Part Six

MODERN AND
POSTMODERN RHETORIC

Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century, rhetoric appeared to be in decline. As an academic discipline, it no longer occupied a prominent place in the university. In Europe, some universities discarded it altogether as a relic of the outmoded classical curriculum, and in others it was absorbed into the study of classics. In England, where debate developed into a competitive sport, rhetoric nonetheless progressively lost its academic presence. In the United States, it was reduced to a few courses in writing and speaking that served the needs of a new curriculum dominated by modern languages and science. Specialization and departmentalization in the modern university dispersed the many traditional intellectual concerns of rhetoric to other disciplines such as psychology, linguistics, philosophy, and literary studies.

But in the course of the twentieth century rhetoric became, once again, a valuable interdisciplinary theory of language and meaning. Philosophers and literary critics rediscovered rhetoric—or reinvented it under some other rubric, such as "discourse" or "dialogism"—as a solution to problems raised by traditional theories of language and meaning. Rhetoric has been enriched by their efforts. It has grown to encompass a theory of language as a form of social behavior, of intention and interpretation as the determinants of meaning, of the way that knowledge is created by argument, and of the way that ideology and power are extended through language. In this same period, the history of rhetoric has been rediscovered and reimagined. Enlarged as a theoretical resource, rhetoric has also expanded its grasp of the ways that women, people of color, and cultural or ethnic minorities use language to gain a hearing for themselves. In short, rhetoric has become a comprehensive theory of language as effective discourse.

The themes of language and meaning, ethics and ideology, and argument and knowledge recur and overlap at each stage in the formulation of rhetorical theories during the twentieth century. The chronological stages outlined below are arbitrary conveniences that locate groups of ideas around the dates of major texts. But it is the interconnection of these ideas—not just their chronological succession—that best characterizes twentieth-century rhetoric.

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

By the end of the nineteenth century, college rhetoric in the United States had become freshman English, a one- or two-semester writing course focusing on technical skill in grammar and usage, paragraph coherence, and exercises in the modes of discourse—description, narration, exposition, and argumentation (as described in the introduction to Part Five). Invention, in the classical sense of discovering probabilistic arguments, was rarely studied, for it was believed that knowledge came from the sciences and from careful observation. The job of rhetoric was therefore to record and transmit this knowledge with a minimum of distortion.

Professors in the newly established English departments advanced their professional interests through the study of modern literature, far from the outdated tradition of rhetoric and what they regarded as the philistinism of technically oriented composition. Composition instructors—graduate students and junior faculty members of the English department, most of whom were eager to gain higher status and leave composition behind as soon as possible—were content to rely on the nineteenth-century approach now known as "current-traditional," which emphasized expository writing, the modes of discourse, and prescriptive grammar, usage, and style. Although some professors who urged a focus on public discourse and argumentation expressed opposition to the current-traditional approach, that method prevailed and, indeed, continued to be the predominant approach to composition through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century—and on some campuses much longer.

this view still fucking persists

In the first decades of the twentieth century, composition courses in some of the more elite colleges used creative writing, reflective essays, and autobiography as an alternative to the dominant model of expository writing. Students were to express their own meanings, to regard themselves as artists, and to be original in thought and style. Personal writing advocates drew some support from the new field of psychoanalysis—self-expression seemed to be therapeutic, not merely self-indulgent—and, later, from the student-centered pedagogy associated with the Progressive movement in education during the 1920s and 1930s. The concerns of the Progressives merged with the modern (perhaps now we would say *modernist*) development of the social sciences in the communication movement of the succeeding decades. *Communication* was a way of thinking about language and rhetoric as a means or a "technology" for sharing experiences in a social setting. Thus communication theory drew on psychology, sociology, and even anthropology, while incorporating insights from information theory and semantics. This movement, although short-lived in most colleges and schools, was an important precursor of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language that would become prominent later in the century.

For the most part, however, the technical concerns that dominated the undergraduate curriculum during the first part of the twentieth century meant that expository writing and grammar suited the generally practical goals of most colleges and their students. The expressive writing course never seriously challenged the current-traditional model for dominance and soon became identified as a separate course in creative writing. A more lasting effect of the creative writing approach was the in-

troduction of literary study into the composition course, which was appropriate, argued English professors, because literature provided teachable content, something to write about other than oneself or arbitrarily chosen subjects in which the teacher was not an expert.

Interest in rhetoric as a historical and theoretical discipline revived in some English departments (most notably in the University of Chicago, home of the neo-Aristotelian movement) in the fifties and sixties. In addition to studies of medieval and Renaissance literature that acknowledged the importance of rhetoric in those periods, there appeared scholarly analyses of rhetorical history and theory by English professors such as Richard Weaver and Richard McKeon. Weaver and other scholars who took part in the rhetorical revival — for example, Edward P. J. Corbett (*Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 1965), Wayne Booth ("The Revival of Rhetoric," 1965), and James Kinneavy (*A Theory of Discourse*, 1971) — applied the lessons of the rhetorical tradition to composition, arguing that rhetoric was the true basis of the discipline for both pedagogy and research.

But in the 1960s and 1970s, self-expression rather than rhetoric once again appeared to be the chief alternative to the current-traditional model. Expressivism returned to the composition course as a response to political events, chiefly the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, and to the increase in college admissions that required new approaches to "basic" writing. Personal writing, the individual's search for an "authentic voice," was regarded as a form of opposition to the impersonal and oppressive Establishment: It was an assertion of personal freedom in the face of the corporate and political forces that urged conformity. For all the popularity of expressivism, the current-traditional approach continued to be the most widely used method of composition instruction during the sixties and seventies. Nonetheless, expressivism had the salutary effect of sparking renewed interest in composition theory by questioning the prevailing approach and by turning attention to the experience of the writer in the process of writing.

The process model of composing that emerged during the 1970s uses a psychological approach reminiscent of the communication theory movement — it observes writers at work and attempts to identify those activities that produce good writing. The process model has clear affinities with the traditional rhetorical model of invention, arrangement, and style. For example, the "heuristics" that operate in the "prewriting" stage of the writing process can be regarded as versions of invention and arrangement. But many advocates of the process theory emphasized "cognitive" processes and "scientific" methods of research, so that for most composition teachers, the relationship between their work and the rhetorical tradition remained rather tenuous.

As the discipline of composition became more vigorous and more independent of literary study, the links between composition and traditional rhetoric became stronger. The "academic discourse" theory of composition, for example, favors rhetorical analysis of the genres of academic writing. In doing so, this theory looks at conventions of address as well as at the persuasive intent of all forms of writing. Moreover, the difficult relationship between the English department and its writing program was extensively examined and its history analyzed as composition programs

it moved back toward rhetoric

sought greater respect. Another positive sign is that literary criticism has come to take a brighter view of rhetoric. Most important for the growing connection between composition and rhetoric, however, is the professionalization of composition: the development of graduate programs in the field and the increasing number of scholars who study rhetoric from the point of view of composition.

SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Departments of speech formed in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, breaking away from English departments, whose primary focus was literature. The curriculum of the new speech department was based on the public speaking course, which had been oddly neglected by most universities at a time when public lectures were eagerly attended and when popular political oratory was a powerful force. The speech course was, and continues to be, quite popular with students for whom the ability to speak confidently, both on the job and in community life, may be as important as the ability to write well.

In speech as in composition, the prevailing view of rhetoric since the beginning of the twentieth century has been instrumental or managerial: The purpose of rhetoric, in other words, is to convey knowledge clearly and efficiently. For this purpose, an Aristotelian approach proved entirely satisfactory. The basic course in public speaking continues to be dominated by the traditional categories of invention (or research), arrangement, style, memory (or practice), and delivery, and by the traditional forms of appeal to reason, emotion, and authority.

The basic speech course (like the composition course) focuses on a practice rather than an abstract body of knowledge, and so rhetorical theory is rarely a course topic. Instructors are more likely to be interested in pedagogical theory, focusing, for example, on the comparison between the so-called skill-oriented and function-oriented models of teaching speech communication. As long as departments of speech were devoted entirely to these basic undergraduate courses, as they were for the first quarter of the twentieth century, there was little cause to look into large theoretical questions.

In the twenties, however, speech departments sought to develop a graduate curriculum and a research agenda, and so they turned to the psychological and sociological study of speech (in the so-called Midwestern school) and to the history of rhetoric (in the so-called Cornell school). The Midwesterners sought to base the new discipline in science, discovering through behavioral psychology the springs of oral persuasion. Their speech curriculum included oral interpretation, drama, speech and diction, and speech pathology, to which they later added interpersonal, group, organizational and mass communication, public relations, and journalism. The Cornell group focused on rhetorical theory and oratory, including speech criticism (based, as the public speaking course was, on classical principles), and soon generated a plethora of historical studies of rhetoricians and orators.

For both composition and speech communication, however, the disciplinary gestation period that extended through much of the twentieth century delayed the de-

velopment of new theoretical perspectives or even the active assimilation of avant-garde positions in the philosophy of language that influenced scholars in more established fields. But in the fifties and thereafter, academic rhetoricians took more interest in theory, especially by converting the work of I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, and Stephen Toulmin into analytical methods. The social protest movements of the sixties affected speech and composition similarly, sparking internal criticism and an investigation of traditional assumptions. In both disciplines, the result has been a turn toward an ideological and epistemological analysis of rhetoric, alongside a more rigorously scientific approach to psychological and statistical studies of language behavior.

ACADEMIC RHETORIC IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a vestigial course requirement at the secondary level was all that remained of the study of rhetoric in French and other western European schools. Philosopher Chaim Perelman (p. 1372), educated in Belgium, recalls cramming for an exam on the names of tropes and then forgetting about rhetoric until years later, when he learned that rhetoric had once been considered the counterpart of dialectic. He felt then that he had "rediscovered a part of Aristotelian logic that had long been forgotten, or at any rate, ignored and despised."[1] His discovery is detailed in *The New Rhetoric,* which was largely responsible for a resurgence of interest in rhetoric on the Continent.

For most European language theorists, including Stephen Toulmin, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, rhetoric is a limited and moribund subject. Those who speak of it positively, like Perelman or I. A. Richards, speak in terms of its rediscovery and rehabilitation.

So, too, in the United States. In his 1950 book, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke (p. 1295) announces his aim to "rediscover rhetorical elements that had become obscured when rhetoric as a term fell into disuse, and other specialized disciplines such as esthetics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and sociology came to the fore (so that esthetics sought to outlaw rhetoric, while the other sciences we have mentioned took over, each in its own terms, the rich rhetorical elements that esthetics would ban)."[2] Burke sees rhetoric as the loser in a conflict with literature (or "esthetics"), with social science available for additional depredations. Burke's perception follows the history of rhetoric in American universities. But whereas literature was the chief opponent of rhetoric in America, linguistics and semantics opposed rhetoric in European intellectual life at the beginning of the century. Linguistics and semantics sought the "true" relationship between language and reality, a relationship that was not illuminated, or so it then seemed, by rhetoric. The story of rhetorical theory in the twentieth century is, to a considerable extent, the story of how the philosophy of language on the one hand and literary criticism on

you could turn to your interview with J. Lauer

[1] See p. 1390 in this book.
[2] See p. 1324 in this book.

the other moved to consolidate once again the richness of rhetoric as a theory of language in use.

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE VERSUS RHETORIC

In his excellent introduction to Jacques Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena,* Newton Garver notes that "the mediaeval trivium [grammar, logic, and rhetoric] is a much sounder approach to the study of language and gives a much more adequate framework for understanding the philosophy of language than its all too fashionable neglect might lead one to suppose."[3] Grammar, as Garver explains, concerns linguistic competence; logic is a matter of knowing what expressions are sensible or not; and rhetoric, released from bondage to tropes and figures, is "not a matter of pure form but has to do with the relation of language to the world (to life) through the relation of linguistic expressions to the specific circumstances in which their use makes sense."[4] Garver goes on to say, "In these traditional terms, the central issue of philosophy of language, the issue around which all other issues revolve and to which they all return and in terms of which we can surely see the relation of Derrida to other philosophers, is the issue about the relation of logic and rhetoric."[5] Derrida's project, Garver says, is to attack "the whole tradition in which language is conceived as founded on logic rather than on rhetoric."[6] Such an attack is necessary partly because, "unlike grammar and logic, rhetoric has not been refurbished by new ideas and new vigor but remains a weak and ancillary discipline about which few students of language have strong or clear ideas."[7]

[margin handwritten note: that's a real bummer]

Traditional language philosophy treats language as an imperfect expression of logic. Since philosophy is conducted in language and dependent on it, many branches of philosophy reflect on language, quite often in the effort to render it, or at least its philosophical manifestations, more nearly perfect. Thus in metaphysics a persistent concern has been to determine the relationship between real things and the linguistic expressions that (presumably) name them. Epistemology faces the same problem with respect to the relationship between our ability to know something and the way we express or describe it. Logic itself has a similar concern with language and its perfectibility, for logic seeks to analyze the truth values of statements based on inferential reasoning. In its more recent history, too, philosophy has been shifting to a more language-oriented analysis of concepts. Instead of seeking phenomena that correspond to concepts (morality, justice, and causality, for example) or of positing the ideal existence of concepts, philosophers are now more likely to ask what it means to speak of a concept, to define the terms that identify concepts, and to be self-conscious about semantic problems that arise in dealing with concepts.

[margin handwritten note: the problem of access / cf. em to e correlationalism]

[3]Newton Garver, "Preface," in Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* (1967; trans. David Allison, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. ix.
[4]Garver, p. x.
[5]Garver, p. xi.
[6]Garver, p. xiii.
[7]Garver, p. xvii.

SEMANTICS AND SEMIOTICS

Semantics is the branch of philosophy that focuses on language itself, examining such issues as *meaning, synonymy, polysemy* (multiple meanings of single words), *ambiguity, literal* versus *figurative* expression, distinctions between types of meaning (such as *expressive* and *emotive*), and the relationship between the structure of language and the structure of reality. In the twentieth century, the most significant semantic theory is semiology or semiotics — the theory of signs and signification.

American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, who produced an influential theory of semiotics in the first years of the twentieth century, describes semiotics as heir to the trivium: Grammar, in semiotics, becomes the study of the conditions of meaning; logic becomes the study of the conditions of truth; and rhetoric becomes the study of the relations among signs. A sign (a word, for example) operates, Peirce says, by calling up an "interpretant" in the interpreter's mind. The interpretant is also a sign, but it is a mental one. Thus the operation of what Peirce called "semiosis" leads from one sign to another: The mental sign, not the communicative one, has a referent in the world. Meaning, in Peirce's scheme, is not identified with the interpretant nor even with the interpretant's reference, but rather with the effect of the proposition upon the interpreter. Thus defined, he called the study of meaning "pragmatism." Later philosophers referred to the elements of Peirce's trivium as "syntactics," "semantics," and "pragmatics," names given them by Peirce's chief interpreter, philosopher C. W. Morris. Later discussions of Peirce's theory generally ignore its connections to rhetoric and the medieval trivium.

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure developed, independently of Peirce, a similar theory of signs that he called semiology. For Saussure, the system of language (*langue*) makes possible and gives meaning to utterances (*parole*). *Langue* is a kind of social contract, the general grammar and lexicon that particular speakers must use to communicate successfully. Linguists study *langue*, which has two aspects, the diachronic (its history) and the synchronic (the system at a given moment). Saussure stresses that signs are arbitrary and without inherent meaning. Meaning, for Saussure, is a psychological phenomenon, a matter of the way that linguistic signs call up mental images. Meaning is not, therefore, the concern of the science of semiology: "To determine the exact place of semiology is the task of the psychologist."[8]

Peirce influenced mainly American philosophers, and Saussure Continental ones. The decisive influence on Anglo-American philosophy of language in this period, however, comes from Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Russell, at the beginning of the century, promoted "logical atomism," a method of reducing language to a form that would allow philosophers to determine how reality was constituted by making a linguistic analysis of propositional statements (assertions about reality). And Wittgenstein says, in the *Tractatus Logicophilosophicus* of 1922, that propositions are pictures or models of reality. The school of analytic philosophy that follows the work of Russell and Wittgenstein holds that much of philosophy is

Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), ed. C. Bally and A. Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 16.

meaningless because philosophers have misused ordinary language. From this premise, two conclusions have emerged. One conclusion, preferred by the so-called neopositivists, is that language is inherently confusing and illogical and should be purified, at least for philosophical purposes. The other conclusion, adopted by the "ordinary language" philosophers, is that use determines meaning. Wittgenstein in his later work takes this position, and speech-act theorist J. L. Austin is one of its most important defenders.

The recent history of language philosophy thus shows some tolerance for theories of meaning based on context and use, but its main tendency is a continued reluctance to move away from the search for a universal basis for language in universal grammar or in psychology if not in logic itself. Rhetoric has been, at best, a marginal concern for both Continental and Anglo-American philosophy.

It is against the background of these developments in the philosophy of language that I. A. Richards and Mikhail Bakhtin call for a reexamination of the meaning of meaning.

THE MEANING OF MEANING IN PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

I. A. Richards (1893–1979; p. 1270) and his collaborator, Cambridge philosopher C. K. Ogden, discuss the work of Peirce, Saussure, Russell, and Wittgenstein in their influential book, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923). Richards and Ogden illustrate Peirce's theory of signs with a communication triangle, in which the linguistic sign directly calls up the mental sign or reference and only indirectly stands for the extramental and extralinguistic "referent" out in the world of things or ideas. They also endorse Saussure's principle of the arbitrariness of signs. But Saussure sidesteps the problem of meaning, which is precisely the issue that concerns them. Signs, to be meaningful, require interpretation, and Richards and Ogden conclude that sign interpretation is conditioned by the situations in which the sign has been experienced. Meaning therefore inheres not in words themselves but in the remembered contexts in which they have appeared to the interpreter. Richards carried this analysis of meaning into literary criticism and eventually identified it with the essence of rhetoric.

In the twenties and thirties, the aesthetically oriented New Criticism arose in the United States, and Formalism, based on structural linguistics, developed in eastern Europe. Both of these approaches eschewed the previously popular historical and biographical approaches to literary scholarship, focusing instead on the aesthetic experience of the text and the attempt to describe the text's meaning, from which the reader's aesthetic experience was inseparable. The artful quality of literature was taken to be evidence that literary language was more emotive, suggestive, and powerful than ordinary language. This distinction was not new: Drawing on Wordsworth's idea that poetry is the expression of feeling, nineteenth-century philosopher John Stuart Mill had posited a scale in which expressive language (in the form of lyric poetry) was placed at the top and mere exposition at the bottom. The most expressive genres were the most literary, followed by the lesser, mixed genres, and finally the nonexpressive, purely descriptive genres. Literary language was complex and metaphoric, whereas ordinary language sought clarity in simplicity.

and we can hear echos of J. Locke here even now

Context and relations

I. A. Richards, in his role as founder of an influential variety of formalist criticism, also observes the literary-ordinary language distinction, but he argues that the ground of meaning for both literary language and ordinary language is the same: They are both sign systems. In his early literary-critical work, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), Richards says that poems must be treated like other sign systems that readers experience, as he had explained in *The Meaning of Meaning*: Previous experiences of language use — in this case, of reading poetry — determine how poems are understood.

But, like other formalists who claimed that the reader's psychological response was the basis of meaning, Richards did not intend to examine the actual experience of readers and then claim that those experiences constituted literary criticism. To the contrary, Richards analyzes the failure of readers to understand poems correctly. In *Practical Criticism* (1929), he uses psychology to explain how readers bring inappropriate associations to poems, thus distorting their meaning. Successful readings see the metaphoric resonances, the modulation of images, the tonal quality of word sounds, and so on. In other words, correct readings focus on the poem itself, not on the reader's feelings. In attending to the reader's experience as the basis of literary meaning, Richards shifts the role of psychology in criticism from the author to the reader. But for all his attention to psychological ideas and vocabulary, the result of his work is to cancel psychology and bring the text to the fore.

As for the rift between literary and ordinary language, Richards characterizes literary language as emotive rather than expressive (again shifting the focus from author to reader). In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936; p. 1281), Richards sets up a scale just like Mill's: At the lower end, meaning tends to "stay put," whereas at the upper end meaning shifts about and requires more careful interpretation. In moving from literary criticism to rhetoric, Richards hopes to expand his theory that meaning depends on the experienced contexts in which language has been used. Words do not have literal meanings that travel with them wherever they go, he says. A word (or any sign) takes its meaning from the context of remembered use in the past and of other words in whose company it appears at a given time. All language is subject to some degree of contextual meaning, but literature is the exemplary case, as his scale shows. Richards uses metaphor as the model for the "interinanimation of words" that determines meaning: The tenor and vehicle mutually limit and expand each other's range of meanings. Richards thus explains semiotic meaning by a literary principle that was there all along. Metaphor links literature, rhetoric, and semantics; it reveals the need for interpretation in context and allows Richards to limit "context" to the immediate verbal setting; and it retains the basic elements of the distinction between literary and ordinary language.

MEANING AND DIALOGISM

Like Richards and most students of language philosophy at the time, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975; p. 1206) was also powerfully influenced by Peirce and Saussure. Bakhtin, too, comes out of a formalist system of literary criticism that he finds faulty. He accepts the fundamental principle of semiotics: that language is a sign system, that the signs themselves are arbitrary, and that signs refer to other

[margin note, handwritten:] connections to what Lanham called formal dramas (and informal ones)

signs, not to extralinguistic entities. But Bakhtin rejects the conclusion, drawn by both Peirce and Saussure, that the meaning of discourse is to be found in the psychological processing of signs. In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, he maintains that language can be understood only as dialogue. Systems such as structural linguistics or literary stylistics fail to account for the parts that intention, interpretation, social context, and historical circumstance play in the creation of meaning. Bakhtin takes the view that "the logic of consciousness is the logic of ideological communication, of the semiotic interaction of a social group."[9] He applies this theory of language to literary criticism as well as to discourse in general.

Before *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Bakhtin had in fact already written a book on literary theory, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928). Here, Bakhtin rejects the distinction between literary and ordinary language and attacks the contemporary Russian Formalist school for maintaining that distinction. Russian Formalism drew upon Saussure's linguistics as a way to turn attention to the close analysis of literary texts. The Formalists, like the New Critics, rejected the source criticism, influence hunting, and biographical criticism that seemed to look everywhere but at the text. Instead, they sought to isolate the text by declaring literary language a "dialect" of ordinary language, and finally, as Fredric Jameson says, "a total linguistic system in its own right."[10] Poetic language is "heightened" and draws attention to itself, the theory goes, whereas practical language tries to be transparent. Thus poetic language changes the usual, rather automatic process by which ordinary language is understood, thereby shifting the reader's focus from the message to the medium.

Bakhtin opposes both of the Formalists' assumptions about meaning: first, that meaning in poetry is a function of the structure of poetic language and, second, that meaning is ultimately a matter of psychological effects. Moreover, in isolating the text from any context (at least in principle) and insulating it from practical speech, the Formalists make dialogue impossible, and dialogue is the real location of meaning for Bakhtin. In the literary criticism of his later books, he treats literature as one set of genres among a great many genres of discourse, all of which are to be studied as forms of social interaction. Not unlike Kenneth Burke, Bakhtin sees all forms of discourse as strategies for producing effects in particular situations. Literature is no exception.

Bakhtin does not draw explicitly on the rhetorical tradition, but he notes, in his essay "The Problem of Speech Genres" (1953; p. 1227), that genres are a useful category in both literature and rhetoric: "Rhetorical genres have been studied since antiquity (and not much has been added in subsequent epochs to classical theory)."[11] He suggests extending rhetorical analysis to every kind of speech, recognizing that genres are the means of adapting an utterance to a complex situation, a situation that includes a history of previous speech acts as well as an immediate context involving socially situated speakers.

[9] See p. 1213 in this book.
[10] Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 49.
[11] See p. 1227 in this book.

LITERATURE, LOGIC, RHETORIC, AND ETHICS

Aristotle's division between rhetoric and poetic usefully reveals the different purposes, effects, and methods of the two realms of discourse. Nonetheless, from Aristotle's time to our own, rhetoric and poetic have been closely linked. Both are concerned with ways of moving audiences by means of language. And even if, as many critics have argued, there is a distinction between the "contemplative" goal of literature and the "active" goal of rhetoric, literature frequently uses persuasion and argumentation. In terms of theory and criticism, rhetoric names the tropes used in poetry, and poetry provides the exemplary forms of the tropes for instruction in rhetoric. Narration is essential to both rhetoric and poetic. Rhetoric, in short, has often been identified with literature.

But for all these connections (and more that might be added to the list), the independence of rhetoric and poetic has been asserted and defended just as frequently as their interrelatedness. Literary critics have resisted (and many still resist) crossing the Aristotelian divide between rhetoric and poetic. At the end of the nineteenth century, after a long period when rhetoric and belles lettres (including literary criticism) were always identified with each other, critics once again asserted the contemplative-active distinction, arguing that poetry concerned only feelings, rhetoric only action (see the introduction to Part Five). Recall Mill's scale, in which expressive language is at the top and exposition at the bottom. When departments of English formed at the end of the nineteenth century, these kinds of distinctions contributed to the desire to dissociate rhetoric and literary studies. Rhetoric, as Burke reminds us, was thus supplanted by aesthetics and the social sciences.

and the philosophy of the bin did the rest (the spirit of specialization)

Burke takes a rather different and more radical approach to the relationship between rhetoric and literature when he declares in his first book, *Counter-Statement* (1919), that literature is unequivocally a form of persuasive discourse and is therefore governed by rhetoric. Though he occasionally distinguishes between art and use in discourse, hinting at the literary-ordinary language distinction, Burke consistently applies his rhetorical methods to an enormous range of written and oral examples, from philosophy to advertising to chats with the dentist. As he explains in *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives*, no form of discourse is exempt from motivation. Scientific and philosophical discourses attempt to describe systems of human motivation, and social discourses attempt to motivate. Thus it is the business of rhetoric to categorize and analyze these discourses. Motives, he says, are "distinctly linguistic products." Burke gives literature and philosophy special attention because of the long-standing presumption about their independence from motivation. Literature is "the adopting of various strategies for encompassing situations" by naming them—that is, an attempt to understand motives.[12]

motive

Unlike Richards's instantly popular method of close reading, Burke's rhetorical approach to criticism was not widely adopted. Still, his approach rattled many who wished to maintain the sharp division between rhetoric and poetic and stimulated

for many reasons, one being acknowledging rhetoric in the first place

[12]Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p 1.

those who saw the value of treating literature as a form of rhetoric. Wayne C. Booth (p. 1491) argues in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, for example, that all literature is discourse addressed to a reader. Critics should therefore examine the techniques by which the author persuades the reader to accept the fictional world and the author's ever-present judgments about it.[13] Following Booth's analysis, a great many critical works appeared that used the term *rhetoric* to describe techniques of all kinds in literature. A few works appeared, too, that explored the theoretical connection that Burke and Booth had put forward. For example, critic and rhetorician Walter J. Ong argues in his 1975 essay, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," that writers cannot address an actual audience, but rather project the kind of audience that will be receptive to their work. Reading thus involves a kind of negotiation between the actual reader and the role that the author projects for the ideal reader. For this reason, the reader has an active role in producing the meaning of the work.[14]

Some of the reader-response critics of the seventies, such as Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser, took a similar position but emphasized that readers must be "informed" or "educated" for their interpretations to be correct. Others, like Norman Holland, eschewed such judgments and sought to describe the many ways in which meaning emerges during the act of reading. This approach follows the road not taken by I. A. Richards, for it attempts to describe what happens to the reader psychologically without making a judgment about the correctness of the reader's interpretation. Reader-response critics generally regard their method as context-sensitive, though not as rhetorical. Still, this method and others that oppose strictly formalistic methods (notably Marxist criticism, which seeks to describe the historical and ideological context of literature) operate on the principle that literature is a form of rhetorical discourse whose interpretation depends on context and response as well as on the structure of the text.

Beginning from rhetoric rather than philosophy or criticism, Richard M. Weaver (1910–1963; p. 1348) develops a theory of meaning similar to those advanced by Richards and Burke. When Weaver argues that language is sermonic (the title of his influential 1963 essay), he means that all instances of language use are persuasive, rhetorical, and therefore imbued with ethical values. For Weaver, human utterances reflect a set of values and aim to move others to accept the image of the world in which those values apply (as in Burke's notion of identification). To speak or write is to perform a positive ethical action, and the value of rhetoric as a discipline, Weaver argues, comes from its goal of revealing the ethical bases of a given discourse. Weaver, a conscious Platonist, does not go so far as other theorists in linking rhetoric with logic or knowledge. He retains in his writing the category of *dialectic* as discourse that leads to knowledge of nature (though he warns that dialectic is not necessarily trustworthy for conveying knowledge in an ethical way). Nonetheless, Weaver shares the tendency of Burke and Richards to include all forms of discourse within the discipline of rhetoric.

[13]Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).
[14]Walter J. Ong, S.J. "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," *PMLA* 90 (January 1975): 9–21.

[Handwritten margin notes:]

part of the resistance is the implications, for judgement s canonization implicit in this assertion

"no bad books, only bad readers"

audiences an always active, and that activity can take many forms

we are never not doing it.

"nonetheless"

RHETORIC VERSUS LOGIC

It was in the context of Bertrand Russell's analytic philosophy, its distrust of language, and its reliance on logic that Stephen Toulmin (p. 1410) developed his theory of argument. When, in *The Uses of Argument* (1958), Toulmin asserted that formal logic should not be regarded as superior to probabilistic argument in establishing truth, his Cambridge friends felt that he had abandoned philosophy altogether. His graduate advisor, he says, "was deeply pained by the book, and barely spoke to me for twenty years."[15] Toulmin's goal is to extend the rigor of formal logic to arguments in realms of greater uncertainty, like law and morality, and even science. Though the standard methods of logic cannot be applied in these areas, he says, there is nonetheless a structure to their arguments that can be shown to apply across fields. An argument consists of a claim that is based on data, modified by certain qualifications and conditions. But the nature of the claims, data, and qualifications is a function of the context or field in which the argument is advanced, and the force of the argument is a question of its persuasiveness, not the perfection of the argument structure.

Apparently, Toulmin did not set out to critique the tradition of analytic philosophy or even to switch allegiances to the "ordinary language" school associated with Oxford University. Moreover, he scrupulously avoids mentioning rhetoric, the field in which his ideas have been most fruitfully applied. But in an important sense, his Cambridge colleagues are correct in their criticism: Toulmin shows that "truth" is a social phenomenon, dependent on the criteria developed by a community for determining what it will believe. In this he is closer than he might himself admit to forthright critics of traditional philosophy, such as Chaim Perelman and even Michel Foucault.

The philosophical project of Chaim Perelman is similar in many ways to Toulmin's. Perelman, a student of law and philosophy, wished to know how reasonable judgments can be reached in values and morals. Finding no account of this sort of reasoning in logic or any other area of philosophy, he and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca undertook, in *The New Rhetoric* (1958), to examine recorded examples of such judgments. While reviewing innumerable arguments from different fields, they made several discoveries. One was that there already was a discipline that studied and classified arguments—namely, rhetoric and its counterpart dialectic. Another was that because argumentation dealt with the probable, the plausible, and the uncertain, post-Cartesian philosophy had no interest in it. Where there was no proof, reason and rationality were presumably absent. Science, Perelman allows, may be within the realm of certainty, where arguments must be based on clear proof. But the vast field of human affairs depends on judgments that are not reducible to self-evident propositions, however much some systems of politics or religion may claim such a basis. Perelman's attack on the premise that there may be self-evident truths and his proposal of an informal logic based on argumentation constitute, as he notes, "a break with a concept of reason and reasoning . . . which has set its mark on

[15]Stephen Toulmin, "Logic and the Criticism of Arguments," in *The Rhetoric of Western Thought*, ed. J. Golden, G. Berquist, and W. Coleman, 4th ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1989), p. 375.

*nothing wrong with
a snake eating its
own tail*

*that's very
nice of him
(& her)*

Western philosophy for the last three centuries."[16] Finally, he concludes that knowledge itself is based upon argument, and that there is considerable ethical and ideological danger in the tendency of most arguments to claim that they rest on immutable truth. The goal of rhetoric, then, is to reveal that all discourse is rhetorical and that no claims are self-evident. Perelman felt that he was reviving rhetoric, recovering the notions of argument, persuasion, audience, and dialectic for the analysis of practical reasoning in human affairs. Indeed, his work stimulated a revival of the discipline in Europe and contributed to its growing respectability in the United States.

DISCOURSE, KNOWLEDGE, AND IDEOLOGY

In philosophy and the sciences, both social and natural, questions about knowledge and meaning have come to be bound inextricably to questions about language. Such questions are disturbing and by no means easily contemplated, let alone answered. Take, for example, the announcement by philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn that scientific knowledge advances through communal argument rather than by the discovery of new facts. Indeed, says Kuhn, the proponents of competing paradigms are like native speakers of different languages. Moving from one paradigm and one language to another is not, as naive histories of science suggest, merely accepting a new bit of data or acknowledging the correctness of a new theory; it is, rather, a strenuous process of cultural conversion. Language is not a clear medium for the exchange of information, but opaque, resistant, and imbued with cultural bias, even in the enlightened realm of science. Scientists cannot simply present new information or demonstrate new findings but must argue for new meanings and create a new community that shares them.[17] Far from being among the first to reveal the place of rhetoric in the construction of knowledge, Kuhn is among the latest. Yet Kuhn's thesis produced, in the words of the philosophers of science, a "crisis of rationality" in the scientific community.

*"density"
sophists*

Even this crisis of rationality is not so new, according to Michel Foucault (p. 1432), who traces it back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was then, he says, that words "rediscovered their ancient, enigmatic density," lost since the demise of the Sophists. First the "human sciences," as Foucault calls linguistics, economics, and psychology, and later the natural sciences, too, have had to deal with the complex relationship between language and knowledge, recognizing that language does not simply represent a preexisting reality or even one's thoughts. Foucault revives Nietzsche (see p. 1168) in arguing that truth, or what counts as truth, is determined by the discursive practices of a community.

Foucault, conversant in philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, and the history of science, is, along with Jacques Derrida, the champion of postmodern opposition to philosophy's quest for universals and absolutes. Foucault argues that knowledge is

[16]Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, tran John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 1.
[17]Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago University of Chicago Pre. ', 1970).

constituted by discourse. Particular statements are taken as true, he maintains, because of the elaborate relationships of communication and power among social institutions that use and control knowledge. Foucault examines disciplinary techniques for interpreting or expounding knowledge, the certification of certain speakers as authorities, and the ways in which certified methods and authorities mediate the needs and desires of communities. Discourse, in this view, is not the transparent conveyor of knowledge, not a free system of expression, and not at all independent of the interactions embodied in it.

nor from institutions

Like Foucault, Jacques Derrida (p. 1471) takes up Nietzsche's critique of the prevailing philosophical assumption that external reality is accessible to perception and that knowledge of the external world can be recorded and communicated in language. Derrida asserts that there is no extralinguistic knowledge at all. In this, he is close to Foucault. But he differs from Foucault in taking as his own philosophical project the critique of philosophy's attempt to accomplish the impossible task of making language transcend itself and be referential. Although Derrida takes language as the basis of his analysis of philosophy, he is not nearly as rhetorically minded as Newton Garver seems to suggest in the remarks quoted earlier. Derrida has no interest in communication, persuasion, or even the structure of discourse. He focuses on writing, as opposed to speech, as the exemplary form of language use, exemplary because it exists apart from the context of utterance or reception and thereby reveals, under the form of scrutiny Derrida calls "deconstruction," its distance from its apparent reference. Derrida's analysis supports the theory that rhetoric is epistemic, for it argues that knowledge is not a function of logic and that language is not a medium for knowledge; rather, knowledge is made by language, though for Derrida, the chief characteristic of knowledge may be that it is an elaborate self-deception.

Derrida's deconstructive method breaks down the traditional distinction between philosophy and literature by drawing on Nietzsche's observation that all language is metaphoric in operation. As deconstructionist critic Paul de Man puts it, "All philosophy is condemned, to the extent that it is dependent upon figuration, to be literary and, as the depository of this very problem, all literature is to some extent philosophical."[1] De Man raises "the very difficult question whether the entire semantic, semiological, and performative field of language can be said to be covered by tropological models, a question which can only be raised after the proliferating and disruptive power of figural language has been fully recognized."[19] In more general terms, de Man's question concerns the boundaries between traditionally distinct realms of discourse, between rhetoric and poetic or between literary and ordinary language.

maybe wouldn't use the word "condemned"

In a 1973 essay, "How Ordinary Is Ordinary Language?" literary critic Stanley Fish (p. 1605) documents the persistence of the idea that literary language is different from ordinary language. He argues that there is no such thing as ordinary language at all, if that means language that is transparent and in no need of contextual

"ordinary" is hardly ever a productive term

[1]Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 28.

[19]de Man, p. 28.

interpretation.[20] In his later work, Fish comes to rhetoric as the discipline that best addresses the issues of meaning and interpretation. In his essay "Rhetoric" (p. 1609), Fish situates his own understanding of epistemic language in relation to the same kind of history of twentieth-century thought that we have been examining here. Barbara Herrnstein Smith takes a position similar to Fish's in her excellent discussion—in *On the Margins of Discourse* (1978)—of the mostly false distinction between natural and poetic discourse.[21] Deconstructive criticism, inspired by the work of Derrida, also assumes that literary language is not different from ordinary language, for all language is fundamentally figurative and no language is referential. Deconstructive critics use this insight to collapse the distinction between philosophy and literature, and several (most notably Paul de Man, another devotee of Nietzsche) have identified rhetoric as the discipline responsible for analyzing the figurative nature and hence the epistemological function of language. But Derrida and the critics who follow him focus on the way that texts undermine their own apparent meaning. Rhetoric, in the work of these critics, thus tends to refer to tropes as symbols of an epistemological dilemma but not to the larger questions of discourse and its construction of knowledge.

In *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), Marxist literary critic Terry Eagleton argues that there is no such thing as literature, if by literature we mean a text that is linguistically different from "ordinary" texts. He concludes his clear and helpful survey of modern critical theories by calling for a new rhetorical criticism, for rhetoric, he says, takes the most comprehensive view of the operations of discourse: It is by definition opposed to critical formalism, for it seeks meaning in human interactions, in history and culture, and in ideology; it also regards discourse as a form of human action, as the construction of history and culture, and as ethical and ideological. Eagleton puts it this way:

> Rhetoric, which was the received form of critical analysis all the way from ancient society to the eighteenth century, examined the way discourses are constructed in order to achieve certain effects. It was not worried about whether its objects of enquiry were speaking or writing, poetry or philosophy, fiction or historiography; its horizon was nothing less than the field of discursive practices in society as a whole, and its particular interest lay in grasping such practices as forms of power and performance. . . . It saw speaking and writing not merely as textual objects, to be aesthetically contemplated or endlessly deconstructed but as forms of activity inseparable from the wider social relations between writers and readers, orators and audiences, and as largely unintelligible outside the social purposes and conditions in which they were embedded.[22]

this is pretty helpful

Eagleton speaks of rhetoric in the past tense while hoping that it will be the future of criticism, but the notes he strikes sound through the theories of rhetorical criti-

[20]Stanley Fish, "How Ordinary Is Ordinary Language?" in *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[21]Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature and Language* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)

[22]Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 205–06.

cism offered by Stanley Fish and Wayne C. Booth, and by those who look back to the prescient work of Kenneth Burke.

The forms of rhetorical analysis we have been examining seem to conclude that all forms of communication are rhetorical. Burke would certainly agree. He argues, for example, that Thomas Carlyle was quite right to analyze clothing as a symbol system. Clothes symbolize social distinctions. Clothing has meaning, and meaning is subject to interpretation. Mikhail Bakhtin, arguing that even natural phenomena take on ideological meaning, uses hunger as an example: Hunger is not simply a physiological fact, the same in all cases, but is interpreted by the hungry person in the context of a system of social meanings. French critic Roland Barthes, Canadian critic Marshall McLuhan, and others have pursued the rhetoric of nonlinguistic symbol systems, though chiefly under the rubric of semiotics. Historian of rhetoric George A. Kennedy contemplates animal communication as rhetorical.

For all its new-found theoretical reach, rhetoric still means the practice of effective speaking and effective writing; it still means teaching the strategies for effective discourse; and it still resides in the "public sphere," as German sociologist Jürgen Habermas and others put it. In the twentieth century, the public sphere has become dramatically more open to the rhetoric of women and minorities, whose practices, coming from struggles to get a hearing, have materially marked contemporary rhetoric.

RHETORICS OF GENDER, RACE, AND CULTURE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In sharp contrast to women in other periods of Western culture, many more twentieth-century women, both white and of color, are literate, and many more are educated beyond the elementary level. Women practice rhetoric in a wider variety of forms than ever before. In addition to the many private genres in which they have always participated, more and more women are speaking and writing for public forums. Women are lawyers, ministers, college professors, and politicians. Moreover, far more women are studying and teaching rhetorical practices than ever have in the past. Women scholars in the social sciences, speech communication, literature, and composition studies are analyzing written and spoken discourse of many kinds.

Women's theorizing about language in use is also taking new forms. As speech communication scholar Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has pointed out, women have always had to be particularly inventive in their uses of rhetoric — inventing not only the matter of their texts, but appropriate personae to deliver them.[23] In the past, women could be found reflecting on forms of rhetoric that might be used by both sexes, even if those forms were considered especially appropriate for women. For example, Aspasia (p. 56) discusses dialogue and Madeleine de Scudéry (p. 761) conversation as rhetorical genres. But perhaps the most frequent kind of reflection

[23]See Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Inventing Women: From Amaterasu to Virginia Woolf," *Women's Studies in Communication* 21.2 (fall 1998): 111 26.

but of course

* this is HUGE now in cont rhetoric
in the decade since this edition made has been in Sommkos this

private/public

on rhetoric that women produced before the modern period comprised arguments for allowing women to express themselves at all in speech or writing, or especially to practice rhetoric in public forums. Examples of such claims for a public voice can be found in the work of Margaret Fell (p. 748), Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (p. 780), Maria W. Stewart (p. 1031), and Sarah Grimké (p. 1045), among others. In general, these arguments claimed for women the use of the same rhetorical practices as were available to men. By the nineteenth century, however, a new kind of theorizing about women and rhetoric began to emerge. This was work that attempted to identify something uniquely female in language use, a sort of "women's rhetoric" that was clearly distinct from the mainstream rhetoric for men. Early attempts at such theorizing can be found, for example, in the defense of women's public Christian ministry mounted by Phoebe Palmer (p. 1085) and Frances Willard (p. 1114).

Work on women's rhetoric broadened and deepened in the twentieth century, so that it might now be possible to speak for the first time of a women's tradition in rhetoric. Discussing texts in which women argue for their right to speak, feminist historian Gerda Lerner has wryly noted the tendency of successive authors to construct arguments very similar to one another—for example, in criticizing pronouncements on women's public speaking by the Apostle Paul.[24] This has happened, Lerner says, because the women's texts did not stay in print; transmission was further attenuated because of women's uneven and uncertain access to education. But in the twentieth century, these conditions changed for the better. One of the first important theorists of women's rhetoric in the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf (p. 1246), emphasizes the importance for women to connect with the work of earlier women writers. Moreover, Woolf mounts a critique of the social conditions, oppressive to women, that have resulted in previous suppressions of women's writing. Appropriately enough, Woolf herself has come to be regarded as an important foremother of work on women's rhetoric later in the century. Subsequent writers have cited her and have also emulated her feminist stance against the social, political, and economic forces that discouraged women's writing.

Woolf's own writing style has also been taken as paradigmatic of women's ways of using language. For example, her essays do not proceed linearly to drive home points supporting a thesis, but rather accumulate support for her position gradually and indirectly. Her evidence may be taken from published authorities but is more likely to come from her own experience and reflections. Later women writers, including Adrienne Rich, who openly acknowledges her debt to Woolf, and Hélène Cixous (p. 1520), whose affinities with Woolf's work have been noted by a number of scholars, have worked to develop theories of women's language use that follow along these lines and clearly differentiate it from men's. Cixous calls her concept of women's writing, rooted in the ways women experience their bodies sexually, "écriture feminine." Rich has devoted her long career as a poet and essayist entirely to working out ways to use language to express the wide range of women's experience.

[24]Gerda Lerner, "Introduction," in *The Feminist Thought of Sarah Grimké*, ed. Gerda Lerner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 21–22.

As a lesbian and a Jew, Rich has also been alert to the implications of sexual preference and ethnicity for language use. As Rich has noted, Gloria Anzaldúa (p. 1582) has become an important theorist of the intersections between women's rhetoric, gay rhetoric, and rhetorics of color.[25] Composition scholar Andrea Lunsford has called this conjunction in Anzaldúa's work "mestiza rhetoric."[26] Anzaldúa's writing mixes not only her experiences as woman, lesbian, and Chicana, but also her varied linguistic resources; she boldly uses Spanish and Nahuatl along with English even when writing for primarily English-speaking audiences. Women of color have always labored under a double burden of racial and sexual oppression in their attempts to claim a public voice, as can be seen from the experience of early-nineteenth-century African American orator Maria W. Stewart. But women's increasing educational and professional opportunities in the twentieth century have allowed more varied voices to emerge. Their work raises powerful questions that challenge the Western rhetorical tradition's assumptions of cultural homogeneity among speakers or writers and audiences. Can communication and persuasion take place when such homogeneity does not exist? The theoretical work and the popular success of twentieth-century women rhetoricians suggest that it can.

[handwritten margin note: What are the conditions for communication]

The increasing numbers of men of color entering the professions of law, medicine, politics, and the academy provide further confirmation. Some of the most influential political leaders of the twentieth century have been African American men: Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Jesse Jackson. Following in the footsteps of important nineteenth-century African American intellectual and political leader Frederick Douglass (p. 1061), these men have adapted forms of rhetoric preferred by the dominant culture to pursue successful political activism for social justice. At the same time, they have felt more free than Douglass did to bring the great rhetorical resources of the African American community to bear in rhetorical forums that address the general public. As literary scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. (p. 1543) has shown, Black English and African American rhetoric have their own powerful tradition, and African American leaders have used it effectively even when communicating with people who are unfamiliar with it. Largely an oral tradition, at least before the twentieth century, African American rhetoric has not suffered from the transmission problems, noted above, that have hampered the development of women's rhetoric. It has been a vital force in the African American community for centuries and now enriches the broader American rhetorical scene.

[handwritten margin note: experimentation]

Black English has long been recognized, at least by linguists, as a dialect, a grammatically coherent language that is a form of English and not simply English rendered incorrectly (though the persistence of that prejudicial view was evident in the battles over teaching Ebonics). The linguistic description of Black English cites the African languages that combined with English to produce distinctive grammatical, syntactic, and lexical features. In addition, sociolinguists and folklorists have looked at the rhetorical character of black discourse to discover how it functions in

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[25]See Adrienne Rich, *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), p. 140 et passim.

[26]Andrea Lunsford, "Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric: Gloria Anzaldúa on Composition and Postcoloniality," *Journal of Advanced Composition* 18.1 (1998): 2.

behavior, social organization, and ideological relations with the dominant white culture. Rhetoric, in most such studies, has not been called upon as a comprehensive theory of discourse. Where rhetoric appears at all, it refers to tropes, which in turn refer to a number of distinctive black speech patterns and genres, such as "playing the dozens" and "signifying." Henry Louis Gates Jr., in *The Signifying Monkey* (p. 1551), analyzes the tropes of black discourse in terms of the epistemic notion of tropes developed by deconstructionist critics. Gates thus brings the analysis of a part of black discourse into line with a significant element of the language theory shared by literary criticism and rhetoric.

a double move

THE REACH OF RHETORIC

Twentieth-century theories of rhetoric, in formulating the relationships between language and knowledge and in reexamining the powers of discourse, have extended the concerns of rhetoric to include each and every instance of language use. Although some earlier rhetoricians, such as Isocrates, Vico, and Nietzsche, believed that rhetoric must be comprehensive and address all language acts, for centuries the scope of rhetoric was limited to overtly persuasive and deliberately stylized forms of discourse and to the speech and writing of those in power. Twentieth-century theories of rhetoric, in contrast, take the concerns of rhetoric to be nothing less than the foundations of knowledge and ideology in discourse.

and now moving into new materialist directions which involves things, the body, and affect

The movement of philosophy toward the problems of language and epistemology, of literary analysis toward a concern for the nature of textual and contextual interpretation, of the social sciences and even the natural sciences toward the realization that knowledge is a linguistically constructed and consensual arrangement—all point to the need for a comprehensive theory of language and knowledge, a theory of practical reasoning, of speech acts, of discursive formations, of persuasion and identification—in short, a theory that encompasses all the rich elements of rhetoric. Rhetoric at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not only a field of historical investigation, systematic analysis, pedagogical practice, political change, and theoretical speculation, but an intellectual project that extends beyond disciplinary boundaries.

disciplinary boundaries are a thread here

it must necessarily be so in the future

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