At best, note, Maugham did not give us an answer, or at least he didn't promise one in the short "quote" I began from. I will turn this silence to my advantage, and claim to you, as I do to all my students in our first meeting: *Writers teach themselves to write*. Whatever your craft, and however many rules you abide by, you learn writing for yourselves.

Once, in my buried past, I earned my way as a trumpet player. I learned some fine writing lessons in that period. For some months I watched my teacher practice. And later I sat in my arranging lecturer's studio when he worked at his craft. All the *dos* and *don'ts* under the sun cannot improve upon this experience. Of course, I had some skill of my own, at those tasks, and I was ready for observing these talented artists at work. But, as a brief aside, let me encourage those of you who teach writing to write for your students. Put your practice on the line in live performance, and engage students in interesting features of your work. *Write for your students*.

In this period, also, I had close friends in undergraduate dance and music courses. I attended master classes with some of them, once to see a Soviet ballet teacher working with advanced students, and again to watch James Galway take Honours flautists through demanding passages. Now, how can this experience help writers? Like this.

In both classes the international teachers worked on limited, specific concrete skills. The dance teacher almost immediately improved the grace and fluency of dancers by focusing on muscles, weight distribution, the spine, the sweep of an arm from the chest to the finger tips. Galway changed fingering before a phrase where intonation let the performer down, and he lifted one student's flute a little, and drew a third student's jaw forward, ever such a little way. The points I bring to this conversation are these. First, the *basics matter*. Never take your eyes off the basics. Second, beautiful performance arose from physical issues, not abstract, psychological coaching. The word *deconstruction* didn't cross their lips.

We've all thought a particular piece of our own, or one of a student, lacked *warmth*, or *tone*, or *mystery*, or *interest*. But how do we repair these abstract problems? I argue the most productive approach to bring to these shortcomings is *in and through words*.<sup>7</sup> After all, we work in words. Hit on the words that let the piece down. Improve writing by using (changing) the words on the page.

So, writers teach themselves their craft, some of the gems other writers list might have merit for us, teachers should write for their students, and work on the muscles and sinews, the bones and the balance of words to improve writing.

Oh, and commercial writing, did I say, should *entertain*, *inform* and *persuade* readers. Win them, hold them, sink them in fun, facts and thought.

Now, what would I take to Mr. Maugham? Which three "rules" on a platter?

Well, I would avoid the term rules. Laws and rules smack too much of *painting by numbers*. *Policies*. Which three policies would I offer to humour Maugham? How would I find these policies, and how would I defend them? Could I explain these policies in concrete terms, or would I find myself speaking wistfully of moonlight in a frog's belly?

After anxious nights, I've slipped three gems into street clothes, and I'll walk them out here. First, the issue of language - how can writers limit the abstract nature of language? Words look like nothing but words, in the main. The word ocean, for example, looks nothing like that big pool out the back. I think you understand. Words immediately distance us from our writing subjects: words stand between the writer and the reader. Remember my plea for attending to basics: words, let me repeat, stand between - or link - writer and reader. Writers, don't ignore the key place of words<sup>8</sup>.

Second, how should the topic, the subject or action, the concept or value, shape itself into a single strand of words, a 12 point chain of Times New Roman footpath pavers? Along these pavers the reader must dance. What must a writer do with words to bring the content into language in such a way the reader (of commercial writing, recall) can comfortably step out in good company for the whole journey? How do we keep the reader on track?

And, strike three, for my visit to the Maugham parlour, I would swing the oldie but goodie about *audience*. How do you, my fellow writers, win and hold an audience? Tell me about audience with words that I can pinch and squeeze. In commercial writing, audience matters, I say. How do we explain this to students, and how we work on audience in our own work?

Incidentally, I've worked with many writers who have heard the key points I offer. That is, these writers are familiar with the *notions*, but their writing slops along. Why? The fact is, many writers have a passing familiarity with some of the ideas I outline here, but they do not implement the ideas. What good is it if I own a seat belt in my car but I don't buckle it on? It's one thing to *know about*, and another thing *to do*.

My three issues, then, about which I will propose my policies, I label abstract language, the line of *content-in-language*, and *audience*. But, I can't resist two further asides: of course, as you well know, these issues do not merely knot together, one to the next, in a segmented chain, much like dandelions. Rather, they twist together, they interlock, in a live performance, a writing act, itself a reading act.

The other of my pair of asides touches on the *how* of each writer teaching himself or herself to write. You've heard much of this - everyone has. *Read*. Learn to read like a writer. Don't yawn. I am amazed by the poets who do not read poetry, the scriptwriters who do not read scripts, the Mills and Boon novelists who don't read -- don't even like -- Mills and Boon romances. I have nearly throttled rooms full of people who clutch folios of their own short stories, but who haven't read a short story since they were at school, and, worse by far, have never bought a collection of short stories.

Much of my class work centres upon teaching students to read like writers.

Writers must read, and many would-be writers do not.

You won't enjoy reading when you've learned to read like a writer. But you'll write well. (I recall attending concerts and catching myself counting bars of rests in the trumpet parts. I'd played every note from my seat M34.)

Next, even if he entertained my three issues, and my inclination to propose policies not laws, why should Somerset Maugham listen to my specific examples of what matters? How should I convince any of you that I have the right grip - the true grip - on limiting the abstraction in language, on presenting the line of content-in-language, and on constructing the audience into commercial writing?

Today we have a flood of good writing books I could lean on for this discussion. When I was fourteen we had few such books, especially on fiction - which dominated my concern then - and I made my first steps by spending all my bottle money and apricot money on rhetorics from college courses in the United States, and Penguin copies of Hemingway. Maugham didn't have either of these, I suggest, and so I'll not lean on them now. Instead, let me propose this source of standards, or authority.

Somerset Maugham might have liked this approach: Go. Read. Read until you can return and hold before all of us three works you wish you had written. Find the three poems, the three novels, plays, stories, that are so good that you wish you had written these above all others. These three pieces are your answer to the question, "What is good writing?"

You have your writing models. Only a small step remains. Why do you like these pieces? This matters. Tell me in words that fit my work-a-day attitudes toward craft.

Teach yourself to write by unstitching three ideal pieces.

Commercial writers, in their quest to learn what matters, must also consider the grass in the other field. It's not that I want the writer to wander, but I do want writers to marvel at other texts that entertain, inform, persuade people who might be won over as readers.

Television, for example, at the end of the room as I write this, rolls out colour, and noise, puts men and women I don't know before me as if they and I were mates. Music and talk and sound effects clatter away behind the scenes. Stories leak out between the ads, (and even within the ads), and if I don't like this story I can quickly flick to another. The texts and contexts of broadcast television, of cable and satellite, of video, are marvelous opportunities for commercial writers - providing these writers aim at writing for television. In other respects, commercial writers must counter the action, colour, sound and dazzle of television with action, colour, sound and dazzle of their own. Lucille Vaughan Payne taught us that writing is the liveliest of arts. Let's take advantage of that.

I learned this exercise from the American writing teacher who died a young man a year or so ago, Gary Provost:

Close your eyes. Relax, and think of nothing. Now, don't see yourself out in the city Mall. Don't hear the chatter of a spruiker working the Woolworths shop front. Don't see the tables of blue jeans, the stacks of shortbread biscuit tins she walks between. Don't catch the wafts of sickly ice-cream cones two four year olds carry past you. Don't see the red and navy checked shirt the little girl wears, or the Swans jumper with the number 10 on the back the little boy wears. The woman beside the children speaks with a strong Yorkshire accent, but don't pay attention to that. Don't let the lapping October sunshine distract you, even though that girl by the green slatted mall seats wears her new-season lime cotton shirt for the first time, and her boyfriend wears his old muscle shirt - a Metallica fan, you know. Don't pass a tramp in a torn tweed coat, and don't smell his dried sweat. Don't mind the pair of police swaggering electronics and hardware along the grey paved mall. And don't taste the yeast and warm dates of spicy fruit bread that hang in a thick cloud outside the hot bread shop. Don't lean against the wrought iron lamp pole near the fountain, it's knobbed shaft hard, surprisingly cold against your back in the spring morning. Don't listen to the hum of voices, or the slap and knock of shoes along the mall, and don't imagine people swirling along like currents in a mountain stream across granite.

Enough. I defy anyone to claim he or she did not see the children with ice-cream, and see her checked shirt or his number 10 Swans jumper. You all heard the spruiker, the police radios, the feet on the mall. You felt the sun, the knobbed pole, the cold wrought iron. You tasted yeast and hot dates in spicy bread fresh from the oven, and the fragrance of soft serve ice-cream. You heard the visitor from Yorkshire, and smelled the tramp's sweaty coat. You saw and heard and tasted and felt and smelled the mall, even though I constantly asked you not to. We could make a big list of writing tips from this one passage, like, be specific, write through the senses, present things in action, and so on. Let's claim all these and more, and note that no television producer has ever caught all these features. *Harness the abstract nature of language.*

I am not content to use that Henry James maxim, *Show, don't tell*. A fine principle, widely known, often breached, this maxim illustrates beautifully my claim that many people know good advice but have not made it part of their technique. Using my game, stolen from Provost, I lead into a discussion that herds together a dozen conceptual chickens into the backyard coop.

Rather than summarise such a discussion here, let me use two grabs from fiction that show this game applied to the novel. I don't particularly like westerns, but I will use two fine novels here to help me out. For the writing craft on show, I wish I had written Oakley Hall's *The Bad Lands*, and Bud Guthrie's *The Big Sky*.

*The old man squatted close to his son, seamed face in shadow beneath his hat brim, and Andrew reached for his sketch pad to limn the grouping, the firelight and the dense shadow, the tense but reposeful postures. Among the pages of the sketchbook were the three elk grazing among the cottonwoods, one with head raised alertly; the wolf at dusk on the ridge three nights ago; a prairie dog haunched up, forearms crossed over his belly, for all the world like some plump and comical fellow lounging before a country store; the mountain sheep with that astonishing heft of horn parted like a bartender's toupee, and the yellow eye with its vertical dark stripe of pupil. The light of life fading visibly from that eye hung indelibly in his memory. 9*

This example illustrates sensual writing, where the abstract nature of language is harnessed, controlled, I say, by the emphasis on sensual representations - words that don't claim experience for us, but put us into the experience. That matters in commercial writing.

Commercial writing is - or, according to my dogma - should be intensely visual, or put more broadly, *commercial writing should be sensual*. 10 The devices of building such sensuality into writing extend far beyond *Show, don't tell*, as I hope I've illustrated here to your satisfaction. And, recall too, my claim that all three of my policies interlock, bind together in and through a single strand of type on the page.

Bud Guthrie wrote fiction as well as anyone:

*Boone awakened sick and trembling with cold in the first flush of the morning. He felt for the blanket and, not finding it, sat up slowly. The fire was a gray ash, in which the cook-rock had fallen and lay half buried. The breeze rolled a tuft of rabbit hair across it. He tasted his mouth and made a face and brought his fingers to his eyes to rub the film away. He looked around for Bedwell. He must have gone to see about his horse, he thought. His hands felt at his side, felt and reached out and felt again. Each finger carried its small sharp message to him. Without looking, he knew Old Sure Shot was gone. 11*

Both Guthrie and Hall have written books on fiction craft. I like to compare what the teacher said with what the teacher did. These two teachers and writers achieve a fine match of talk and craft.

Another game: I ask my students to look out the window. After a minute or so, we discuss what we saw. We discuss movement, colour, people, sounds, unusual things, unexpected things, extremes of emotion related to our window watching. We discuss the effect of the frame in relation to those items that caught our attention. . And I ask them, "What frames can you find in your writing, and how can you bring all these window-watching principles to your writing?" 12

Also, ask your students to consider "how do artists build motion into a drawing, a painting, a sculpture?" Can't we writers use the techniques of the artist?

Next, turn to those photographs, paintings, posters, hanging on your walls. Look at these "stills" and tell me the narratives they imply. Bring all of your theories of narrative to analyse the posters. Build up the backstory of each still, and weave, for a moment, the counter-plots, the subtexts. Fix these in sensual language.

I think Somerset Maugham would hear me put this policy: *harness the abstract nature of language by building a sensual representation of experience*. On, now, to my second issue.

Beyond the words, consider the larger units of commercial writing. We all know simple theories of paragraphs. Those college rhetorics I read throughout the late sixties and seventies made much of such theories. Good. But they didn't pay appropriate attention to that second issue of commercial writing I chose to isolate. How should the content-in-language shape the writing? Each paragraph might take one element of the story and unfold it, defend it, illustrate it, and build it into the whole. Yes, but too often we end up with blocks of ideas that do not weave together.

We read a single thread of ink arranged on paper, say. But this linear arrangement does not model the real world. It suggests a simple hierarchical progression of facts, or impressions, a structured reality. Even computer programmers know about object oriented language to manage representations of the world they perceive. The flourishing computer languages of today, especially C++, and its cut-down off-shoot, Java, are object oriented. We writers can use English with much greater effect to capture the world we perceive.

The writing teacher whose instruction I most admire, Theodore Rees Cheney, taught graduate students at Fairfield University, Connecticut. Cheney's research of commercial writing reports that, if they have a weakness, coherence is the single outstanding weakness of writing professionals. We should not find it surprising, therefore, that Cheney spends a good portion of his instruction time on teaching writers to build coherence.

In *Getting the Words Right* Cheney provides a solid overview of the techniques he prefers, 13 and so I won't restate these here, but I will claim some of your time to outline general principles. Somerset Maugham might keep his lips

pursed while I outline these points to purposefully resonate ideas within the shackles of a single line of black ink on paper.

While repetition, variation and backstitching, as Cheney outline these, are strategic language level techniques to resonate commercial writing, I pause with my students to highlight the merit of sensual language to interlock with this second issue. The accumulated effect of writing that presents experience itself resonates commercial writing. Now we have two foundation strategies to resonate the thread of black ink: one the devices Cheney outlines, the next a carry-over effect of our first goal. One outcome interlocks with the other: writing's like that. And I can capture a third strategy in a brief call to the power of narrative.

We don't have time for a detailed explication of narrative as it has been theorised by the Russian Formalists, the early and later structuralists,<sup>14</sup> the phenomenologists, and those who deconstruct for us. I should like to argue that no theory is more modern than the eighty-year old propositions of Bakhtin, but this would be a significant aside, even for me, today.<sup>15</sup> Here, now, I assert the place of narrative to overcome the limitations of the single strand of ink on the page.

Particularly, I want to take my students' work and ask it: have I a good story here? What's good? I would gesture to my models: at least as good as these three provide. I say at least because I have the benefit of 20/20 hindsight (or should that be 6/6 vision. No matter.) Commercial writing, where writers win an audience and then entertain, inform and persuade those readers, must present a good story.

In my experience, student writers find the place of story hard to accept. Sure, they will see a feature as a story, a news item as a story, a media release as the story of what happened, or what will happen. But I must work at having these writers build the narrative. We don't want to sacrifice facts. We don't want tabloid enthusiasm for sensational grabs, or groundless hype, or gutter talk. But we do want the essential human triumph, or quest, or struggle and failure, and the blood in the veins of the people in the piece to flow right through the piece. We want to find this evolved within the commercial writing narrative, not spread upon it as icing on a cake, but at its core, fiction or non-fiction. Narrative centres upon people in dramatic action people engaged in conflict,<sup>16</sup> and commercial writers, in my view, must employ this powerful insight to resonate the linearity of the reading experience.

My third issue binds firm to this primary place of narrative in overcoming the limitations of that little thread of ink. Audience - to be, or not to be. Why will anyone read this piece? Or, better, why is it I assure you no reader will put it down?

Hemingway reminded us to tell of the war through the eyes of a single soldier. I borrow an old saw of writing teachers to extend this advice. Have you never read the advice, write for yourself? To cut quickly to the issue, report that one soldier's experience to one ideal reader. Samm Sinclair Baker, advising writers on promoting their work, encouraged us to speak sincerely to one interested listener. Build a relationship, honest, packed with integrity, durable, with one listener. Apply this, also, to writing, I say. This is not new to you, and I speed to the how of my issue. Mr Maugham, please consider.

To endure even interesting company, we must build a relationship. We must build links of knowing, of understanding, of empathy, even if we disagree on elements under discussion. At the heart of the matter, people are interested in people. More than things, or facts, or concepts, people find people most interesting. *Put people in your writing.*<sup>17</sup> Unfold inventions through the inventors, the developers, the manufacturers, the marketers, the retailers, the consumers. In each sentence, even, let us know who speaks. Of course no writer in a short feature would attempt to bring this full cast to one piece. I hope. But somewhere in that crowd we can all find the *just right* vehicle to carry the facts of the thing.<sup>18</sup> That vehicle is a person - maybe several people - warm, personable, central to the narrative, sharing experience through sensual retelling.

What I beg most of my students, here, is that they work to avoid the bland mass-audience structured in so many television texts. Bland no-bodies, that stand for not-much-at-all, lurk behind local and foreign television serials and series, mostly "soaps". Just don't. Not in writing. If you write for television, and that's the game, play by those rules. But commercial writing, and particularly for my students, is a niche marketing game, and now we must reach out with engaging voices. Build a solid ideological core, a speaking voice that commands company, applying all the techniques of characterisation to your viewpoint character, to each character, to an implied writer who listens to his or her singular co-conversationalist. How? In her *Writing Fiction A Guide to Narrative Craft*, Janet Burroway develops her discussion of character over two chapters.<sup>19</sup> And I encourage you to read Oakley Hall's *The Art and Craft of the Novel* for his instruction on instilling voice in fiction.

Next, consider this exercise.

I provide my students with a bland, nothing of a scene.

*Over there someone did a job, and the noise of it all kept the buildings full, and animals moved about. The weather stayed away and another person went to fix the machine that broke down yesterday. Later it was quiet and she began to enjoy things a bit.*

After my writers have had a chuckle at such a passage they go to work. I ask them to compose a scene with real characters, that unfolds experience in sensual representations of experience, that uses a specific voice to speak to a specific listener, where reader and writer form a relationship. This relationship matters.

Finally, these strategies and techniques of characterisation, of building voice into the writing, of linking a specific reader with the writer, all apply to the full spectrum of commercial writing. Feature articles, public relations releases, stories, scripts - each will continue to carry distinguishing qualities, but each will interlock the issues of audience, of resonating the linear strand read by the audience, of harnessing the inherent abstract nature of language, into a writing performance.

Again, a student exercise - a writer's exercise: take a collection of stories you wish you had written and analyse the first twenty sentences. Weigh the story samples for the sensual representation of experience, for the coherence of ideas presented, for the progression of narrative, and sound it for the people built into it - speakers, actors, listeners. Read the samples as a writer must read. I encourage all writers to accept that the understanding of writing each writer can learn in this process matters. Not rules, Mr. Maugham, policies.

If, for analysis, you would like more detail than I've provided here, turn to the work of Cheney<sup>20</sup>, or Provost<sup>21</sup>, or Hall<sup>22</sup>, or Burroway<sup>23</sup>, or Guthrie<sup>24</sup>.

I cannot accept a theory of writing by numbers: "Follow these 10 rules, young man or young lady, and a writer you will be". But I cannot turn my back on the succinct advice some writers have offered. If I could present, in conversation with Somerset, issues writers must contend with, I would find these in the abstract nature of language, in the content-in-language, where the language is a single line of printed characters read (probably silently read, I add), and the questions of "who is the audience, and how do I reach this audience?"

Techniques to handle these issues *matter*:

Three policies: (1) harness the abstraction of language with the sensual representation of experience; (2) resonate the thread followed in reading with coherence devices, with sensual language, and with the binding force of narrative; and (3) put people in your writing, in each sentence, paragraph, scene, and so put reader and speaker close to each other -- and tune your work toward a single ear.

## NOTES

1. p234 Safire & SafirReturn to article
2. What would Maugham make of Whale's three guiding principles: Think in pictures; write as you speak; keep your reader happy. (1984: pp 7 - 10)?Return to article
3. p16 Bates 1983Return to article
4. These are stated and developed across some 200 pages of Simple & Direct (1994)Return to article
5. pp70-81, Strunk & White 1979Return to article
6. pp97-98 Guthrie, 1991 Guthrie writes: *Here is the advice I try to follow: "Show, don't tell." (Henry James) "The object of the novelist is to keep the reader entirely oblivious of the fact that the author exists – even of the fact that he is reading a book." (Ford Madox Ford) "Any work of art must first of all tell a story." (Robert Frost) "Plausibility is the morality of fiction." (Edith Merrilees) "The secret of successful fiction is a continual slight novelty." (Edmund Gosse)*

- *Good enough is never good enough. The very best you can do may be good enough.*
- *The adjective is the enemy of the noun and the adverb the enemy of the verb, the adjective, and the adverb itself.*
- *The task of fiction is to excite, not imprison, the imagination of the reader. So watch those adjectives.*
- *Unlike expository writing, good fiction sticks to characters, their actions, speech, and thought. It stays on scene.*
- *If you switch viewpoint, make it plain early on that a different character has taken over.*
- *The good writer keeps asking himself, "What am I doing to the reader."*
- *Write a good scene and much else will be forgiven you.*
- *The good writer makes every word count.*
- *Showing opens doors: telling closes them.*
- *Give the reader a rooting interest – or lose him.*
- *Question yourself if you are leaving your character to solitary musings.*
- *Don't be funny-funny. "Sez" for "says" is about as funny as a migraine.*
- *A writer's wisdom exists in dispersion.*
- *If you have a good story to tell, then tell it. Introductions such as "I will never forget" are fatal.*

- *Don't overdo figures of speech. Don't get cute.*
- *Take care with the past perfect tense and the passive voice.*
- *The good writer takes the reader on a course of experience.*
- *Lose yourself in your characters and they may emerge large as life.*
- *As a writer of fiction you will skirt the edges of sentimentality.*
- *Don't shrink but don't fall in.* Return to article

7. see pp122-123 Cheney, 1983, and Brohaugh's (1993) four strategies, Ch1 Return to article
8. Barzun (1994) page X states a plan to resensitize the mind to words. Return to article
9. p4 *The Bad Lands* Return to article
10. pp28-30 Provost 1990 Return to article
11. p30 Guthrie 1948 Return to article
12. Ch 7 Rimmon-Kenan Return to article
13. pp51-90 (1983) Return to article
14. see Riffaterre's discussion of retroactive reading and intertextual reading (1978) Return to article
15. Rimmon-Kenan provides such a discussion, or seek out the work of Culler. Return to article
16. Ch 4 McConnell Return to article
17. p41 Blundell Return to article
18. pp101-109 Boles Return to article
19. Ch 4 & 5 Return to article
20. 1983, 1987 Return to article
21. 1990, 1980 Return to article
22. 1990 Return to article
23. 1992 Return to article
24. 1991 Return to article

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## LETTERS AND DEBATE

Letter from Terry O'Connor