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ABSTRACT

Papers delivered at the 1973 and 1974 meetings of the Conference in Rhetorical Criticism are contained in this pamphlet. These papers are preceded by a list of student and faculty participants, a list of editor-critics, and a schedule of events for each of those two years. The 1973 address to the conference, entitled "Rhetorical Criticism as Criticism," by Walter R. Fisher, examines the different kinds of rhetorical criticism, discusses three implications of a normative view of criticism, and concludes that "rhetorical criticism is criticism, is criticism, is criticism...." The 1974 conference address by James J. Murphy, "Two Major Rhetorical Heretics: Plato and McLuhan," warns rhetors to be nervous and skeptical about rhetorical criticism and especially the rhetoric of Plato and McLuhan. Two commended papers of the conference are also included. "The Motivations of Racial Guilt in the Symbolic Actions of William Kunstler" by Alan L. Gillars searches for possible reasons why William Kunstler defends minority groups, and "Isocrates' Theory of Rhetoric" by Bob Gaines examines the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy in the works of Isocrates. (RB)

CONFERENCE IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Estelle C. Mannis, Editor

John Cambus, Deborah Brown, Assistant Editors

California State University, Hayward — 1973 - 1974

FOREWORD

This issue of *Conference in Rhetorical Criticism* is the first since 1972 and covers the Conferences of 1973 and 1974.

We are happy to note that Professor Walter R. Fisher's "Rhetorical Criticism as Criticism," the main address of the Conference of 1973, has appeared in *Western Speech,* in adapted form.

With equal happiness, we would anticipate a new and wider audience for Professor James J. Murphy's "Two Major Rhetorical Heretics: Plato and McLuhan," the brilliant main address of the 1974 Conference.

1973
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1974

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1973
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

9:00 Briefing – Robinson Hall

9:30 Critic's Silent Review of Papers in Sections

9:30 "Entertainment in Rhetoric"

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Presentation of Papers in Sections
Presentation
Comments of Editor-Critics
Decision for Commendation and Publication

3:10 Visit with Professor Fisher, Conference Room

4:00 Reading to Entire Conference of Commended Papers

6:00 No-host Cocktail Hour at the Blue Dolphin, San Leandro Marina

7:30 Dinner

Master of Ceremonies: Professor Harold Barrett
Department of Speech and Drama
California State University, Hayward

Introducing the Speaker: Pat Paoli
Co-Director of the Conference

Speaker: Professor Walter R. Fisher
Department of Speech Communication
University of Southern California

"Rhetorical Criticism as Criticism"

1974

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1:00 Briefing – Robinson Hall 137

1:30 Presentation of Papers in Sections
- Presentation
- Comments of Editor-Critics
- Decision for Commendation

4:00 Reading to Entire Conference of Commended Papers

5:30 Cocktail Hour at Campus Ministry Center

7:00 Dinner at Campus Ministry Center

Master of Ceremonies:
John C. Hammerback, Chairman
Department of Speech and Drama
California State University, Hayward

Introducing the Speaker:
Professor Harold Barrett

Speaker: James J. Murphy, Professor
of Rhetoric and Associate Dean,
College of Letters and Science
University of California, Davis

"Two Major Rhetorical Heretics:
Plato and McLuhan"

Contents

RHETORICAL CRITICISM AS CRITICISM

Walter R. Fisher
University of Southern California

Someday in the near future you may be standing where I am tonight. When your invitation comes to make this presentation, I wonder if you will experience what I did. At first, I only felt the honor of being considered, of being included in the list of former speakers on this occasion. It is a very distinguished list, including such names as Harry Caplan, E.L. Hunt, Bower Aly, and Kenneth Hance. My second emotion was pleasure. I was pleased to receive the invitation because I have admired the conference since its inception in 1966. Its concept, its administration, and its results are a tribute to the faculty and students of California State University, Hayward, and an important contribution to the field of speech communication education.

As I began to contemplate my remarks for this presentation, my sense of honor and pleasure almost evaporated and in their place a degree of dejection and consternation arose. After all, I had always thought of the speakers who have preceded me as "grand old men" of the field. While I don't mind being considered "grand," I have not accustomed myself to being "old." The reason for the consternation was the prospect of addressing critics and students of criticism on the subject of criticism. It would be difficult to imagine a more challenging task to inform experts and do it expertly. Just remember, you can't expect much from an old man.

Perhaps when you are called upon to make this address, you will not go through the experience that I have described. However, I think you will agree with me — even now — that the Rhetorical Criticism Conference is eminently worthwhile and the generosity and hospitality of our hosts are unsurpassed. I am — as I am sure you are — happy to be here.

The letter that I received from Professor Barrett said that he and his colleagues "would like a sample" of my "current thinking on any significant aspect of the discipline, whether in theory, criticism, or history." As you know, I have decided to offer a sample of my thinking about criticism; it will be a sample of my seminar kind of thinking, the kind that is dialectical and intended to stir controversy, re-examination, and perhaps reformulation of thought. More specifically, my remarks may be taken as an antithesis statement on criticism to the one made by the Committee on Rhetorical Criticism at the National Conference on Rhetoric. The curious statement was this: "We are arguing that any critic, regardless of the subject of his inquiry, becomes a rhetorical critic when his work centers on suasory potential or persuasive effects, their source, nature, operation, and consequences."[1] My thesis or antithesis is that this statement ignores the essence of criticism, which I will take to be — a qualitative judgment. In other words, not all writing about the source, nature, operation, or effects of rhetorical transactions is criticism.

In pursuit of my point, I would like to tell you a story, which reveals the inherently normative nature of criticism, relate this normative conception of criticism to rhetorical criticism, and then sketch several implications of a normative view of rhetorical criticism to its relationships with theory, science, and art. The story is true. It happened at the 1966 Western Speech Association Convention, which was held at the Disneyland Hotel. After the last session on the last day, several of my colleagues and I went up to the top room to enjoy a light libation before hitting the exhaust fumed trail home. Just before we left, the film and television star Forrest Tucker went down in the elevator that we were to use. There was a young man running the elevator who was, accompanied by two teenage girls. One of the girls was quite impressed with Forrest Tucker, especially his trousers, She kept repeating: "His trousers are too baggy." I latched on to this statement and the more I thought about it, the more I became intrigued with it. I finally concluded that it is a paradigm of all critical statements. Like all other critical statements, it expresses an intellectual-intuitive perception of the degree to which a given object measures up to or conforms with a model of excellence. This particular statement may not express a well informed judgment and one may disagree with its implicit standard of excellence, however, it does reveal the essence of criticism — that essence consists in the comparison of an object or act with an implicit or explicit set of norms.

Before going on to rhetorical criticism, I think it would be useful to recognize some of the differences between unsophisticated and sophisticated critical statements, the differences that distinguish inartistic from artistic critical statements. Everyone engages in critical acts; few elevate them into an art form. The principal difference between the ordinary criticizer and the critic is knowledge. The criticizer says, "I don't like it but I don't know why"; the critic says, "I don't like it and I can tell you why." The critic possesses special, comprehensive knowledge of the nature and functions of the objects and acts that he examines. He has at his command a wide range of models to choose from, a fine sense of the appropriateness of given models in the evaluation of particular objects of criticism, and he has a capacity to make his models of comparison explicit; if necessary, and he can cite attractive, convincing reasons to justify his judgments. The critic is known for his expertise, "heightened appreciation;"[2] and extraordinary perceptiveness. In short, criticism becomes an art when the critic is informed, when he makes incisive, illuminating intellectual-intuitive observations, and when he creates engaging statements of his judgments about worthwhile and remarkable things.

From this perspective rhetorical criticism may be defined as an artistic expression composed of statements comparing an instance of symbol inducement with an implicit or explicit model of excellence. It says how and in what ways a rhetorical transaction fits, falls short of, or transcends other examples of its kind. The model used as the base of comparison may be derived from other real examples of its kind, from theories of rhetoric, from a new model created by the critic, or the critic may argue that the object he observes is a model by which other examples of its kind should or should not be evaluated. Whatever the base of comparison, rhetorical criticism is a "reason-giving" form of expression founded ultimately on an argument by analogy.

Given this view, it should be clear that the writings of biographers, historians, teachers, textbook authors, and theorists are not necessarily examples of criticism, however valuable their statements may be. Rhetorical criticism is not synonymous with biography, history, explanation, interpretation, philosophy, or theory-building discourse. Such writings may be a part of or add to the work of the critic, become a means to his end, but they should not be confused with it.

Because rhetorical criticism is a "reason-giving" kind of discourse, several scholars have classified it in the category of forensic communication. Rosenfield, for instance, states. "A valuable first step in grasping the logical structure underlying this conditional relation of reasons-and-verdict is to realize that criticism is an exercise in forensic reasoning."[3] Most recently, Karlyn Campbell has asserted: "For criticism, too, is rhetoric. Its impulse is epidiectic – to praise and blame, its method is forensic – reason-giving."[4] The position that I have taken – at least for this presentation – would imply that rhetorical criticism is not only epidiectic in function, but also in form. Epidiectic discourse is as much a reason-giving form of advocacy as forensic discourse. As Aristotle said. the epidiectic communicator aims at "proving" his subject "worthy of honor or the reverse . . . . ."[5] He also stated that "all men, in giving praise or blame, in urging us to accept or reject proposals for action, in accusing others or defending themselves, attempt not only to prove" their points "but also to show the good or the harm, the honour or disgrace, the justice or injustice, is great or small, either absolutely or relatively. . . ."[6] The natural province of criticism is praise and dispraise rather than guilt and innocence. And the functions of criticism are in line with those of epidiectic discourse: to educate men to excellence, celebrate it, and provide "wise counsel for the state."[7]

Being concerned with the "ought," the "should have been," the "could have been," the quality of rhetorical things, rhetorical criticism is always related to theory. This is the first implication to be drawn from the view of rhetorical criticism that I am developing. Whether one considers the most unsophisticated or the most sophisticated act of criticism, one can see that it is based on a theoretical conception of the nature, functions, and norms appropriate to the art it concerns or it leads to the possibility of such conceptions.

We can illustrate the point by analyzing criticism in the classroom, which is neither the most unsophisticated nor the most sophisticated example of criticism. The focus of classroom criticism is the student's response to assignments; the purpose of assignments is to proscribe an experience in which the student is supposed to behave according to a given model of speech performance, of effective and excellent speech communication behavior. The purpose of the criticism is to praise those aspects of the student's behavior that conform with the assignment model and dispraise aspects of the performance that fall short of it. Underlying the entire process is an effort to induce growth in the student's ability to think and act as a successful communicator – just as it is the purpose of the criticism conference to induce growth in the ability of students to think and act as critics, speech historians, or rhetorical theorists. The important thing to observe is that the assignment model is or should be designed on the basis of the soundest theory available, on the best philosophical, ethical, psychological, and aesthetic knowledge that the field has to offer. And, indeed, if a student should perform successfully by either violating the model or transcending it, the instructor should be moved to question the theory and pursue the matter by further investigation.

Another way to show that rhetorical criticism is interwined with theory is to consider exemplary examples of the art. A list of models of criticism would, I think, include Kenneth Burke's "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'," [8] Lawrence W. Rosenfield's "A Case Study in Speech Criticism: The Nixon-Truman Analog," [9] John Angus Campbell's "Darwin and *The Origin of Species:* The Rhetorical Ancestry of an Idea," [10] Ray Lynn Anderson's "The Rhetoric of the *Report from Iron Mountain,*" [11] Thomas O. Sloan's "A Rhetorical Analysis of John Donne's 'The Prohibition'," [12] and Edwin Black's "The Second Persona." [13] I do not have time to review these essays; however, it should be noted that each of them is not only grounded on a particular theoretical view of rhetorical transaction, each of them also contributes new insights into rhetorical process and is suggestive of theory modification. The end of rhetorical criticism is not theory-building, but it often does just that by recommending improved theoretical conceptions. This is not surprising, of course, since theory tends to follow rather than precede practice.

The second implication of a normative view of rhetorical criticism is that it is not a science, nor can it become one. Rhetorical criticism should be expressed precisely, systematically, and employ the most convincing forms of reasoning available to the case the critic is making. It may well employ concepts derived from behavioral constructs, quantitative research findings, and statistical analyses of data. But I would reassert what I have said elsewhere on this point.

> . . . if a scientific view of rhetoric presumes that all persuasive discourse should be viewed in the same way and that criticism should be subject to replication, rhetoric and criticism are both misconceived. Persuasion varies from time to time, place to place, and

according to the persuader's view of human nature. Criticism proceeds from assumptions about the nature of the art being examined and the nature and functioning of criticism. To arrive at the same conclusions as another critic, one must begin with his assumptions — not only of the nature and functions of the object being criticized but also his aesthetic and ethical criteria as well. Critics may use the same method to judge a rhetorical effort but quite logically arrived at different conclusions.[14]

In sum, rhetorical criticism is not scientific activity.

The third implication of a normative view of rhetorical criticism is, then, that rhetorical criticism is an art, a rhetorical art; in nature, form, and function. I do not mean to suggest that art and science are completely different activities. On the contrary, I would insist that they are alike in their most important phase; that is, in the creation of concepts that guide their work. The scientist J. Bronowski makes this point quite clearly in an essay on the logic of the mind. In discussing how a new axiom is developed in science, he says:

> It is a free play of the mind, an invention outside the logical processes. This is the central act of imagination in science, and it is in all respects like any similar act in literature. In this respect, science and literature are alike; in both of them, the mind decides to enrich the system as it stands by an addition which is made by an unmechanized act of free choice.[15]

However, once such free choices are made, the scientist is bound by well defined, rigorous rules of procedure, analysis, and inference, the artist is not bound by such rules; his work requires that he constantly be making free choices. And this is the difference between art and science and is the reason why criticism is an art.

Consider for a moment how we respond to a report of a quantitative study and how we receive a critical essay. Assuming that they both concern matters of consequence, we determine the worth of the statements by criteria indicated by their different natures as science and art. The report recommends itself by the extent to which it complies with the relevant rules, which not only prescribe the arrangement of materials, but also the style of expression. On the other hand, the critical essay tends to engage its audience not so much by the procedures it follows, not so much by the cogency of the sound arguments it may present, but through the auditors recognition of the validity of the judgment being expressed, the aptness of the comparison that is implied, the instructive nature of the analysis and evaluation, and the vivid and compelling image that the critic has created. Furthermore, the result of the scientific report is a set of descriptive conclusions; the result of the critical essay is a set of normative conclusions. If we dismiss or reject a scientific report, it will be because it was trivial or violated appropriate procedures. If we disagree with or dislike a critical essay, it will be because the critic did not select an object worthy of his or our time and attention, or he applied a mistaken model, not that his argument was necessarily unsound; it was just that the essay was uninteresting, uninformative, or inconsequential.

If you are negatively inclined toward the thesis I have developed, if you would rather uphold the notion that criticism is anything anyone who considers himself a critic may do, which is the apparent position of the committee on rhetorical criticism, I would ask that you contemplate these questions: (1) how can criticism be taught if it has no unique characteristics, if there is no precise way to define it, to delineate its functions and relationships to other kinds of writing? (2) how can a theory or philosophy of criticism be developed if it has no peculiar province? (3) how can methods or approaches to criticism be determined and evaluated?

I may already be too late, but I thought I would try to conclude these remarks before someone makes the classic critical statement: "His speech is too long." In closing I would like to congratulate all participants in the conference and thank you and our hosts for this kind reception. Finally, I would like to leave you with Gertrude Stein's immortal words: "Rhetorical criticism is criticism, is criticism, is criticism, is . . . "

NOTES

[1] "Report of the Committee on the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Prospect of Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 221, edited by Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black.

[2] Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "The Anatomy of Critical Discourse," *Speech Monographs*, XXV (March 1968), 51.

[3] Rosenfield, p. 55.

[4] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "'Conventional Wisdom - Traditional Form'. A Rejoiner," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, LVIII (December 1972), 454.

[5] *Rhetoric*, 1358[b] 28. Translation by Rhys Roberts (New York: The Modern Library, 1954).

[6] *Rhetoric*, 1359[a] 15ff. See also Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1969), pp. 51, 54.

[7] Cited in Marie H. Nichols, *Rhetoric and Criticism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 78. The quoted statement is from the Dionysus of Aristophanes.

[8] *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Revised ed., New York: Vintage Books, 1957), pp. 164 - 189.

[9] *Speech Monographs*, XXXV (November 1968), 435 - 450.

[10] *Speech Monographs*, XXXVII (March 1970), 1 - 14.

[11] *Speech Monographs*, XXXVII (November 1970), 219 - 231.

[12] *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XLVIII (February 1962), 38 - 45.

[13] *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, LVI (April 1970), 109 - 119.

[14] Walter R. Fisher, "Method in Rhetorical Criticism," *The Southern Speech Journal*, XXXV (Winter 1969), 105 - 106.

[15] "The Logic of the Mind," *The American Scholar*, XXXV (Spring 1966), 236.

TWO MAJOR RHETORICAL HERETICS: PLATO AND McLUHAN

James J. Murphy
Department of Rhetoric
University of California at Davis

In one of Shakespeare's plays, *Julius Caesar*, there is a famous scene on the streets of Rome, just after Caesar has been assassinated. An uneasy mob has gathered. Antony speaks to them, to quiet them:

> Antony. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him,
> the evil that men do lives after them, the
> good is oft interred with their bones.
> So let it be with Caesar.
>
> III. ii. 80 - 83

Now I see before me an uneasy mob of rhetorical critics, wondering why Plato is supposed to be a rhetorical heretic, and no doubt wondering why the sacred name of McLuhan is mentioned in the same title with Plato. Just as the Roman mob wondered about the intentions of Antony, you may be wondering about my intentions.

Actually I have come to Hayward to do three things: first, to tell you a story about a cat and a fox; second, to warn you about two very dangerous types of rhetorical heresy, with examples both old and new; and third – the most important – to try to make you nervous: to make you nervous about rhetoric, about rhetorical criticism, and about their dangers to you. To paraphrase the admonition which the U.S. Attorney has thoughtfully placed on each pack of your cigarettes: "Warning: continued use of rhetorical criticism may be injurious to your mental health."

> Or, to paraphrase Shakespeare's Antony.
> I come to warn the critics, not to praise them;
> The critiques that persons write live after them,
> The value-judgment is oft interred with their bones.
> So let it be with critics.

In other words, just as Antony rose before the mob of Rome, to justify the assassination of Caesar, I rise before you, the Hayward mob, to justify the assassination of your senses, to denigrate you after dinner. The outside world will little note nor long remember what we have eaten here tonight. But I hope that you can never forget these brave words of today.

Let me begin by telling you the story of the cat and the fox. It is attributed to a Greek story-teller by the name of Aesop who lived six centuries before Christ. Now, you may perhaps have thought that Aesop's fables are merely intended for children. But Roman rhetorical schools taught these stories for hundreds of years – Cicero studied this particular story around 100 B.C.; Quintilian explains their use, and we have at least one record of it being used in a rhetorical school as late as the seventh century of the Christian era. So it is much more than toddler's tale; listen to it as a sort of allegory of rhetoric. Ask yourself, as you hear it, what lessons it might have for you as a rhetor, or for you as a rhetorical critic?

There is an old fable, by the Greek writer Aesop, that may tell us something about the dangers of knowing too much about some things and too little about other things.

Aesop tells us that a cat and a fox were having an argument. They were standing on the brow of a small hill. The fox was telling the cat that he, the fox, knew a hundred ways to get away from the hounds whenever they started chasing him around. Why, he knew how to jump over little streams so he wouldn't leave any footprints, or any scent; he knew how to double back on his tracks to get the dogs running in the wrong direction, he knew how to jump from rock to rock without leaving a mark, he knew how – but the cat was getting pretty bored with the fox's list of a hundred ways, so the cat interrupted him. Well, the cat said, I only know one way to escape the hounds, but on the other hand he explained; it's a pretty good method.

Now just at that moment they both heard a loud barking at the bottom of the hill, and they looked down to see a whole pack of hounds charging up the hill at them. Suddenly, they both had a problem – what to do?

While the fox stood staring at the dogs scrambling toward him up the hill, he began to run over in his mind all the hundred ways he knew to get away. Number 16 – no, number 34 – no, maybe number 77. All of a sudden he realized he was alone. The cat was gone. He looked around. and just as the hounds swarmed all over the fox he looked up and saw the cat – up in a tree. The cat had had only one method, but it did work. The dogs tore the fox to pieces while the cat looked down from perch, safely in the tree.

That story is more than two thousand five hundred years old. But if you think about it for a moment, you can see that it still tells us something about human freedom. About the dangers of freedom of choice. About the dangers of not knowing how to make up your mind.

Two thousand years ago, this fable of Aesop was a regular classroom exercise in the Roman schools. The boys – and of course the Romans did not think it was worthwhile sending girls to school – had to write a composition or make a speech in class, either defending the fox's viewpoint, or the cat's viewpoint. We have copies of some of those ancient schoolroom exercises, so we can see what some of the boy's answers were.

Right away, of course, one bright lad asked the key question about the cat: suppose, he said, there wasn't any tree? And he pointed out that the fox's mistake was merely in being too slow, not making up his mind fast enough to get away. Another boy said, no, that wasn't the fox's problem, his problem was that he spent too much time bragging and not enough time running; this lad believed the fox was killed by excessive advertising. If he'd kept his mouth shut, and got his legs in gear, he'd have made it.

One of the schoolmasters' favorite questions was one we'd probably call a flashback. That is, go back to the time, in the story, before the dogs showed up. The master would ask the student this question: would you rather be the fox, at that point in time, or would you rather be the cat? Which one, in other words, had the better chance of succeeding in the real world.

Look at the alternatives. The cat had a nearly foolproof method, one that worked every time, every time he was near a tree. But he couldn't carry a tree around with him, could he? So there would just simply be some places a wise cat wouldn't wander. cats simply don't like wide open spaces. Even today, two thousand years later, we can see that cats like corners, fences, shady nooks. Cats have an extremely specialized major in the school of life safety.

But the fox, with a hundred ways to get to safety, has an almost infinite number of options open to him. The well-rounded fox, we could say, has had 180 quarter units of breadth requirements. The fox has an interdisciplinary major in infinity.

These Roman schoolboys did debate this question. Interestingly enough, one of those schoolboy compositions, written in La... in defense of the fox, survived into early Christian times with a rather unusual result. Somehow that schoolboy's theme got taken up, very seriously, as an actual treatise on animal husbandry. We don't know the schoolboy's name, but he became so enthused over working out for his class all the different ways the fox could escape, that he said he was sure the fox could even climb a tree like a cat, if he really put his mind to it. About the year 1180 A.D. an English poet used that idea in a poem called *The Owl and the Nightingale* as an example of how clever foxes could be – they could even climb trees. A number of very serious professors of English – not at Davis, of course – have committed dozens of footnotes trying to explain how an otherwise intelligent poet could say such a ridiculous thing about foxes. Most of them have not yet realized, for some reason, that the poet in the year 1180 was simply taking as scientific fact what was in reality merely some schoolboy's thousand year-old term paper. (The moral of this story, obviously, is that you should write your term papers on very good paper that will last a thousand years, because your term paper might shape the world of the future.)

But enough of this degression. Why was this such a good topic for schoolboys to debate? Precisely, because there is something to be said for each side. The question about the two animals provides acres and acres of human dilemmas.

Now, before we begin to analyze this little story of the cat and fox it might be wise to define some terms, like "rhetoric" or "criticism" or "heretic."

I take any rhetoric to be a coherent body of precepts (or advice) designed to transmit information to others for the preparation and delivery of future discourse. The key words here are. coherent body, precepts, transmission, and future discourse. Typically – and this was true in Ancient Greece just as it is in today's classrooms – a perceptive observer fastens on the successful speaker or writer of his own time, analyzes the process that seems to lead to success, and translates these analyses into direct precepts – bits of specific advice – that show how some future discourse can be successful. This whole process, then, has four steps. observation, analysis (the ancient Greek term was *kritikos,* "criticism"), codification, and finally transmission (usually through the medium of writing because of the lasting effect of that medium). In ot... words, observation, analysis or criticism, codification, transmission

The Hayward Conference in Rhetorical Criticism, then, is in the second of the four steps of formulating a rhetoric Your papers look to the identification of the good processes to be recommended to the future, or to the discovery of the faculty processes that are to be avoided in the future. You are judging the quality o... ...nstances of a major human activity, that of cor... ...ith other human beings. You may, each of you, ... a rhetoric – a coherent body of advice for the future use of your fellow communicators.

But a "heretic," a dictionary will tell you, is a person who willfully and persistently rejects an established belief, article of faith, or principle shared by others. Heresy consists either in purposeful deviation, or in mistaken deviation.

You will note at once that heresy can only be defined negatively – that is, it is defined only in terms of what it deviates away from. the medieval Albigensian heresy deviated from orthodox Catholic Christianity, the modern capitalist views communism as a deviation from the true economic faith. You have to have some established kind of a drummer before, as Thoreau puts it, you can choose to march to a "different" drummer.

The belief in the possibility of rhetoric, I allege to you, is so ingrained in Western civilization that to deny rhetoric is to be truly a heretic in the most culturally profound sense of that word. Rhetoric is possibly the oldest art in Western civilization. its first textbooks in Greece were written two hundred years before the first textbooks on logic, six hundred years before a theory of poetry, and eight hundred years before the first accepted textbook on grammar. If there is any one attitude that separates Western culture from Eastern and African cultures, it is precisely the belief that men can analyze the apparently bewildering variety of "things" in the world, and by analyzing them can understand, organize, and ultimately control them. This is so obvious a point that it does indeed need to be stressed. Rhetoric, the habit of distilling the experience of the past to be used in the future, is in the exact center of the mainstream of Western culture. A rhetorical heretic, I would say, is one who does not recognize this fact.

Those are some definitions. Let us now return to the hill, the hounds, the cat, and the fox.

The fox is blessed with *inventio,* Invention. He has a whole arsenal of possibilities. Or, to put it in terms of Monroe's Motivated Sequence, he can't shift gears fast enough to get out of his Need Step. He is Cicero perplexed, all talent, no expertise. A well-educated, well-rounded liberal arts major. Unemployable. Or, to put it in terms of the Hayward Rhetorical Criticism Conference, he is all analysis, all evaluation. He knows no way to get from thought to action. But he is no heretic – he believes in rhetoric, but it's all faith, no good works. He gets clobbered.

What about the cat? Well, it seems to me that the cat is the ultimate of sophists. He is so pragmatic it hurts. He's a rhetorical agnostic, that is, he doesn't see any reason to believe. He doesn't see any need for any kind of faith in an

inventional rhetoric. After all, why analyze good escape methods, why codify them, why transmit them to your boy and girl kittens when you have a single, foolproof method that always ell, nearly always – you need a tree to make it wo. n't carry a tree around with you all the time, of course, and you will notice, by mere observation, that cats to this day prefer fences, corners, dark places. Moral. if you want to be a one-method pragmatic sophist like the cat, you'll probably always be in a corner!) The cat can get away if there's a tree, but if there is no tree he's a hundred times worse off than the fox, because he has no alternative plan of action, actually, he has no freedom of choice. No freedom at all. Let's ask Plato and McLuhan to look at the cat and the fox. Plato (or Socrates), depending on whom you read, has either (1) a clear, consistent view on the subject of rhetoric, or (2) a confusing, inconsistent set of views. McLuhan, as is well known, has either a view, no view, or several views. McLuhan has commented, disparagingly, on Plato; Plato, alas has said precious little so far about McLuhan.

One view of Plato would have him saying something like this. there is of course no hill, consequently no hounds, and therefore no problem. Hence neither the cat nor the fox have any business trying to figure out a way to escape what can't possibly hurt them. (You will recall that Socrates steadfastly refused to use rhetoric to save his own life: see his *Apology*.) What unreal thing, after all, can hurt an immortal soul? Hence there is no need for a rhetoric.

Another view of Plato would run the scenario like this: the only possible rhetoric (as in the *Phaedrus*) involves knowing, in complete certainty and complete understanding, the "souls" of the hearers. Hence the cat and the fox need to know, intimately, the souls of the hounds. Once their souls are known, then the cat or the fox could figure out a way to handle the hounds. (One small hitch, by the way – no ancient rhetorician, including Aristo , Cicero, or Quintilian, ever described what to do when audiences were composed of simultaneously varying masses of heterogeneous individuals and the speaker could say only one thing at a time. That additional bit of rhetorical wisdom only began to appear about the year 600 in the Christian era, with Pope Gregory the Great writing about the problem of preaching one message to diverse hearers.) But in any case neither the cat nor the fox enter into any kind of audience analysis, do they. Plato's soul-analysis method would only have left them in the same fix as the fox – that is, only with some stray facts that were unusable, inapplicable, unrealistic, and impossible of achievement.

The plain fact of the matter, it seems to me, is that Plato doesn't really believe that a rhetoric, as we know it, is possible. Either there isn't any real world, hence no real hill and therefore no real hounds and thus no real problem; as Gertrude Stein once said of Oakland, "There is no there there;" if there is a hill and hounds and problem, the only solution is to turn into a virtually supernatural god-like creature who knows the souls of the hearers. Us humans just can't get there from here. Plato doesn't seem to believe in the possibility of observation, analysis, codification, and transmission. He is a rhetorical heretic. He wouldn't come to the Hayward Rhetorical Criticism Conference at all.

Marshall McLuhan is quite another gaggle of ganglia. Briefly, he says that human beings are constantly immersed in an imploding mosaic of data bits that come at us from all sides. Ever since Gutenburg and the advent of printing, man has been inventing new communicative technologies – especially, lately, the electronic ones like radio and television – that have accelerated this implosion enormously. The media, like other tools invented by man, are in the last analysis extensions of man himself. The problem as he sees it is that the sheer force and number of our modern media inputs just makes it impossible for us to handle them at all. His message to the cat and fox, on behalf of the hounds, simply, would be something like the message of that smiling man on the television commercial for Roi-Tan: "we're gonna getcha, we're gonna getcha," In other words, there's no way to get away. No way. Don't bother to jump in the tree, cat – there's a dozen channels of hounds up there waiting for you. And you, fox, so what if you know a hundred ways to get away? Can you outwit Walter Cronkite? There are ten thousand hounds, running twenty-four hours a day, and they're gonna getcha. They're even on cable channels.

McLuhan is a rhetorical heretic because he says the worst thing that can be said to a Western man or woman. That is, that there's no use trying. In *Understanding Media* he says it just that bluntly:

> . . . not even the most lucid understanding of the peculiar force of a medium can head off the ordinary "closure" of the senses that causes us to conform to the pattern of experience presented: (p. 329)

There is, therefore, no sense observing or analyzing or codifying, because there's nothing worth transmitting. There never was, is not now, nor ever can be, a rhetoric. You cannot help yourself, so it's obvious that you can't help anybody else. To paraphrase the inscription which Dante says is on the gate to Hell, "Abandon all rhetoric, ye who enter here."

Perhaps you don't view the world this way. Perhaps you think you've found a way to escape the hounds, even McLuhan's electronic hounds. Perhaps you just enjoy analyzing speeches, or like cogitating about how to tell a McKinley from a Kennedy. Perhaps you think that events like today's Hayward Rhetorical Criticism Conference are just good clean fun, worth an hour or two of lighthearted play at your typewriter, so you can make a nice trip and enjoy a nice dinner. Perhaps you've never thought much about what it means to be a rhetorical heretic.

But you may recall that I said I came here to Hayward to do three things: first, to tell you a story about a cat and a fox, and I've done that; second, to warn you about two dangerous types of rhetorical heresy, with examples old (Plato) and new (McLuhan), and I've done that. But the third thing was to try to make you nervous. I think you, and we all, should be nervous about rhetorical criticism.

. . . Despite what Plato seems to say, there is indeed a real world out there, with real hills and real hounds that can tear you to pieces. You're never going to get to know those hounds intimately, in the depths of their souls as Plato demands. But you've got to try, unless you climb trees very very well – and you can't always find a tree in the real world when you need one – and if you think like McLuhan that there's just no sense in trying, then you, like he, will end up a hopeless rhetorical heretic, convinced that surrender and disaster are natural things. The whole of Western Civilization is founded on the premise that men can analyze the environment, and then change it. Rhetoric is an integral feature of that civilization, because it analyzes communication, evaluates what is worth transmitting into the future, and thus always looks to make the future that much better than the past. If you believe that, then you have no right just to "play around" or "enjoy" rhetorical criticism – no, if you do believe it, then it ought to make you nervous as you wonder whether you are doing a good enough job to try to make the future better.

Now perhaps you do not believe. You are entitled, as a free man or woman, to be a rhetorical heretic too, like Plato, McLuhan, and the single-minded cat. But if that's your choice, let me remind you of one little thing that might make even you heretics nervous as you ponder the rhetorical implications of Aesop's little story of the cat, the fox, and the hounds – that is, that we all, after all, always get the hounds we deserve.

THE MOTIVATIONS OF RACIAL GUILT IN THE SYMBOLIC ACTIONS OF WILLIAM KUNSTLER

by
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In the past few decades a profound change has taken place in the interpretation of American history, particularly with regard to the role of ethnic minorities. The black community has been instrumental in this change by steadily escalating its demands for equal rights and a positive self image. The resulting reevaluation of history has made it clear that the raciest subjugation of non-whites is very much a part of the American tradition. A new consciousness, unknown to our forefathers, now confronts much of white society. Eldridge Cleaver perceptively describes this new conciousness. "What has suddenly happened is that the white race has lost its heroes. Worse, its heroes have been revealed as villains and its greatest heroes as the arch-villains."[1]

The reevaluation of American history has had varying impact across different segments of white society. For those whites made acutely aware of racism in American history, a potentially large source of guilt might be brought on by their identity as Caucasians.

If we view Caucasian identity as a potential source of guilt for some whites, then we can look for corresponding efforts to minimize guilt. That man seeks rhetorically to relieve guilt is attested to by Kenneth Burke. Burke believes that man continuously seeks "purification" because guilt is man's permanent condition,[2] and as Burkeian theorist William Reuckert points out, "if unrelieved, guilt fragments and corrodes the self."[3]

According to Burke, the way in which man seeks to remove guilt is through symbolic action or "strategies." Burke notes that critical and imaginative works are "not merely answers to a situation, they are strategic answers, stylized answers."[4] With this perspective in mind we can view some actions and rhetorical efforts of whites as symbolic attempts to minimize the guilt that stems from an awareness of American racism.

Through this conceptual framework, this paper will examine the actions of William Kunstler. Kunstler seems especially well suited for this analysis, not only because of his deep and long-standing involvement in the area of civil rights, but also because of his candid and introspective manner. In probing Kunstler's motivations, this paper does not seek to discount his contributions. Rather, the purpose is to offer a psychological interpretation of Kunstler's actions which may contain implications concerning the role of racial guilt in larger segments of white America. Because of his extreme dedication to black liberation, Kunstler cannot be considered typical of white Americans. However, to a lesser extent liberal and radical whites might be interpreted as using some similar strategies.

William Moses Kunstler is a white lawyer notorious for defending dissident clientele. His clients have included Martin Luther King and the Freedom Riders, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Malcolm X, the Chicago Seven, H. Rap Brown, the Black Panthers, black school districts in New York, and Adam Clayton Powell. Since 1961, Kunstler has associated himself with black liberation.

An incident which he observed in Jackson, Mississippi, is considered by Kunstler to represent a dramatic turning point in his life. He discusses this incident, the arrest of five Freedom Riders, in his book, *Deep in my Heart:* "The sight of five frightened young people who had traveled long and far in order to offer their bodies as witness to the equality of all men, quietly but forcefully taught me what I had never known before – that only by personal involvement can one justify his existence, either to himself or to his fellows."[5]

In 1964 Kunstler indicated in an article that his experiences in Mississippi the previous summer had left him with feelings of guilt over his prior lack of involvement. His concern for justifying his existence may stem from a reaction to this guilt. This is implied when he writes:

> The young men and women who offered their bodies as witness to the attainability of a just society shamed the American bar into standing beside them. For generations lawyers had looked aside while Negroes in the Deep South had been systematically dehumanized . . .
>
> The law did not change in Mississippi last summer, but the lawyers who journeyed there did. All of us, suddenly and starkly conscious that we had failed in one way or another to live up to the solemn responsibilities of our profession, were grateful for the chance to justify our existences.[6]

Kunstler's guilt feelings are not limited to his past failing of professional responsibilities. In making a personal assessment he reflected that guilt permeates the whole of white society: "I know now that all white men, including me, look upon black people with fear. It's a feeling of guilt."[7]

Other statements by Kunstler show that to some extent his guilt derives from feelings about his ethnic background. In an interview in 1970, he expressed an awareness of the relationship between past racism and his present day economic status: "I have a lot of good things in life. Yet I have an increasingly guilty feeling that my status in this world and my possessions probably came to me because other men lost their lives and liberty and were oppressed by the society that gave me these goodies."[8]

When viewed in connection with guilt feelings, Kunstler's devotion to his work may be seen as mortification. Mortification is spoken of by Burke as a means of achieving catharsis through self-punishment.[9] For Kunstler, work is an obsession. He has had from thirty to forty clients at one time in addition to numerous speaking engagements, meetings and interviews.[10] In 1970, it was reported that Kunstler gets up at dawn, puts in an eighteen-hour day and spends most of his free nights on the telephone and in meetings with clients.[11] Yet Kunstler does not accept any money for "movement cases."[12] Concerning his family life Kunstler notes that "I am an absentee father and husband, taking telephone calls all night long, operating my house like an office, running for airplanes constantly. You've got to be able to take it psychologically."[13]

Viewed as mortification, Kunstler's actions assume symbolic significance. His work becomes a symbolic act of cleansing aimed at relieving guilt. With Burke's conceptual model, the self-punishment represented by Kunstler's work serves to maintain a positive identity in much the same way as "neurotics who visit sufferings upon themselves in the name of very high-powered motives which, whatever their discomfiture, feed pride."[14] Kunstler demonstrates the psychological satisfaction gained by his work in expressing his gratitude to the "movement". "The movement has given my life heightened meaning and purpose. In return, I have put at its disposal all the energies I possess. I hope that the exchange is not too greatly in my favor."[15]

By identifying himself with the high motives of the movement, Kunstler thus allows himself a release from guilt anxiety. The "movement" is a term loosely applied by Kunstler in referring to a multitude of causes, including those of dissident whites as well as blacks. The motives that Kunstler attributes to the movement are obviously quite altruistic. In one article he writes that "the movement lawyer . . . is activated not by the promise of fame and fortune, but by the sharing of a common cause with those he represents."[16] In the same article he describes a racially biased judge and jury which he encountered, as being "only temporary barriers on a broad highway that led inevitably to the triumph of morality."[17] Another statement indicates that he perceives himself to be aligned with the forces of good against the forces of evil: "Good and evil are always at war . . . and the role of the good men is to fight against evil, hoping thay can hold the line and not go under."[18]

Kunstler's identification with such abstract and polarized concepts as "morality" and "good" allows him to, in a sense, "victimize" others for racial injustice.[19] With the guilt directed at those who are immoral and evil, he is provided a release from personal guilt.

It is interesting to note that Kunstler's identification with blacks apparently extends beyond the sharing of an ideological cause. Though his identity as a white man is obviously an inescapable fact, Kunstler displays a certain tendency to disassociate himself from the white community while seeking strong ties with black society. In a candid moment Kunstler once remarked, "I guess . . . that I would like to be black and have the education and profession I have, because black people have been involved in almost everything proud that has happened to me. But I'm no magician. I have to be Kunstler."[20]

Consider also that Kunstler, a Jew, has supported clients who were associated with the anti-Semitic portion of the black militancy movement.[21] At the same time he has indicated, "I only defend those whose goals I share . . . . I only defend those I love."[22] He further noted "I think I am much more hated than Bobby Seale . . . because I am an apostate. I am the white middle-class Jew who has turned on his class."[23] Also implying identification with blacks is Kunstler's attitude concerning money. Rap Brown's joke about the size of Kunstler's Victorian house touched a sore spot since "Kunstler thinks that poverty is more becoming than wealth,"[24] observed Charles McCarry.

Kunstler's identification with blacks may also serve an anxiety reducing function. By deemphasizing his own ethnic ties he can minimize his psychological accountability for the actions of other whites. In forming identifications with black society he sides himself with the oppressed against the oppressive dominant society, of which he is a member by birth. By altering his ethnic identifications then, Kunstler may further victimize other whites to relieve his own guilt feelings.

Kunstler's attitudes on violence clearly illustrate his rejection of the dominant society and also reflect his identification with black militants. Writing in 1966, Kunstler indicates a respect for the nonviolent philosophy followed by certain factions of the civil rights movement: "Without burning a building, firing a shot or looting a store, the Negroes of Mississippi have witnessed to their just belief that their grievances can be remedied through the orderly processes of the law. No country can ask more of its citizens."[25] While this statement does not show a rejection of traditional American values, Kunstler has more recently stated that "Dr. King's nonviolent campaign was basically contradictory, because it was only when violence did occur that he met with any success at all . . . Violence seems to be the only thing that we understand."[26]

A transition is apparent in the attitudes expressed in these statements. After black militants began turning away from nonviolent philosophy, Kunstler himself took on a more radical tone, stating in 1970, "If I were a black man living in the ghetto – particularly if I were a Black Panther – I would amass every bit of hardware I could get my hands on. For self defense."[27] Since the late 1960's Kunstler has been accused of inciting to riot and cited for contempt of court and conduct unbecoming a lawyer. After Attica he called Nelson Rockefeller a "murderer."

To a certain degree Kunstler has been allowed entry into the black world. While in recent years white radicals have frequently met hostility and suspicion from blacks, Kunstler is one of the few whites really accepted by a number of black militants. For example, at a "Remember Attica" rally in Harlem, 2,000 blacks and Puerto Ricans shouted down a black politician by chanting "Give us Kunstler! We want Kunstler!" Kunstler then rose to the microphone and raised a clenched fist as the crowd cheered.[28]

But while Kunstler has received greater acceptance from blacks than have other whites, he is, as a white man, unable to make full entry into black society. In responding to a question about his identifications with the black world, Kunstler seems to convey a sense of frustration at his inability to escape his ethnic identity completely:

> Oh, yes, I belong to the white world. And it's not only on the basis of skin color but also on the basis of my background. It's impossible for any white man to comprehend fully what it's like to live every day as a black man in this country – to comprehend the rage, the lack of fulfillment, the destruction of potential. Black men may think of some whites as friends but not as black men. I guess I want desperately to be part of that black world for many reasons – some of which are probably deeply psychological. I will continue increasingly to resist, personally and as a lawyer, much of what the white world represents and what it does – but as a white man.[29]

As this statement suggests, Kunstler is clearly aware of his identification with blacks. Other statements show that as a white man he is consciously affected by guilt. Kenneth Burke in devoting considerable attention to the function of guilt as a motivating force, provides a useful framework for analyzing the symbolic behavior of a person such as Kunstler. The difficulty in applying this analysis to other whites is that Kunstler is obviously not a typical white. Kunstler appears to be more affected by guilt, more conscious of it and certainly more expressive about it than most whites. An examination of the symbolic action of some whites might lead to similar interpretations, but these qualifications should be kept in mind.

[1] *Soul on Ice* (New York. McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968), pp. 68 - 70.

[2] Peter Martin Coyne, "Kenneth Burke and the Rhetorical Criticism of Public Address," Diss. University of Utah, 1971, p. 126.

[3] William H. Reuckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 46.

[4] *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (New York. Vintage Books, 1957), p. 3.

[5] *Deep in my Heart* (New York. William Morrow and Company, 1966), p. 36.

[6] "The Lawyer," *Nation*, 199 (December 28, 1964), p. 509.

[7] Charles McCarry, "A Few Soft Words for the Rabble-Rousers," *Esquire*, 72 (July 1969), p. 108.

[8] "Playboy Interview. William Kunstler," *Playboy*, (October 1970), p. 170.

[9] Coyne, p. 128.

[10] Thomas Moore, "William Kunstler for the Defense – of Himself," *Life*, 71 (October 1, 1971), p. 77.

[11] "Playboy Interview," p. 71.

[12] Carol Ruth Sternhell, "A Brief Encounter with a Lawyer Named Kunstler," *McCalls*, 98, no. 4 (January 1971), p. 102.

[13] Moore, p. 72.

[14] Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (New York Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 39.

[15] "The Lawyer," p. 509.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 508.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 508.

[18] Sternhell, p. 801.

[19] Mortification and victimage are the two symbolic general means of relieving guilt which are discussed by Burke. They are explained by Reuckert, p. 147, who notes that "to make others suffer for our sins is victimage; to make ourselves suffer for our sins is mortification."

[20] Sternhell, p. 801.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[22] Joseph W. Bishop, Jr., "Will Mr. Kunstler Please Step Down?" *Esquire*, 75 (April 1971), p. 116.

[23] Moore, p. 77.

[24] McCarry, p. 132.

[25] *Deep in my Heart*, pp. 352 - 353.

[26] "The Blackest White Man I Know," *Life*, 67 (July 25, 1969), p. 51.

[27] "Playboy Interview," p. 90.

[28] Moore, p. 77.

[29] "Playboy Interview," p. 90.

ISOCRATES' THEORY OF RHETORIC

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Isocrates, not unlike the sophists, was chiefly concerned with the inculcation of virtue in his students.[1] To this end he provided instruction in philosophy (φιλοσοφία), which he identified with training in rhetoric (*τὴν τῶν λογων παιδείαν*).[2] Such a relationship among these concepts illustrates the crucial role played by rhetoric in Isocrates' intellectual program, but it does not explain how or why rhetoric performed this function. For an answer to these two questions we must turn to Isocrates himself.

Because of Isocrates' desire to differentiate himself from sophist competitors, his official position was that virtue cannot be taught,[3] but this view did not preclude for him the possibility that with the proper guidance and motivation a man could become more virtuous.[4] In fact, Isocrates claims that those who desire to follow the precepts of his discipline may "be helped more speedily towards honesty of character than towards facility in oratory."[5] How Isocrates justified this doctrine becomes clear if we examine his theory of moral imitation. Because he believes the desire to speak well is motivated by a desire for honor, Isocrates maintains that the speaker will attempt to produce discourses "worthy of praise and honor"[6] and will necessarily choose noble themes and causes, supporting them with examples selected from actions "which are the most illustrious and edifying."[7] The rhetor, says Isocrates, "habituating himself to contemplate and appraise such examples will feel their influence not only in the preparation of a given discourse but in all the actions of his life."[8] For Isocrates, then, the way to virtue through rhetoric was indirect. The student, led by rhetorical objectives to consider examples of virtue, acquired it for himself and it was this theory of moral imitation that Isocrates utilized to hammer out the link between rhetoric and virtue.

Isocrates' practical reasons for disputing the sophists' claim that virtue can be taught were complemented by theoretical objections. He characterized the sophists as promising young men "that if they [the young men] associate with them [sophists], they [the young men] will know what things it is necessary to do and by means of this knowledge they will be happy."[9] Isocrates thought that fulfilling the promise would require knowledge of the future,[10] and since knowledge of indeterminate future events is impossible,[11] he argued that "it is not in the nature of man to attain a science [*ἐπιστήμη*] by the possession of which we can know positively what we should do or what we should say" (*ἣν ἔχοντες ἀεὶ εἰδείμεν ὅ τι πρακτέον ἢ λεκτέον ἐστὶν ἐστιν*).[12] Excluding, in this way, the possibility of knowledge in the realms of word and deed, Isocrates held "that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course."[13] Isocrates thus established conjecture or opinion as the criterion for right action, and it was toward the development of right opinion that his educational program was directed.[14]

Up to this point we have confined our attention to rhetoric as it served as the basis for Isocrates' intellectual program. We have seen first, how Isocrates supposed that the study of rhetoric could instill virtue in the student; second, why he believed this function could not be performed by direct ethical instruction, and third, through what intellectual means he proposed that men could conduct human affairs. The focus of our discussion will now be altered somewhat as we turn toward Isocrates' analysis of the art he conceived to be so powerful.

Isocrates' Rhetorical Art

The earliest statement of Isocrates' rhetorical theory came in *Against the Sophists*. In this speech he lays out the components of rhetoric and the requirements for the successful orator as follows.

> . . . I hold that to obtain a knowledge of the elements [*τῶν ἰδεῶν*] out of which we make and compose all discourses is not very difficult if anyone entrusts himself, not to those who make rash promises, but to those who have some knowledge of these things. But to choose from these elements those which should be employed for each subject [*ἃς δεῖ προελέσθαι*], to join them together [*μίξαι πρὸς ἀλλήλας*], to arrange them properly [*τάξαι κατὰ τρόπον*], and also not to miss what the occasion demands [*τῶν καιρῶν μὴ διαμαρτεῖν*] but appropriately [*πρεπόντως*] to adorn the whole speech with striking thoughts [*τοῖς ἐνθυμήμασι* and to clothe it in flowing and melodious phrase [*εὐρύθμως καὶ μουσικῶς εἰπεῖν*] – these things, I hold, require much study and are the task of a vigorous and imaginative mind: for this, the student must learn the different kinds of discourse and practice himself in their use.[15]

This passage expresses in somewhat truncated fashion nearly every major feature of Isocrates' rhetorical theory. Besides his educational trinity,[16] Isocrates refers to several important rhetorical considerations. (1) the selection of rhetorical elements, (2) the mixing and proper arrangement of those elements, (3) the adornment of the speech with striking thoughts as well as the use of rhythm and melody,[17] and (4) the criterion of propriety for the occasion. We note that the first three of these are roughly equivalent to invention, arrangement, and style respectively.[18] The last suggests a primitive rhetorical method. It is to these concepts and those implied by them that the rest of this discussion is devoted. Since Isocrates nowhere else mentions arrangement, the treatment will center upon his theory of invention and style and how these are related to his conception of occasion and persuasion.

Invention and Kairos Perhaps the most instructive introduction to Isocrates' theory of invention appears in *Letter 6* where he writes, "I am accustomed . . . to tell the students in my school of rhetoric [*φιλοσοφίαν*] that the first question to be considered is what is the object to be

accomplished by the discourse as a whole and by its parts? And when they have discovered this and the matter has been accurately determined, I say that we must seek the rhetorical elements [τὰς ἰδέας] whereby that which we have set out to do may be elaborated and fulfilled."[19] We might be led by this passage to ask: (1) where does the orator seek the rhetorical elements, (2) what is the nature of these elements, and (3) how does the orator select the elements whereby his object may be fulfilled? A partial answer to our first question we already have at our disposal, since in the passage from *Against the Sophists* quoted above, Isocrates insists that a knowledge of *all* these elements is not difficult to obtain provided that the student choose a knowledgable instructor.[20] In fact, as the first step in rhetorical education "teachers of philosophy impart all the forms of discourse in which the mind expresses itself" (τὰς ἰδέας ἁπάσας, αἷς ὁ λόγος τυγχάνει χρώμενος).[21] In this way we see that Isocrates' rhetorical elements are *known* by his students and are thus available whenever needed. The nature of these elements (ἰδέαι) has been in the past a matter open to dispute, but there is now general agreement about how Isocrates uses the term ἰδέαι in the contexts of interest to us here. It is clear in some instances that by ἰδέαι Isocrates means 'figures of speech,' but equally obvious is that in other cases we are to understand ἰδέαι as thought elements or ideas from which all discourses are constructed.[22] Once selected, these thought elements may be elaborated in various ways to suit the object of the discourse.[23]

We now arrive at the third of our questions, how does the orator select rhetorical elements which fulfill the requirements of his objective? Perhaps the answer to this query is most easily obtained by examining Isocrates' method of teaching this skill. Once the students have become acquainted with the rhetorical elements, their instructors "require them to combine in practice the particular things which they have learned, in order that they may grasp them more firmly and bring their theories into closer touch with the occasions for applying them."[24] Isocrates likens rhetorical instruction to gymnastic training in wrestling. Just as the student wrestler must first learn individual holds, the student orator must learn the elements of all discourses. Both become adept at their pursuit by learning to combine the building blocks of art in accordance with the demands of the situation. The wrestler, through practice, becomes capable of responding to any predicament with the most appropriate hold. Through similar practice in his own field the orator becomes adept at sizing up his rhetorical problem and responding with the most appropriate thoughts or elements of discourse. It is here that we begin to realize why Isocrates held that meeting the demands of the occasion (καιρός) was the fundamental requisite for artistic discourse.[25] The orator is constantly confronted with unique rhetorical situations. His artistic success in dealing with each situation depends upon how appropriately he selects the materials to be included within his discourse, i.e., whether he can invent a discourse that "fits" the occasion. Thus, Isocrates would respond to our question that the orator should be guided in his selection of elements for his discourse by the details of the rhetorical occasion itself. One matter, however, remains unclear. How is the orator to ascertain which elements are appropriate to which occasions? In response to this, Isocrates asserts that the successful orator acquires this capacity through application of his intellect and observation of the outcomes of previous discourses.[26] For Isocrates, then, invention is the selection of those thought elements which meet the rhetorical demands of the occasion. In this process the orator need only be equipped with a knowledge of the set of rhetorical elements and an opinion of propriety based on practice.

Style and Persuasion Isocrates' critical standards demanded not only that the treatment of the subject matter be original and fitting for the occasion, but also that it be expressed in the proper style.[27] He repeatedly praises speeches which are appropriately adorned with figures of speech and composed in rhythmic and melodious phrase (εὔρυθμος καὶ μουσική).[28] These requirements lead us immediately to ask, what reasons could Isocrates have had for establishing such criteria for *prose* composition? We find the answer in an examination of Isocrates' analysis of poetic style.

Early in the *Evagoras* Isocrates details the devices available to the poet.

> For to the poets is granted the use of many embellishments of language, . . , and they can treat of these subjects not only in conventional expressions, but in words now exotic, now newly coined, and now in figures of speech, neglecting none, but using every kind to embroider their poesy. . . . Besides, the poets compose all their works with metre and rhythm, . . , and these lend such charm that even though the poets may be deficient in style and thoughts yet by the very spell of their rhythm and harmony they bewitch their listeners.[29]

There are two striking features of this description. First, all of the devices which Isocrates attributes to poetic composition, he requires of good prose.[30] We remember that he instructs the speaker to adorn his discourse with figures as well as to speak rhythmically (εὐρύθμως) and while Isocrates does not demand that meter be strictly observed in prose, he does nevertheless prescribe that speeches be expressed melodiously (μουσικῶς), a term often used to describe lyric poetry. Second, Isocrates discloses a belief that the rhythm and harmony of a discourse lead the souls of the audience. Thus men are moved or persuaded by the poetic form of discourse. If Isocrates viewed persuasion in this way, it would be easy to see why he unconditionally required the use of poetic devices in prose composition. That, in fact, he did believe that persuasion was derived from the poetic form of discourse, we have both internal and external evidence.

In the whole of the Isocratean corpus, style (λέξις) is mentioned with relation to the effect it has on the audience in three instances. One of these, *Evagoras*, § 10, we have discussed above. The other two bear close scrutiny At *Antidosis*, § 47, Isocrates describes discourses which are "more akin to works composed in rhythm [ῥυθμῶν] and set to music [μυσικῆς]" than forensic speeches. These discourses "employ thoughts which are more lofty and more original, and . . . they use throughout figures of speech in greater number and of more striking character." About these discourses he continues, "All men take as much pleasure in listening to this kind of prose as in listening to poetry." Poetic style does not, however, function only to make the discourse more pleasant for the audience. At *To Philip*, § 27, Isocrates writes that rhythmic and elaborately adorned speeches (εὐρυθμίως καὶ ποικιλίας κεκοσμήκαμεν) are not only pleasant (ἡδίους), but at the same time *more convincing* (ἅμα καὶ πιστοτέρους). Thus, internal evidence strongly commends the hypothesis that Isocrates held that the poetic form of discourses made them persuasive. Such a belief might se m unusual were it not for the fact that Isocrates was a student of Gorgias, who defended a nearly identical position.[31] Gorgias' psychological theory produced the doctrine "that the psyche itself responds to the physical structure of the word or vision with emotional impulses which, if strong enough, result in a total *ekplexis* and a concret action of an unexpected nonrational type ."[32] Gorgias noted that these emotional impulses could be elicited in a controlled fashion by works of art and it was a small step from that point to the application of his theory to an art of speech which derived its ability to move the soul from the very sound of its poetic form.[33] External evidence, then, seems also to support our hypothesis, since if Gorgias held this view of persuasion, why would pupil not learn from teacher and produce a similar account at a later date?

Summary In the discussion above we have observed Isocrates' conception of rhetoric from two perspectives. First, we have briefly examined the role played by rhetoric in Isocrates' intellectual program. Isocrates viewed rhetoric as a means of inculcating virtue in his pupils, since the objectives of the art served to inspire its students to imitate the acts of virtuous men. He deemed such a learning process necessary because no discipline could impart knowledge of what a man should do or say. Having excluded the possibility for such knowledge, Isocrates set up opinion as the criterion for right action and established as his educational objective the development of sound opinion in his students. Second, we have considered Isocrates' theoretical analysis of rhetoric. His critical standards for the art demanded that the treatment of any subject be original, appropriate to the occasion, and embellished by figures, rhythm, and melody. Invention was, for him, the selection from among known rhetorical elements of those elements which most "fit" the situation. Such opportune use of the elements, he believed, could be learned only through practice. The proper style, as we saw, was important to him on practical as well as aesthetic grounds, since it was Isocrates' assertion that speeches composed in poetic form effected not only pleasure but also persuasion.

NOTES

[1]Harry M. Hubbell, *The Influence of Isocrates on Cicero, Dionysius and Aristides* (New Haven. Yale University Press, 1914), p. 14 and George Norlin, *Isocrates* I (Cambridge. Harvard University Press, 1964), p. xxv.

[2]See George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 177 - 178. The identification of philosophy with rhetoric is perhaps most transparent in *Letter 5 (To Alexander)* where τὴν παιδείαν τὴν περὶ τοὺς λόγους in § 4 must certainly refer to τῶν φιλοσοφιῶν in §3. Isocrates prefers the formulation τὴν τῶν λόγων παιδείαν at *Antidosis*, §§ 168, 180, 189, and 296. For a defense of Isocrates' use of φιλοσοφία see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia. The Ideals of Greek Culture* III (New York. Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 49. Stanley Wilcox ("Criticisms of Isocrates and His φιλοσοφία," *Proceedings and Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 74 [1943], p. 115) writes, however, "Probably *philosophia* originally described all higher studies whether or not taught in school, for all seemed paradoxical, but in Isocrates' time rhetoricians as composers of forensic and deliberative oratory were not called philosophers by anybody except themselves."

[3]*Against the Sophists*, 21, *Antidosis*, 274.

[4]Isocrates stresses the importance of guidance in *To Demonicus*, 3-4, *To Nicocles*, 12; and *Antidosis*, 209-214. Stanley Wilcox ("Isocrates' Fellow-Rhetoricians," *American Journal of Philology*, 66 [1945], p. 177, n. 23) takes *To Nicocles*, 12-13, to be Isocrates' statement that virtue can be taught. However, in view of Isocrates' theory of moral imitation and his theoretical objection to moral knowledge (both of which will be dealt with below), we need not necessarily ascribe to Isocrates the contradiction which arises from Wilcox' interpretation.

[5]*Against the Sophists*, 21. Unless otherwise specified, translated passages from Isocrates' works are from *Isocrates* I, II, Trans. George Norlin (Cambridge. Harvard University Press, 1954, 1956).

[6]*Antidosis*, 276.

[7]Ibid., 277.

[8]Ibid. Isocrates expresses similar beliefs at *To Demonicus*, 12 *To Nicocles*, 38; and *Panegyricus*, 159.

[9]*Against the Sophists*, 3. This is my own translation.

[10]Ibid., 8.

[11]Ibid., 1-2.

[12]*Antidosis*, 271. See also Norlin, *Isocrates* II, pp. 162-163, n. d and R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1952), p. 143.

[13]Ibid. 271. See also Norlin, *Isocrates* II, pp. 290-291, n. a and Jaeger, *Paideia* III, p. 64.

[14]Antidosis, 184, 271, 274-275.

[15]*Against the Sophists*, 16-17.

[16]R. Johnson ("Isocrates' Methods of Teaching," *American Journal of Philology*, 80 [1959], 25-36) posits that Isocrates learned the educational trinity from Protagoras.

[17]Isocrates' use of ἐνθυμήμα is sometimes unclear. In *Against the Sophists* (§ 16) he seems to mean 'figures of speech.' Likewise in *Evagoras*, Isocrates answers τοῖς εἴδεσιν (figures of speech) in §9 with τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων at the completion of the sentence in §10. In this case it is the force of the construction and not collocation that demands the rendering. Isocrates lends credence to this supposition later in *Evagoras* (§ 10) where he refers to the deficiencies of poets in two of their previously mentioned advantages, τῇ λέξει καὶ τοῖς ἐνθυμήμασιν, which can only mean the use of exotic words and figures of speech of §9. At *Antidosis*, § 47, however, Isocrates distinguishes ἰδέαι (here meaning figures of speech) from ἐνθυμήματα. At this point ἐνθύμημα seems to mean 'thought' and is apparently more related to invention than style. The word appears once more at *Panathenaicus*, § 2, but the context withstands either rendering. One plausible explanation for Isocrates' inconsistent use of ἐνθυμήμα is that he may have conceived of it as roughly synonymous with ἰδέα. He uses ἰδέα to refer not only to figures of speech at *Antidosis*, § 47, but also to elements or topics of speeches as in *Against the Sophists*, § 16. It is possible that Isocrates used both terms untechnically and nearly interchangebly. Cf. Harri Ll. Hudson-Williams, "Thucydides, Isocrates, and the Rhetorical Method of Composition," *Classical Quarterly*, 42 (1948), p. 78.

[18]That Isocrates was not unaware of the importance of delivery is emphasized in *To Philip*, 26.

[19]*Letter 6, To the Children of Jason*, 8.

[20]*Against the Sophists*, 16.

[21]*Antidosis*, 183.

[22]Hubbell, p. 7. See also Johnson, p. 28 and Harri Ll. Hudson-Williams, "Political Speeches in Athens," *Classical Quarterly*, 46 (1951), p. 73; "Thucydides, Isocrates, and the Rhetorical Method of Composition," p. 78.

[23]See Hubbell, p. 67.

[24]*Antidosis*, 184.

[25]*Against the Sophists*, 13: *Panegyricus*, 9; *Helen*, 11. See also Jaeger, *Paideia* III, p. 61; Daniel Gillis, "The Ethical Basis of Isocratean Rhetoric," *La Parola Del Passato*, 127 (1969), pp. 335-336.

[26]*Antidosis*, 184.

[27]Norlin (Isocrates II, p. 171) translates the first sentence of *Against the Sophists*, § 13, as follows: "But the greatest proof of the difference between these two arts is that oratory is good only if it has the qualities of fitness for the occasion, propriety of style, and originality of treatment, while in the case of letters there is no such need whatsoever." On this ground we could assert quite correctly that 'propriety of style' is a necessary condition for calling any oratory 'good.' Upon close examination of the text, however, some ambiguity arises about the firmness of such a doctrine. The selection of interest is: τοὺς μὲν γὰρ λόγους οὐχ οἱόντε καλῶς ἔχειν, ἢν μὴ τῶν καιρῶν καὶ τοῦ πρεπόντως καὶ τοῦ καιρῶς ἔχειν μετάσχωσιν . . . We note that the good speech must share in appropriateness, but there is no direct mention of style nor is the single collocation of πρεπόντως and figures of speech at *Against the Sophists*, § 16, sufficient evidence to hypothesize a technical formula, especially at a point in the text preceeding the collocation. For this reason the formulation of Isocrates' critical standards found above is somewhat more conservative than that usually found in conjunction with Norlin's rendering.

[28]See *Against the Sophists*, 16; *To Philip*, 27; *Antidosis*, 47; and *Panegyricus*, 9.

[29]*Evagoras*, 9-11.

[30]See Helen North, "The Use of Poetry in the Training of the Ancient Orator," *Traditio*, 8 (1952), p. 4, n. 18; and Kennedy, *The Art of Persuation in Greece*, p. 73.

[31]There is little room for any doubt that Isocrates studied under Gorgias. For a discussion see Jaeger, *Paideia* III, p. 48. See also Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, p. 174; Guthrie, *The Sophists*, p. 273; and J. F. Dobson, *The Greek Orators* (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1919), 127.

[32]Charles P. Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 66 (1962), pp. 107-108.

[33]Ibid., 127.