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Sommario/riassunto

"A critique of the postmodern pluralist faction in composition and rhetoric that has led these disciplines to value diverse student voices over the teaching of critical thinking and writing, this book explains why political literacy is necessary and how instructors may teach it"--
"In Political Literacy in Composition and Rhetoric: Defending Academic Discourse against Postmodern Pluralism, rhetoric and writing scholar Donald Lazere calls for the revival of National Council of Teachers of English resolutions in the 1970's for teaching the "critical reading, listening, viewing, and thinking skills necessary to enable students to cope with the persuasive techniques in political statements, advertising, entertainment, and news," and explores the reasons these goals have been eclipsed in composition studies over recent decades. A survey of obstacles to those goals begins with the emphasis in the profession on basic and first year writing at the expense of more advanced study in argumentative rhetoric, and on the privileging of students' personal writing over critical study of both academic and political discourse. Under the sway of postmodern-pluralist theory, the limitless multiplication of diverse "voices," "stories," "conversations," "contact zones," and local "discursive sites" has tended to destabilize or even denigrate any common ground of academic discourse and vocabulary, including that of basic critical citizenship. Lazere argues that theorists who legitimately validate students' multicultural home communities sometimes fail to recognize that liberal education presents a privileged space for students to grow beyond their home cultures and expand their horizons to awareness of national and international politics. He similarly argues that ingenuous educational pluralism often serves to dissipate the coherent progressive consciousness and political action needed to confront the increasing domination of American public discourse by corporate oligarchy, propaganda apparatuses, and distraction from politics through consumerism and entertainment. Moreover, the fixation in recent composition studies on liberally-inclined students and communities "on the margins" has eclipsed attention to the conservative conformity long prevalent in mainstream America. So the book explores means of challenging the conservative conditioning of students at middle-American colleges like those where Lazere has taught for many years. His proposals for curriculum and pedagogy beyond first-year-writing seek to introduce students to a more highly-informed, cogent, and open-ended level of debate between the political left and right. Addressing scholars and teachers of rhetoric and writing, Lazere issues an imperative call for a less pluralistic but more literate writing classroom"--