

Inventive Modeling: *Rainy Mountain's* Way to Composition

English teachers certainly do not need a statistical survey to tell them that the manufacture of "readers" for composition courses is a healthy—or at least a highly visible—industry. For them, it is a rare week that goes by without finding their mailboxes blessed with yet another bit of promotional copy touting its ware as the answer to freshman thinking, reading, and writing problems. Nevertheless, the continuing promotion of readers—even collections as unabashedly entitled as Gerald Levin's *Prose Models* (6th ed., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984) and *Short Essays: Models for Composition* (3rd ed., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983)—has not halted the gradual trend away from modeling as a primary means of teaching composition. We can see this trend in publishers' and editors' almost frantic attempts to produce "new" types of readers, in what the authors of a survey of resources for teaching invention claim is a general "shift of attention away from arrangement . . . and a growing interest in invention,"¹ and in the direct and indirect criticisms of modeling over the past two decades by many rhetoricians, even those, such as D. Gordon Rohman and Nancy Sommers, whose approaches to teaching composition are very different.

Almost twenty years ago Rohman conceded that modeling could teach students to perceive standards of writing excellence and to "recognize more vividly their own inadequacies."² But knowing about "goodness," he argued, did not insure good writing. Too often the standards of the "rhetoric of the finished word [were] too remote, too abstract." Instead of encouraging students to discover "combinations of words" that allowed them to invent "fresh and origi-

1. David V. Harrington, Philip M. Keith, Charles W. Kneupper, Janice A. Tripp, and William F. Woods, "A Critical Survey of Resources for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," *College English*, 40 (1979), 641-661.

2. D. Gordon Rohman, "Pre-Writing: The State of Discovery in the Writing Process," *College Composition and Communication*, 16 (1965), 106-112.

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nal" patterns of discovery, modeling usually led to the production of stale and contrived "echo[es] of someone else's combinations" (p. 107). As an alternative to modeling, Rohman proposed a type of pre-writing experience "grounded in the principle of personal transformation" (p. 112). (Other rhetoricians, borrowing Abraham Maslow's terms, have linked this process to "self-actualization": Harrington, et al., p. 645.) Instead of echoing approved, finished products, Rohman contended that a student should learn to "assimilate his 'subject' to himself" (p. 106). This process, to quote John Ciardi, involves "rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to new insight."³ The basic assumption underlying this stress on a personal transformation is that a student cannot write well until he or she "has learned to discover aspects of individual experience and knowledge worth writing about" (Harrington, et al., p. 645). To achieve this type of transformation, Rohman pointed to his own classroom experiments with journals, analogy formation, and meditation.

In a much more recent essay, Sommers criticizes Rohman's linear concept of composition (pre-writing, writing, rewriting).⁴ Yet, even as she articulates her theory of rewriting as an integral element of all significant stages of good writing, she—at least indirectly—supports Rohman's criticism of modeling. She admonishes the students in her case study for perceiving rewriting as a type of cosmetic tinkering that translates a "rough" draft into a final product by introducing minor changes that make the last draft conform more closely to "predefined" models, rules, or meanings (p. 384). In contrast she presents the attitudes of her sample of "experienced" writers (journalists, editors, academics) who tend to see their writing as never being "finished" and who perceive rewriting as a dynamic process of invention: "They seek to discover (to create) meaning in the engagement with their writing, in revision" (p. 386). From this viewpoint, the processes of writing and rewriting themselves become heuristic procedures.⁵

Rohman and Somers are only two of the many rhetoricians, linguists, philosophers, and speech and communication experts who, during the past two decades, have encouraged a trend away from imitating finished products to writing as a process and to the development of a variety of methods of invention ranging from procedures as unstructured as Peter Elbow's brainstorming and free writing to those as structured and complex as the tagmemic matrix developed by Kenneth Pike, Richard Young, and Alton Becker. This impressive heuristic spectrum sends a clear message: as Richard Young argues in his essay in Gary Tate's collection, composition courses should place less emphasis on modeling "masterpieces" and more on stimulating and guiding students to discover "ex-

3. See Jerome Bruner, ed., *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 82-83; Rohman, p. 107.

4. "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," *College Composition and Communication*, 31 (1980), 378-88.

5. For a brief survey of advocates of this approach, see Richard Young, "Invention: A Topographical Survey," in Gary Tate, ed., *Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 35-36.

plicit plans for analyzing and searching which focus attention, guide reason, stimulate memory and encourage intuition" (p. 1).

The senders of this message should, however, be aware that modeling can still find a place in such courses. Indeed the central contention of this essay is that if teachers select models carefully and present them not as "finished words" or "remote masterpieces" but as paradigms of dynamic processes and as hints leading to avenues of discovery, then modeling can and will contribute significantly to contemporary composition courses. My belief in this approach to writing is grounded in my use of N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969) during the past six years in America and Japan. I have consistently received essays like the following one in which Yukiko Ikeda, of Shimane University in Japan, transforms Momaday's combination of storytelling, historical, and personal voices to create a personalized view of a landscape significant to her.

First Voice Long, long ago, Tottori Prefecture was called Hoki country, and gods and people lived there together. At this time, there wasn't a Yumigahama Peninsula in Hoki country. People in Yonago could see only an Island in the Japan Sea. One day, the gods of Hoki country talked about their territory. One god said, "Our land is very small. Why don't we pull the island above Yonago into our country to make our country bigger?" All the gods around him agreed with him, and they brought a big rope. After a young and strong god swung the rope to the island and tied it fast, all the gods pulled the island to their country, shouting encouragement, "Come, come to us." In this way, the territory of Hoki country became bigger.

Second Voice Yumigahama Peninsula grew out of the sand that the currents of the Japan Sea carried from Kaike shore. Kaike is south of Yonago city and is famous for its springs and the beautiful scenery of its shore. As the ocean currents carried away the sand, Kaike shore became small. People in Kaike were afraid that they would lose their beautiful shore, so they dropped many tetrapods in the sea. Tetrapods usually prevent the water from eroding the sand, but in spite of the efforts of the people, the sand from Kaike shore continued to drift to Yumigahama Peninsula little by little. Even now the sea moves farther from the road that runs across the peninsula.

Third Voice I have walked on the beach of Yumigahama Peninsula. There are many windbreaks of pine trees. Once my mother told me that before the Industrial Road between Yonago and Sakaiminato was built, she could see only the windbreaks and the beach. When the road was made, some parts of it were very near the sea. But now, the sand from Kaike shore and the areas reclaimed by drainage have enlarged the beach by the road. I couldn't believe that I was standing at a place that was once under the sea. It was like magic for me. The land was changing.⁶

In the remainder of this essay I will explain my view of how and why models can be used to assist student invention. First I will describe how Momaday,

6. Tottori is a prefecture in western Japan. I would like to thank Ms. Ikeda for allowing me to use her essay. I would also like to thank Shimane University for allowing me to use Japanese student writings and revised versions of some of the Momaday background material that first appeared in my "Japanese Ways to Rainy Mountain," *Memoirs of the Faculty of Law and Letters*, 6 (1983), 75 (337)-101 (363).

again to borrow Ciardi's words, rearranged and transformed "evidence in such a way that [he was able] to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to new insight." I will then consider how a study of Momaday's inventive procedure can help students to develop heuristic procedures that can achieve many of the goals Rohman associates with the use of journal writing, analogy formation, and meditation and Sommers associates with discovery through rewriting. The implication of my argument is that a text like Momaday's should be used in a writing course not as a model of a finished product but rather as an occasion to study and practice writing as a dynamic process that links thinking, reading, writing and rewriting, and as a useful means of increasing student motivation to discover and experiment imaginatively with effective methods of invention.

N. Scott Momaday (1934-) is the best-known contemporary American Indian author primarily because he won a Pulitzer Prize for his first novel, *House Made of Dawn* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). To many students, however, this author and his second most influential book, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, will be unknown. To help acquaint them with Momaday, instructors can direct these students to a growing body of scholarship.⁷ In a writing course the background material should focus primarily on how Momaday transformed a variety of oral and written styles and public and private subjects into a coherent and original form of tribal, family, and personal history.

In his lectures on college campuses Momaday often mentions that his style was influenced by several well-known authors—especially Melville, Hemingway, and Faulkner—and some lesser-known writers—for example, Frederick Goddard Tuckerman and Momaday's teacher at Stanford, Yvor Winters. But the core of *Rainy Mountain* grew out of Kiowa oral traditions, which in turn grew out of specific landscapes, particularly the stark and striking Oklahoma prairies, hills, and mountains. According to Momaday, the origins of the book can be traced to his collecting in English of a "remarkable body of history and learning, fact and fiction—all part of the oral tradition."⁸ The sources of these materials include his father and other relatives mentioned in Momaday's memoir *The Names* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) and the Kiowa elders mentioned in his essay "The Man Made of Words." In collaboration with D. E. Carlsen and

7. See the footnote references to Kenneth M. Roemer, "Survey Courses, Indian Literature, and *The Way to Rainy Mountain*," *CE*, 37 (1976), 619-24. See also Thekla Zachrau, "N. Scott Momaday: Toward an Indian Identity," *Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters*, 9 (1979), 52-67; Robert L. Berner, "N. Scott Momaday: Beyond Rainy Mountain," *American Indian and Culture Research Journal*, 3 (1979), 57-67; Martha Scott Trimble, *N. Scott Momaday* (Boise, Idaho: Boise State College Western Writers Series, 1973); Alan R. Velie, *Four American Indian Literary Masters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), especially pp. 24-31; Kenneth M. Roemer, "Native American Oral Narratives: Context and Continuity," in Brian Swann, ed., *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), especially pp. 51-52; Jarold Ramsey, *Reading the Fire: Essays in the Traditional Indian Literatures of the Far West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 182, 187-89. See especially Martha Scott Trimble, "N. Scott Momaday," in Fred Erisman and Richard W. Etulain, eds., *Fifty Western Writers* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 313-324.

8. "The Man Made of Words," in Abraham Chapman, ed., *Literature of the American Indian: Views and Interpretations* (New York: New American Library, 1975), p. 106.

Bruce S. McCurdy, Momaday presented much of this material in a small edition (one hundred hand-printed copies) of a book entitled *The Journey of the Tai-me* (Santa Barbara: privately printed, 1967). (The Tai-me was both a mythological figure who helped the Kiowa and a sacred Sun Dance doll.)

Even this first collecting stage involved "transformations" and "rewritings"; whenever an oral literature is taken out of its storytelling context and presented as a series of written paragraphs, its form and often its content and meaning can be radically altered. But the most significant transformations came after the publication of *The Journey of the Tai-me* when Momaday discovered a heuristic procedure that enabled him to "assimilate his 'subject' to himself," as Rohman would say (p. 106), and to observe a "general pattern of development," as Sommers would add (p. 384). This process included Momaday's attempts to match specific Kiowa narratives of tribal or family origins (usually paragraph units of 100 to 280 words) with shorter passages in two other voices. One apparently objective voice typically recounts historical, anthropological, or factual information. The other voice is more private, subjective, and reflective, and recalls significant personal memories, especially from Momaday's childhood. Momaday placed the storytelling voice on the verso page and the two answering voices on the recto. He selected and arranged twenty-four of these clusters of three voices in a loose chronological order suggested by the titles of the three divisions of the body of the text: "The Coming Out," "The Going On," and "The Closing In."

The storytelling voices in the first division begin by recounting parts of Kiowa origin narratives. The storytelling voices in the other divisions proceed through historical and family narratives. The second "objective" voice usually parallels the chronological development of the first voice by offering facts, definitions, and descriptions derived from written sources, including the anthropological and historical works of James Mooney and Mildred P. Mayhall, and oral accounts, notably tribal and family background. The progression of the third voice is less chronological. In it Momaday recounts personal memories that capture aspects (sometimes subject, sometimes tone or mood) of the other two voices that—through acts of memory, association, and imagination—were meaningful to him. For instance, I doubt that Momaday literally believes the Kiowa account of how a baby and a redbird ascended into the sky in the arms of a miraculous tree and changed into the sun's wife and the sun (*Rainy Mountain*, chap. 4). Nevertheless, he can see, in the second voice, the relationship between this story and the Kiowa landscape, which "ascends into the sky." And he can recall, in the third voice, walking in mountain meadows and seeing "high in the branches of a lodgepole pine the male grosbeak, round and rose-colored. . . . And the uppermost branches of the tree seemed very slowly to ride across the blue sky" (chap. 4, pp. 22-23). Gradually, as the book progresses, the three voices tend to merge, as each voice exhibits the characteristics of narrative, descriptive, and personal writing. This movement gives the book a dynamic quality, a sense of discovery: a feeling of rich but fragmented pasts coalescing into a rich, meaningful, and personalized present.

Momaday framed the twenty-four clusters of voices with an opening poem, a preface, an introduction (originally published in *The Reporter* on 27 January

1967 and then again as part of *House Made of Dawn*), and a closing poem. The frames include images, tones, and information necessary to the reader's understanding of the Kiowas' and Momaday's physical and spiritual journeys from the mouth of the Yellowstone to the Southwest and specifically to Rainy Mountain in Oklahoma, where Momaday's paternal grandmother, Aho, was buried. At one point in the composition Momaday intended that this collection of writings represent the "finished" book. Then a nagging sense of incompleteness grew into a private visitation (Henry James, Sr., would call it a "vastation") movingly described in Momaday's "The Man Made of Words." While sitting alone in a room with the manuscript, Momaday imagined that he saw an old Kiowa woman, Ko-sahn, who had seen the last days of her tribe's Golden Era and had also seen Momaday. She was a vital and intimate link connecting the three voices and Momaday's many imagined and remembered tribal, family, and personal experiences. Ko-sahn inspired Momaday to write a brief epilogue that precedes the closing poem.

After reading *Rainy Mountain* (it is only eighty-nine pages long) or excerpts from it and hearing the story of its composition, it should be very difficult for students to perceive of writing as an isolated act narrowly defined by that brief time interval during which a writer completes a final draft. Furthermore, the students should have gained knowledge of a fascinating way to transform significant times and places into personal experiences—a way that should inspire them to gain new insights into relationships linking their lives, their relatives, and private and communal histories and landscapes.

After devoting a class to background material about the composition of *Rainy Mountain*, an instructor could proceed to use Momaday's text as a conventional reader by pointing out sections of the book that illustrate specific organizational strategies and the four basic modes of discourse—description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. There are numerous examples of spatial and chronological organization; instances of paragraphs ordered by definition, comparison, comparison and contrast, and analogy; and strong passages of narrative and descriptive writing, especially in the storytelling voices and the opening of the introduction.⁹ Although there are few examples of explicit argumentation, there are plenty of arguments implied "between" the juxtapositions of Indian and non-Indian viewpoints.

Unfortunately, this conventional approach to modeling could encourage students to produce the types of stale echoes Rohman criticized. (Students might even write some rather inflated prose; the dramatic and melodramatic cadences of the openings of Momaday's storytelling voices could easily be mishandled by less experienced pens.) A better approach, particularly in a writing course that stresses the importance of invention, is to help the students to perceive Moma-

9. For example, spatial/chronological ("Introduction," "Epilogue"); definition (chaps. 1, 8, 18, 19); comparison (chap. 15); contrast (chap. 19); comparison and contrast (chap. 16); analogy (almost all the sections); narrative (the story-telling voices); description ("Introduction" and many of the second voices).

day's heuristic procedures, encourage them to adapt these procedures to their experiences, and then require them to write their versions of *Rainy Mountain*. In an introductory course students can be asked to read a few excerpts from the book and to write one to three three-voiced sections. In an honors or upper division course students can be challenged to spend the entire semester writing fifteen to twenty-five sections and the frames.

In either case the students should follow Momaday's approach by first selecting a significant landscape in their lives. Then they can begin the necessary early stages of remembering, imagining, and jotting down phrases or sentences that attempt to capture or at least render accessible their memories and suggest tentative relationships linking different aspects of their landscape experiences. This process of retrieval and speculation must soon be complemented by research into written and oral regional, community, and family sources that will provide information usable in the first and second voice. The research experience not only enriches students' versions of *Rainy Mountain*, it also gives them skills and practice that will be useful to them when they attempt other types of writing in other courses, especially history and social science courses. As the remembering, imagining, and collecting processes continue, students must begin to select materials that will match—in subject, theme, or tone—so that they can begin to structure the three-voice sections. In the upper level or honors course students must also watch to see if they can discover significant patterns in their materials that would help to organize the entire work. Momaday's basically chronological approach has been appropriate for many students, but others have found geographical and thematic approaches more suitable to their needs.

At this point in the course most of the students have an abundance of material, including some preliminary drafts of individual voices, and a general notion of an overall organization. Now comes the exciting and painful process of discovering unexpected relationships between different types of material, deleting good material that doesn't fit any of the three-voiced sections or the frames, and searching, sometimes frantically, for an appropriate voice to complete a section. As painful as this stage can be, students learn valuable lessons about perceiving general patterns and about making additions and deletions in accordance with these perceptions. These lessons can certainly be transferred to other more "conventional" types of expository and argumentative writing experiences. Requiring students to hand in outlines that indicate the general organization of their fifteen to twenty-five sections and then three to five sample sections before they attempt drafts of all the sections helps the instructor to guide the students so that their attempts to match voices do not become forced and so that they do not overlook possible matches. When the students finally put all their sections together, they often discover that they have to rewrite their introductions or epilogues or change the positions of some of the sections to fit patterns they had not perceived until all the sections were assembled. Occasionally these new perceptions even necessitate deletions and additions of several entire sections.

Of course, any of the courses, such as Rohman's pre-writing classes, that require autobiographical thinking, reading, and writing will offer strong motivations for discovering heuristic procedures and for writing. The particular ad-

vantages of using a book such as *Rainy Mountain* are that as a model it provides a clear focus for autobiographical writing (a landscape) and that Momaday's approach to invention offers a repeatable sequence and structure that students can grasp and make personal. Further, Momaday's unusual three-voice form requires students to participate in information collecting, selecting, arranging, and deleting processes (which help them to master other non-autobiographical forms of writing) while simultaneously encouraging them to discover and write about new insights about relationships that link their identities to communities of relatives, friends, stories, and physical and cultural environments. Thus they come to realize, in a very intimate way, how the process of writing can transcend the functions of communication and persuasion to achieve the power of agents that shape how they perceive reality. Once this lesson is discovered and acted out as they write, their versions of *Rainy Mountain*, even the short one-to-three section versions, help them to understand the importance of attempting other types of writing and the significance of being aware of how their perceptions are altered in the act of writing.

Imitating Momaday's process of discovery can also help students to understand and achieve many of the goals associated with other methods of invention. For instance, they experience the type of inventive rewriting Sommers describes in the writing of experienced authors. It is evident that the students' attempts to generate matching voices can be related to the argument, as Richard Young puts it, that "the activity of writing itself can be seen as a heuristic for discovering content" (p. 35).

The students who used *Rainy Mountain* as a model, furthermore, experienced many of the types of discoveries Rohman's students enjoyed as they wrote journals, formulated analogies, and meditated. Rohman's advocacy of journal writing—which grew out of his interest in a literary model, Thoreau—is based on his contention that "the more familiar we are with ourselves, the better chances of our 'groping to' some discoveries in writing" (p. 109). As the *Rainy Mountain* students grope, they may not become familiar with all of the eight areas Ira Proffroff outlines in the "journal checklist" in *At a Journal Workshop* (New York: Dialogue House, 1977). The process of matching story, fact, and personal experience does, nevertheless, require students to examine the typical topics Proffroff mentions (significant persons, physical condition, attitudes about society, crucial events), and those instances during which students must search ingeniously for matches can force them to become familiar with less typical forms ("Dream Log," "Twilight Imagery Log," and "Inner Wisdom Dialogue," pp. 127 ff.).

It is easy to see how Momaday's process of invention relates to analogy formation, especially to what Rohman refers to as the "shocks of recognition" that accompany discoveries of the "'bisociation' of experience" (p. 111). *Rainy Mountain* students must continually uncover meaningful relationships between unlike entities as they match voices. It may be more difficult, however, to perceive meditation in this modeling process. (It would be a bit much to require the students to meditate so well that they conjure up equivalents of Momaday's Kossahn.) *Rainy Mountain* does, nevertheless, offer an excellent model for what

Rohman identifies as a key element in meditation, a "transformation of religious 'subjects' into personal experiences" (p. 110). Most notably in "The Setting Out" division (chaps. 1-11) Momaday perceives some of the most sacred Kiowa stories within, or through, the contexts of the personal experiences recounted in the third voices.

In this division the Kiowas' birth through a hollow log lives through Momaday's memory of "coming out upon the northern Great Plains in late spring" (chap. 1, p. 17). The origin of the Sun's wife speaks to him through the plants, trees, birds, and sky observed during mountain meadow walks (chap. 4, p. 23). The grand meeting of the Kiowa and the Tai-me continues in a boyhood recollection of seeing the Tai-me bundle with his father and grandmother (chap. 10, p. 37). Just as important as these transformations of the sacred to the personal are numerous examples of spiritualizing the ordinary. Viewed through the contexts of generations of tribal, family, and personal beliefs, memories, and imaginations, common objects such as a box of bones (chap. 22), a grandmother's kettle (chap. 23), an old pair of moccasins (chap. 24), and even a corpse buried in a cabinet (chap. 24) become sacred to Momaday. Such transformations teach the students to discover new writing topics, and, more significantly, "new" sacred objects. Carefully placed within the right storytelling, historical, and personal contexts, students have discovered how to transform objects as ordinary as a backyard well in suburban Fort Worth, an attic in Mansfield, Texas, a tiny marsh in Mt. Holly, New Jersey, an alley in Pittsburgh, an irrigation ditch in Ventura County, California, a meadow in Wales, a backyard spider in Matsue, Japan, a section of industrial highway near Yonago, Japan, even a grade school restroom in a suburb of Matsue. To some degree the students who transformed these objects knew that these common places were intimately sacred. Momaday's process of discovery gave them the authority and inspiration to perceive ordinary landscapes as populated with wonderful things.

Admittedly, Momaday's pattern of discovery cannot be related to all the currently popular heuristic procedures. Still, if we consider the types of questions students must ask as they experiment with Momaday's model—questions such as, How is a sense of place important to me? or What facts or events help me to understand the origins and meanings of landscapes?—we can see that the *Rainy Mountain* process not only relates to the rewriting, generative, and pre-writing approaches but also to significant aspects of other theories of invention.¹⁰

Despite the many advantages of using *Rainy Mountain* to teach invention, critics of modeling could still make a valid complaint: a heuristic procedure that requires the discovery of a process perceived through an interpretation of a finished work represents an imprecise and roundabout route to invention. Why should instructors waste their precious time arriving at and giving their interpretations of Momaday's process, and why should students waste their equally precious time attempting to decipher their teachers' interpretations and Moma-

10. For example, Momaday's process could be related to Kenneth Burke's concept of "scene," to many of Jacqueline Berke's "twenty questions," and to the tagmemic emphasis on viewing a topic from many angles.

day's text, when it would be so much easier for teachers and students to sit down with something like Jacqueline Berke's self-explanatory twenty questions and get to work? Prepackaged and recognized heuristics are easier to communicate and can be very effective. Nevertheless, many of the criticisms Rohman leveled at imitating "finished products" can also be aimed at teaching ready-made invention guides: they can become remote, abstract, artificial, mechanical, even repressive. The results of following a method of discovery advocated and clearly outlined by a "leading authority" may even lead to more profoundly disturbing stale echoes than the imitations of "masterpieces." Which is worse after all: the plodding echoes of the diction and syntax of a "finished product" or the unimaginative echoes of a "finished" thought process? Wordwashed or brainwashed?

I realize that I am taunting with oversimplifications and overstatements. Any good teacher should be able to present established heuristic procedures in ways that discourage mechanical and stale thinking by helping students to distinguish between what Young has called "rule-governed procedures" and heuristic procedures. And yet many students today are so insecure about their writing abilities that—in spite of teachers' efforts—there is a great desire to latch on to quick, ready-made answers to writing. Hence it may be dangerous to present only previously established heuristic procedures that might be snatched up with the simplistic and mechanistic zeal of a chubby reader gobbling up a Jane Fonda exercise book. One advantage of inventive modeling is that as teachers and students struggle to understand and articulate their interpretations of a work as complex as *Rainy Mountain*, they achieve a series of discoveries that represent, in Rohman's terms, "personal transformations" during which an interpretation of the model's heuristic is formulated and "assimilated" by teacher and student. As the samples of student writing offered below and the published works by experienced writers inspired by Momaday indicate,¹¹ inventive modeling can lead to interesting variations of the approach perceived in the model. (This should come as no surprise. Since the beginnings of oral and written literatures, most of the best performers and writers have been inventive modelers.) More significant, groping to discover and then practice a heuristic in a work such as Momaday's should help students to avoid using the model as a simplistic recipe or crutch and should make learning about heuristic procedures more exciting and more personal than if the teaching of invention consisted exclusively of a passive reception of recognized and finished topoi, questions, strategies, pentads, and tagmemic matrices.

One way to demonstrate how students can grasp and personalize the heuristic procedures they find in *Rainy Mountain* is to present several excerpts from their writing. As might be expected, my American students (three freshman honors classes and one senior-level literature course taught at the University of Texas at Arlington) and my Japanese students (primarily junior and senior English majors

11. Two published works that borrow from Momaday's form are Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller* (New York: Seaver Books, 1981) and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's *Then Badger Said This* (New York: Vantage, 1977).

at Shimane University in Matsue) brought very different types of skills and backgrounds to this writing experiment. The Japanese students were insecure about their reading and writing abilities in English and were, at first, baffled by the structure and meaning of the excerpts I gave them. Therefore I had to spend extra time on background material and interpretation; I limited the assignment to one three-voice section; and I required three rewritings. The Japanese students did, however, have two significant advantages over their American counterparts: their deeper sense of place and their richer storytelling heritage. But the deprivations caused by the high mobility of the families of American students sometimes helped them by forcing them to make ingenious juxtapositions and discoveries of the unusual in the commonplace.

Leah Wright's Indian heritage and Oklahoma background allowed her to relate easily to Momaday's book. But the essay she wrote in 1984 was strongly influenced by an agricultural tribal history that is quite different from Momaday's Kiowa background. In *Beyond the Trees* (1981) Mickey Harris concentrates on his family history, especially experiences associated with Glouster, Virginia. In section nine his three voices acquaint us with his mother as a child, her imaginary friend Mrs. Nobbie, and her grandmother. Lisa C. Davis' *And Then There Was One* (1981) varies Momaday's approach. She focuses on three family members and uses anecdotes about famous people as her storytelling voice. In section twelve she selects an anecdote she heard from her mother and combines it with family history and personal memory. Spiders—mythical, real, and homey—are the key elements in Masako Nishimura's section about the Chūgoku mountain area of western Honshu (1983), and family stories about foxes and the Hii River inspired Shingo Nagaoka's three voices about the Izumo region also in western Honshu (1983). I would like to thank these students for allowing me to use their material.

Leah Wright

First Voice When the little girl asked why she lived in Oklahoma, she was told this. Once there was a beautiful Chickasaw woman who lived on a plantation with her husband and son. She was very happy. She had pretty dresses and lots of food. What made her happiest was her rose garden. She spent much of her time working in her garden, trimming, watering, and caring for her plants. She had one rosebush that produced the most beautiful roses ever seen. That bush came to her from Europe.

One afternoon, soldiers came and threw her into a wagon. The soldiers said that they must go to Oklahoma and give up their home. Then the soldiers gave the woman's house and gardens to a filthy, hairy-faced white man. The woman cried and cried because she had to leave her rose garden. That night the son escaped and went back to the mother's garden. He wanted to get a cutting from the rosebush from Europe, so that his mother would have roses in Oklahoma. The dirty man heard the son and came outside and shot him. The son died in his mother's garden, holding a cutting. The white man looked down at the son and said, "That'll teach you Indians to trespass on my land and cut my bushes!"

Second Voice The Chickasaw Indians considered farming an important part of their economy. They cultivated public farms and household gardens. The women performed the duties of clearing the land and caring for the crops. Corn played an especially important role in the Chicksaw community. The Green Corn Festival

was ordained for renewal and perpetuation of health. The marriage ceremony required the groom to divide an ear of corn in two and to give one half of the ear to his bride.

Third
Voice

Granny Julie was my great-grandmother. She was born in a house on the family allotment land in Oklahoma. My grandmother and mother were born in the same house. Granny Julie loved to garden. She raised acres of peanuts for a cash crop and had several big gardens close to the house. She grew green beans, tomatoes, okra, corn, and flowers. Granny had a separate cutting garden for flowers.

I remember walking in the garden between her bean vines. They were taller than I was and the squash bugs buzzed from vine to vine over my head. It was shady under the vines, but still hot. It smelled dry and the bean pods would rattle if a breeze happened to blow. I've got a picture of Granny Julie standing there beside those vines. She's wrapped up in an Indian blanket and her pet owl is sitting up on her right shoulder. I told her to put the blanket on. I knew she was an Indian, and I wanted a picture of her looking like one.

Mickey Harris

First
Voice

Grandmother walked to the end of the hall and called for Nancy. It was time to eat, and the preacher was joining them, so she had to hurry. "I'm coming, Granny," she replied. "Hurry, Mrs. Nobbie, fasten my belt! Okay, let's go and eat." At the table the preacher sat at the far end, and Mrs. Nobbie sat between Nancy and her grandmother. The preacher said grace, and Nancy tried to sneak a peek at everyone only to catch a glimpse of Mrs. Nobbie with one eyebrow raised and a finger to her lips. The day before, Mrs. Nobbie had warned Nancy not to watch secretly her grandmother praying or preparing to bathe, for no one had ever seen Granny bathing. Grandmother forbade such behavior, and Nancy knew it was time to behave.

Second
Voice

To young Nancy, Mrs. Nobbie was a real person, and although she was private, Nancy did share her with Fannie and Aunt Mary. When Fannie prepared the meals, she would always set a place at the table for Mrs. Nobbie and even put food on the plate. And whenever Mary would come to take Nancy in the car, she would always have to wait a few minutes because Mrs. Nobbie was not quite ready. Both Fannie and Mary understood Nancy's fantasies, and together the four of them always enjoyed visiting.

Third
Voice

To my mother, Fannie was Granny. To me, she was Mamie. Once my mother told me that in all the world she did not believe that there could be a better person than Granny—she was always so kind and loving. I would like to remember her better. I do remember her, and I know that she was only thirty-four when her husband died. She was an intelligent woman, and with one more year of school, she would have become a teacher. She truly loved and cared for people. She lived a long time and died very old. Her hair was silver and beautiful.

Lisa C. Davis

First
Voice

Near Princeton there lived a young girl who, day after day, came home after school, got a handful of cookies, and left, heading back down the street. Eventually, her mother stopped her to inquire where she was going. The child innocently told her mother of a kind old man just a few houses down, who was very good at arithmetic and was helping her with her homework. The mother felt bad about her daughter's intrusion and went to the old gentleman's house to apologize. After listening politely to the woman's apology, Dr. Einstein replied, "It's really quite a nice arrangement. She pays me in fresh cookies and I teach her math."

Second
Voice

As Robert neared his eightieth birthday, I was born and he soon began retirement. Our family moved to Arlington, Texas, settling in a house on West Cedar

Street. Jan would leave for work early, and my days were spent with this man. For the next four years, the professor would read, write, and begin to set the foundations for his younger daughter's education. I became his entertainment and he, my mentor.

Third
Voice

Many an afternoon, cloudy or clear, I would sit with my father in the dim light of the kitchen eating fig cookies and playing dominoes. I can still see the gentle, soft-spoken figure pointing to the white spots on the black squares and patiently waiting for me to learn the numbers. It always did seem to help when he would point with the same amount of fingers as the numbers on the block.

Masako Nishimura

First
Voice

There was a big spider like a bear in the heart of the Chūgoku mountains. People feared the mountains because the spider had eaten many travelers who wanted to cross over from Tottori to Okayama. One day a brave young man came to Misasa village at the foot of the mountains. He heard the story of the big spider and made up his mind to kill it. He ordered the villagers to make a large doll that looked like a man. That night he put the doll against a huge pine tree beside the mountain pass and waited, hiding himself behind the tree. Suddenly the giant spider appeared. It tried to fly upon the doll. The man shot an arrow toward the monster and it fell down on the pass never to get up again. After that time the people around the Chūgoku mountains could live peacefully and travelers could go to the other side of the mountains easily. They called the pass 人形峠 (a doll's pass).

Second
Voice

Around the Chūgoku mountains we can see many yellow and black spiders that look like they're wearing striped pirate shirts. They have eight long and tight legs and charming hips. They're called "Golden Spiders" and are the most beautiful spiders in Japan. They are all females. The males are much smaller and uglier; no one notices such poor male spiders. The females spin their webs and wait for their food. When the web catches an insect, they spring upon it and eat it up at once. These are hungry creatures. If they don't like their husbands, they will eat them heartlessly. They will even eat their children. They are beautiful but as cruel as demons.

Third
Voice

Every summer a big spider spins its web between the tall trees in my garden. The web has a large and skillful shape and glitters reflecting sunshine. In my childhood out of curiosity I would break the web with a long stick. But the spider would soon make a web much bigger than the one I had broken. I would break the web over and over, but all my efforts were in vain. The next morning the spider would wait proudly and calmly for food on its beautiful new web. During those summers I fought against the spider, pecking at its web; but I couldn't kill it. The spider seemed to grow out of my dreams. I thought it was uncanny. I won't like spiders forever.

Shingo Nagaoka

First
Voice

When my great-grandmother was young, a sly fox lived on a large island in the Hii River. Inhabitants along the river used to believe that the fox often made fools of them and stole their food. Some villagers tried to capture the crafty beast, but it hid itself so deeply in the thick bushes on the island that they could not get him.

One night, my great-grandmother hurried on her way home along the Hii River. She had been invited by her sister to dinner. On her back she carried many presents, including kamaboko (boiled fish paste) and abura-agē (fried bean curd), which are foxes' favorite foods. She was afraid that the fox might play a trick on her and try to steal her important presents. She went at a good pace, swearing that the tricker would not turn up. Suddenly her gifts became much heavier. She guessed that the fox must have jumped on her presents, though she

dared not look back to see because she was so afraid of the sly beast. Then she made up her mind not to slow down her pace or stop for a rest. If she stopped, the fox might trick her and steal her gifts, she thought. She kept walking patiently. The heavy load made her tired, but she did not get discouraged. Finally, when she saw a light from her home, the weight suddenly became lighter again. She felt at ease, thinking that the fox had given up tricking her.

When she returned home, however, she was surprised at her appearance. Under a light she could see that her body was covered with foxfur, and that the tricker had eaten half of her sister's presents.

Second
Voice

The Hii River flows into the west end of Lake Shinji in western Japan. It is one of the largest rivers in Shimane prefecture, expanding to almost 200 meters in width at its lower reaches. This large and powerful river can flood the Izumo Heiya (plain) and trick and terrify the people. (Our ancestors suffered so much from these floods that they compared the river to a dragon with eight heads.) But this terrifying river also gives us beautiful views throughout the year. In Spring, it dresses like a dancing girl wearing flowers and green grasses. Summer can change the riverside into a jungle—a shaggy wrestler. Autumn brings golden clothes and turns the wrestler into a blond; the river is full of dry grasses. In Winter, especially in the morning, silver frost covers the river. At this time of year, the Hii looks like an old sleeping nobleman.

Third
Voice

One summer night when I was a six-year-old boy, my father and I were on our way home. He was driving a small truck along a road through the rice fields. The night sky covered us with a screen of stars, but it was a very quiet night. I remember that the noise the truck made seemed to be the only sound in the world. Even when we came to the Hii river, we could not hear the water flowing. In the middle of a narrow wooden bridge our car's headlights suddenly caught a golden figure. "That's a fox!" my father shouted. The fear I felt then stopped my breath. It was the first time for me to see a real fox, though I had often heard about foxes from my great-grandmother. The fox stood in the light with its golden back, big golden tale, silver bosom, and two sharp-pointed ears. Two blue flames were in its eyes. After a second, the animal turned around quickly and dashed toward the thick grasses of the island in the river.

I had heard that the fox in the Hii River was a tricker, so I asked by father, "That fox will fool us, won't he?" He smiled a little and replied, "Well, yes, it may fool you if you are a bad boy, Shingo." I remembered the blue flaming eyes of the fox and wished I would be a good boy.

The chances of modeling becoming an integral part of the teaching of invention will, of course, ultimately depend upon the development of anthologies that will include more than one fascinating model such as *Rainy Mountain*. What types of materials should be included in such a collection? Models selected should, of course, be examples of good writing. The anthology should not, however, pretend to be a sampling of "finished masterpieces." The emphasis should instead be placed on perceiving models as dynamic processes and as avenues of discovery, and on finding models that can be adopted by students as instruments to find their own meanings in their own experience.

Based on this editorial principle and the example of *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, what would make suitable models for such a text? Of the numerous possible responses to this question, I would like to suggest three general criteria for selection. First, for each selection considered the editors should consider the availability of information about the composition process. They should look for

models that would allow them to include brief excerpts from sources such as notebooks, journals, drafts, authors' published writings about the work, and post-publication revisions. The goal implied by this criterion is not to turn freshmen into textual bibliographers but to present writing as a process involving many different types of discoveries.

Second, whether the models are fictional or nonfictional, prose, poetry, or drama, they should be in some very broad senses autobiographical, biographical, or at least individualized to the extent that the author has concentrated on one person or character or type, or has tried—as in the case of *Rainy Mountain*—to assimilate the “Not Me” in a personal way. Such a broad spectrum of models will expose students to many types of writing and forms of discovery, while simultaneously encouraging them to adapt the heuristics they discover in the models to their own life experiences—a development which should increase their motivation to write.

Third, the forms or possibly the tone and content should initially puzzle the students. This criterion is not aimed at producing writers who create business letters in the form of T. S. Eliot's “Prufrock” or term papers in Momaday's three voices. The intention is to locate models that are likely to engage teachers and students to a degree that encourages them to define and articulate heuristic patterns “behind” the “surface” of the models. These discovered patterns may or may not be similar to the patterns actually used by the authors. The point is that the process of discovering the means of invention should make the study of heuristic procedures more intimately meaningful to students (that was certainly the case in the *Rainy Mountain* classes) and should convince them either to experiment with personalized versions of the models' heuristics, as my students did, or to use the heuristic approach of a model in combination with one of the recognized neo-classical, pre-writing, dramatistic, or tagmemic procedures. At the very least, such process of discovery will enable them to compare the usefulness of inventive modeling to the usefulness of acquiring inventive skills by studying and practicing the established heuristic procedures. (It almost goes without saying that the introduction to such a collection must include background on these established methods.)

The textbook I'm calling for—and there is evidence of some movement in this direction¹²—would be a book whose form might be something like Walker Gibson's *Poems in the Making* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963) and whose intent could be compared to the intentions of Thomas W. Benson and Michael H. Prosser's *Readings in Classical Rhetoric* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), Forest D. Burt and E. Cleve Want's *Invention and Design: A Rhetoric Reader* (3rd ed., New York: Random House, 1981), or even texts not specifically designed for composition courses, for example, Brewster Ghiselin's *The Creative Process* (New York: New American Library, 1952) and James L. Adams'

12. For example, see William Lutz and Harry Brent, *The Perennial Reader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Elaine P. Maimon, et al., *Readings in the Arts and Sciences* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984); and Hans P. Guth and Renee Hausmann, *Essay Reading with the Writer's Eye* (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1984). *Essay Reading* even includes an excerpt from *Rainy Mountain*.

Conceptual Blockbusting (2nd ed., New York: Norton, 1979). The number of authors included would be smaller than the number of entries in a conventional reader because more material would surround each model. Fewer authors should allow the students more time to understand and assimilate each writer's approach. As to specific models, the most obvious candidates would be excerpts from unusual autobiographies such as *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. This category might include some of the works discussed in Albert E. Stone's *Autobiographical Occasions and Original Acts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), such as Henry Adams' *Education*, Frank Conroy's *Stop-Time*, or Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night*. *Black Elk Speaks* (ed. John G. Neihardt, 1932; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979) is also an interesting possibility because of the complexities of bicultural co-authorship and Black Elk's ability to integrate historical, personal, and visionary writing. Many other types of writing should also be considered: Whitman's "Song of Myself," Eliot's "Prufrock," Hemingway's *In Our Time*, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*, Emerson's "American Scholar," many of Thoreau's writings—these are only a few American examples of possible inclusions.

I can hear the protests already: "My students can't even read a newspaper, and you expect me to plunge them into this crazy, imaginary anthology!" I must admit that the risks of imprecision and confusion are greater when an instructor decides to use inventive modeling rather than established heuristic guidelines to teach invention. Nevertheless, the historical precedents of some of the best writers of English, who were masters at creative imitation, the theoretical advantages I have attempted to outline here, and the encouraging responses of American and Japanese students have convinced me that inventive modeling deserves an important place on our way to effective teaching.¹³

13. I would like to thank two of my colleagues, Victor Vitanza and Charles Kneupper, for introducing me to many established heuristic procedures and for reading and evaluating parts of an early draft of this essay. I would also like to thank William Andrews, University of Wisconsin, Madison, for suggesting titles of several experimental autobiographies.