PREFACE

I have stated in the Introduction the philosophical and pedagogical principles underlying this book, but its justification will have to be found in the usefulness and adaptability of the method of composing that it sets forth. I want here to state my intentions and to acknowledge those who have helped me realize them.

A professional, as distinct from an alternately personal and metaphysical, interest in the teaching of composition dates from 1964 when I gave three NDEA lectures to the Greater Philadelphia Council of Teachers of English. Several true believers walked out, as I remember, when I remarked in passing that linguistics had nothing to teach us about the composing process, but there was a generally favorable response to my arguments that an outline, like a blueprint, is appropriate to the final stages of composing, not to the beginnings; that reading and writing should be taught together; that critical and creative writing should not be isolated from one another; that students in both remedial and Advanced Placement sections need all the experience they can get in observing, recording, and observing again, since perception and concept formation are consonant as acts of mind; that what we need to learn to teach are the uses of chaos and the delights of form-finding and form-creating. Father Thomas Loughrey and Robert Boynton of the Council urged me to write a textbook incorporating these ideas. Ten years later I started on that project; it has been my good fortune to have Bob Boynton as my editor, encouraging and guiding my endeavor.

One of my chief concerns has been to write a book which teachers of literature could respect, yet which would not be devoted to "writing about literature." I wanted students to have the opportunity to read selections of good prose on important matters and to write experimentally about a wide

range of experiences, including the experience of reading and thinking. I have also hoped to write a book that could develop an awareness that language has social and political dimensions. I was thinking about this book during the days of campus protest against American action in Indochina, when I shared the hope of many that thoughtful, substantial changes in attitudes toward education could be institutionalized. They have not been, and one result is that illiteracy is by now a national crisis. I will be glad if this book can help forestall a return to drill; I am hopeful that it will encourage conceptions of "creativity" as something other than "nonlinear" and "nonverbal" solutions to "the communication problem."

Friends and colleagues have offered warnings and encouragement. Best of all, they have been willing to put theory and suggested practice to the test in their own classrooms. I have learned as much from their experiences as I have from my own. For their very helpful responses to "Assisted Invitations," a pilot project for this book, I want to thank Jonathan Bishop, T. Y. Booth, Joan Bridi, Gillian F. Brown, Florence S. DeVecchi, Brenda S. Engel, Robert Foulke, Elizabeth S. Harris, Jane P. Marx, Ruth M. Mathewson, Anne W. Mattill, Martha Orrick, Sherman Paul, U. T. Summers, R. C. Townsend, and Aileen Ward. I am grateful for the thoughtful criticism I've had from colleagues at the University of Massachusetts at Boston: Harriet Feinberg, Alan Helms, Susan Horton, Richard Lyons, Monica McAlpine, Louise Mendillo, Emily Meyer, Rosamond Rosenmeier, and George Slover. Several of my students from Advanced Composition were willing to read various sections from different perspectives and to put some of the assignments to work in their own tutoring and teaching. Kristin Bomegen, Art Morrill, Bill Morse, Jean Parsons, Rebecca Saunders, and Peter Zimmer have been especially helpful. And for help in emerging from chaos, I want to thank Ronnie Groff, Hélène Guidice, and Vic Schwarz at Hayden.

I am very grateful to Samuel Hynes, who invited me in 1965 to develop a course in experimental writing for upperclassmen at Swarthmore College. When James Broderick suggested several years later that I experiment with approaches to freshman composition at the newly established Boston Campus of the University of Massachusetts, I had the chance to discover how many of the problems in teaching

composition were "universal," no matter what the age or background of students. I am grateful to both for their support and encouragement and for their searching questions about some of the premises and conclusions of the book-in-progress.

Leo Marx, whose interest in the pedagogy of composition derives from an understanding that writing and thinking are profoundly related, has raised with patience and persistence the kinds of questions that guide and comfort so that one can find the strength to reexamine fundamental principles. And from Josephine Miles I have learned more than from anyone else about the relationship of a philosophy of language to ideas about teaching writing. The encouragement I have had from these extraordinary teachers has been important to me at all stages of composing.

Insofar as this book reflects my teaching experience, it has been nurtured chiefly by the late Carolyn A. Blackmer, who was mentor and guide in the first years of my classroom career, nearly thirty years ago. She taught me how to read Whitehead and Peirce and to trust the power of the human mind, despite a young teacher's inclination to believe that there was little evidence for its existence. Our daily trip home on the Boston and Maine (bringing back to North Station a carload each of lobsters and tired teachers) was a three-year seminar in forming, thinking, and writing. I like to think that she would have approved this attempt to encourage students to explore how it is that, as she used to say, *form finds form* and "to grow," as I. A. Richards has said, "in capacity, practical and intelligential" as a result. The book is dedicated to her memory.

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