

without speculating how it came to be, how the writer developed it from an inchoate notion to a finely worked expression. Conversely, while it is possible to teach writing apart from literature, it is surely foolhardy. For in both reading and writing we engage in discourse. Writing is bound to be enriched by the intellectual stimulation that often results from thoughtful consideration of literary works. As this is true of students' writing, so is it true of our own writing.

In the light of the humanism Vendler professes, it is galling that she would so readily create a lesser class among us. Because "we allow surgeons to operate and not to write," Vendler urges us to "allow teachers in colleges to teach and not write . . ." (p. 346). What is simply wrong-headed is her observation that "writing is a different profession from teaching, . . . from scholarly research and discovery, . . . from the profession of critical thinking" (p. 346). What, then, is writing? And what is teaching? Do they occur in vacuo? All current research into the nature of the writing process assumes that only in writing can we clarify our thought. And, indeed, haven't we been telling freshmen that for generations?

Leaving aside the traditional justification of scholarly research and writing as an ancillary to good teaching, I speak now as a teacher of freshman composition. The teacher of composition must necessarily teach discourse—reading, writing, and thinking as reciprocal activities. It is inconceivable that, without constant struggle to maintain control over our own writing, we could lead students to wrest meaning from a resistant medium.

Yes, pity the composition teacher who must struggle with ninety or more themes a week. But isn't it condescending to imply that such a burden should excuse this person from writing? To be sure, we may doubt whether any of us must publish an article in *PMLA* to be ranked at the top of the profession. If Vendler and the MLA are serious about restoring the connection between reading and writing, then some thought may be given to easing the crushing burden of freshman themes so that the writing teacher can engage in the most effective form of course preparation, namely, the act of writing itself.

ROGER J. BRESNAHAN  
*Michigan State University*

*Ms. Vendler replies:*

Roger Bresnahan has misunderstood my sentence urging that we "allow teachers in colleges to teach

and not write." I do not see in that sentence any creation of "a lesser class among us." Most college teachers do not publish; the class of those who teach and do not write is already by far the largest class among us. What I object to is the way the members of this valuable and earnest majority are made to feel inadequate because they have not published.

There is no necessary correlation between intelligence and competence, on the one hand, and the need or wish to write, on the other. "Only in writing can we clarify our thought," says Bresnahan. But many clear-thinking people, as we are all aware, do not write and feel no wish to write; they clarify their thoughts very well by reflection and utterance. We all know teachers of this excellent sort.

I did not imply that we should "excuse" teachers of Freshman English from writing because of their demanding work. Those who want to write will write—if it is a pleasure to them and something that their nature requires. That is true of all writers, even if their paid work is time-consuming and demanding.

But I wholly agree with Bresnahan that "the crushing burden of freshman themes" ought to be eased. The best way to ease it is to give up our exclusive emphasis, in Freshman English, on writing. Our freshmen should read a great deal, discuss their reading, and feel what it is to read and talk naturally about books, ideas, and feelings. Once they begin to hear the *written* language in their minds they can begin to write. Until they hear it, their writing will be pitiable.

HELEN VENDLER  
*Boston University*

### Conflicting Names

To the Editor:

In Carlos Feal's "Conflicting Names, Conflicting Laws: Zorrilla's *Don Juan Tenorio*" (*PMLA*, 96 [1981], 375–87) there is a striking statement contrasting Tirso's Don Juan, "man without a name," with Zorrilla's character, who "insistently affirms his name" (p. 378). Examination of Tirso's and Zorrilla's plays suggests that the contrast is overstated and that we may need to qualify Feal's conclusion that "the man without a name, through generations, paradoxically gives rise to one of the most imposing names in history" (p. 378). It would be more accurate to state that Tirso's title, *El burlador de Sevilla* (*The Trickster of Seville*), suggests his play's content better than the name would

have done. By the mid-nineteenth century the name alone included the myth.

Feal underemphasizes the needs imposed by rhyme and meter, the dramatic contexts, and the meanings of the word *nombre* 'name' and 'fame, reputation'—all relevant to the topic.

Several passages may be adduced from Tirso. Don Juan Tenorio pretends to be Duke Octavio as he "tricks" Duchess Isabela; thus his self-identification as "man without a name" accords with the desire to be anonymous (Tirso de Molina, *El burlador de Sevilla*, in *Comedias*, I, ed. Américo Castro [Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1967], Act I, l. 15). Almost immediately, when the King asks who he is, Don Juan answers that he is a man and a woman (I.24). He maintains anonymity; the King recognizes Don Juan's prudence with respect to the problem of honor. The Spanish words corresponding to "name" and "woman" may have been imposed partly for rhyme.

In the Tisbea episode Catalinón reveals his master's name (I.576–77). Shortly afterward Don Juan indicates his desire to be anonymous again so he can "trick" Tisbea, and he tells Catalinón that if Tisbea asks who Don Juan is Catalinón should say that he does not know (I.681–82). Don Juan lies to Ana, pretending that he is the Marquis (II.514–15).

When there is no desire for anonymity, Don Juan identifies himself: he tells his uncle that he is his uncle's nephew (I.54); he acknowledges to his father (II.379) and to Mota (II.549) that he is Don Juan. When he "tricks" Aminta, he varies the procedure, first stating that he is not her Batricio (III.203–04), then asking her to look at him slowly; she recognizes him. Later he states his family name in case any doubt remains (III.236–37).

In the Golden Age play, Don Juan Tenorio makes a "name" for himself as a "trickster." Catalinón refers, in an aside, to the great trickster of Spain; in Spanish the last word rhymes with the word that means "deceives" (II.236). Don Juan says that Seville calls him *burlador* 'trickster' (II.270), and when Catalinón refers to him again as trickster of Spain, Don Juan expresses satisfaction (II.444–45).

In an aside to the audience, Don Juan refers to himself as trickster of Seville (III.300). Here the suggestion is that knowing his name confers little knowledge of him in the role of trickster.

There are further instances. The King mentions Don Juan Tenorio (I.872; III.700). Fabio and Isabela refer to him by name (III.326–32), as does Tisbea (III.386). Don Juan says that he is a Tenorio (III.659), and Octavio refers to him by name (III.746). The notoriety of the man and the name are emphasized by Gaseno, Octavio, and Aminta

(III.790–96). Mota and Aminta both know him by name (III.1016; III.1010).

In *El burlador de Sevilla* both name and title are used. Part of Tirso's purpose is to associate the name with the type. Since the association became fixed through his efforts and those of his successors, Zorrilla could build on this foundation.

Zorrilla's figure also is "nameless" if the dramatic context requires. When Butarelli asks Ciutti the name of the masked figure (actually Don Juan), Ciutti responds that he does not know (*Don Juan Tenorio*, ed. Salvador García Castañeda [Barcelona: Labor, 1975], Pt. I, Act I, Sc. i, l. 30), and when Buttarelli asks the masked figure if he is Luis Mejía or Juan Tenorio, Don Juan replies ambiguously (I.I.II.96). Don Juan pretends to the Sculptor that he is acquainted with Don Juan (II.I.II.133–34, 140–41, 163, 166–68), revealing his identity only later (II.I.II.249).

Feal emphasizes a parallelism between Don Juan and Don Luis; Don Luis, indeed, makes similar use of his name. He, like Don Juan, "invokes his own name, which replaces the pronominal form" (p. 378). Stylistic and metrical reasons, rather than simply the affirmation of the myth-evocative name, may have dictated this choice. The first-person singular pronoun typically has one syllable instead of the two or more in the various designations given to Don Juan. This consideration is important for versification.

Feal's study vigorously illuminates the forest of Zorrilla's creative power. I hope that my attempt to examine some of the trees (or small details) that make up that forest may prove acceptable and may stimulate further analysis by Feal and others.

EDGAR C. KNOWLTON, JR.  
*University of Hawaii, Manoa*

*Mr. Feal replies:*

In contrasting Tirso's Don Juan, "a man without a name," with Zorrilla's Don Juan, who insistently affirms his name, I am referring to Don Juan's attitude toward women for purposes of seduction and to the image that Don Juan creates of himself. Therefore, the instances adduced by Knowlton in which Don Juan, in Tirso's play, declares his identity to other men (his uncle, his father, the Marquis de la Mota) or, in Zorrilla's play, conceals it from other men (such as Butarelli or the Sculptor) do not alter the contrast that I noted. Aminta is the only woman to whom Tirso's "trickster" reveals his identity, but the name revealed is Tenorio (a distinguished family), not Don Juan. That is, Don Juan avails himself of his social prestige to seduce Aminta, a