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ABSTRACT

Teachers of rhetorical criticism need not wait for critics to reach agreement on only one usage of "rhetoric" as a theoretical construct, but can use the various ways it is conceived as an educational resource. This document describes nine kinds of critics, each of whose sense of rhetoric can be useful in suggesting to students ways to unravel a text: intentionalists, social critics, critics such as Wayne Booth ("The Rhetoric of Fiction"), critics of imitative rhetoric, formalists, genre critics, implicit rhetorical theorists, idealists, and eclectics. These nine senses form a topical system intended to give students the minimum amount of background in critical method to stimulate the maximum appreciation of a text--its form, content, context, and communicative potential. Extensive footnotes are appended. (CC)

THE SENSES OF RHETORIC: A TOPICAL SYSTEM FOR RHETORICAL CRITICS OF NONORATORICAL FORMS

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In recent years, discussions of the relations between rhetorical criticism and the arts have taken on the tone of declarations of faith--or sometimes of declarations of war. I want to begin by disavowing any intention to preach or to fight this morning, and to assume the perspective of a curious onlooker.

I will talk as a teacher of rhetorical criticism, trying to show students how rhetoric can provide ways of understanding the working of a variety of texts: films, novels, autobiographies --in fact, virtually any symbolic action. In my experience, a student confronted with a text needs some guidance in knowing what questions to ask about it, and rhetoric provides a living system of thought (one that I find more productive than linguistics, structuralism, semiology, poetics, or logic) in getting at the symbolic form and the communicative potential of a text. But there are problems.

The major problem is in understanding that it is legitimate to apply rhetorical criticism to what may properly be considered poetic texts. The second stems from the variety of often inconsistent ways in which people calling themselves rhetorical critics approach texts.

RHETORIC VS. POETIC

I know that it is impossible to resolve the question of the two literatures, poetic and rhetoric, in a short paper, and there are other questions that I want to move on to. But I must, in passing, indicate how I think the problem can best be approached by rhetorical critics.[1]

To deny a rhetorical critic access to a poetic text it is usual to employ a metaphor of substance, natural act, or contract. For instance, it is argued that some texts are essentially, that is, substantially, poetic: we all know that an object cannot be both one substance and another, and we all know that two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Hence, the argument goes, if an object is poetic it cannot be rhetorical, and so rhetorical criticism would be out of place. But to make poetry and rhetoric into substances is a purely metaphorical act, and not a proper basis for prohibitions that seem to carry the force of natural law. Similarly, I believe it is mistaken to regard either poetic or rhetoric as "natural acts," which are pure and separate in the same way that reflexes and instincts are understood to be: determined as a matter of genetic programming. There are poetic theories which regard a poem as a natural effusion from the unconscious, and therefore, perhaps, a pure form. But rhetorical theorists have almost always held (as have most poetic theorists) that poems and speeches are things made by choice, rather than acts of nature. Finally, some who prohibit rhetorical criticism of poetic forms argue that a poem is, in effect, a contract with its terms implicit in its form: that a form composed as a poem demands that a critic with integrity treat it as a poem. I must admit that this argument strikes me as more forceful than the metaphors of natural substance or natural act, but I think that it imposes a constraint rather than a prohibition: the critic of a poem must keep in mind that the work is a poem, but he need not close his eyes to anything that will help him understand the workings of the text, and here the proof must emerge in the criticism itself. If rhetorical criticism can lead to the

discovery of forms, processes, and effects that might otherwise go unnoticed, then it has made its case. It is true that a clumsy rhetorical critic can trivialize a work of the imagination by treating it as a form of public discourse, and can diminish the experience of an image by reducing it to a linguistic puzzle. A rhetorical critic is likely to be attentive to a diversity of forms and methods, processes and experiences in a text and a critic will seek variety where a theorist might try to impose unity. And so where a philosopher or theorist will rightly try to describe the differences between rhetoric and poetic, the critic may, with Kenneth Burke, be "much more interested in bringing the full resources of Poetics and Rhetorica dooens to bear upon the study of a text that in trying to draw a strict line of demarcation between Rhetoric and Poetics."[2] The theorist and the critic have things to say to each other: one drawing towards logical consistency, the other facing and celebrating the inconsistency of actual cases.

THE SENSES OF RHETORIC

If we give priority to understanding the philosophical distinctions and relations between rhetoric and poetic, we will never get on with the business of examining texts. And so, I propose that we try to understand how the rhetorical tradition provides ways of understanding texts. I will describe my own experience.

I am currently teaching two courses, and part of a third, as the rhetorical criticism of nonoratorical forms. One is a seminar on "The Rhetoric of Narration," in which we look for theory to Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, and to Professor Corbett's anthology.[3] For examples we read and dissect novels and autobiography: Henry James' The Ambassadors,

Gide's The Counterfeiters, Thomas Mann's Felix Krull, Roth's Portnoy's Complaint, Ellison's Invisible Man, Upton Sinclair's The Jungle, and The Autobiography of Malcom X.

In another course, on "The Rhetoric of Film and Television," we consider from a rhetorical perspective the writings and films of Sergei Eisenstein, a selection of German films from The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari to Triumph of the Will, and a changing group of other films such as Wiseman's High School, Respais' Night and Fog, Renoir's Grand Illusion, Godard's Weekend, the Why We Fight series, and a sample of television from The Brady Bunch to Walter Cronkite.

In both of these courses, we devote most of our time to observation, description, analysis, and interpretation of cases, rather than to consideration of theory per se. The first principle of rhetorical criticism for us, is to make a close reading of the case at hand. But the close reading of a text, and a full appreciation of the text as a rhetorical enterprise, demands a perspective and a method. We conceive of rhetorical criticism as providing a way to make use of the best of formalist, contextual, and phenomenological approaches, to get at the method and the experience of a text. It enables us to ask of a given work:

1. What were the resources (and constraints) available to the author?
2. What could the work have meant for its audience?
3. What reading would an ideal audience make of the text?
4. How can a critic help an audience gain access to the communicative potential of a text?

The problem for my students is to know what questions to ask about the

text. We found that we needed a topical system to suggest questions a reader might bring to a text; the sort of thing Wilson and Arnold do for rhetorical invention in Public Speaking As a Liberal Art,[5] and that Arnold has suggested for critics of oral discourse in Criticism of Oral Rhetoric.[6]

Such a topical system exists in the works of self-described rhetorical critics of literature, film, and other media, but has nowhere been brought together as a system. Part of the reason that it has not been brought together is as I have already indicated the willingness of critical method to wait courteously until rhetorical theory solved, finally, the question of the boundaries of rhetoric and poetic. But the courteous pause now having lasted two and a half millennia, we can perhaps be excused for going about our business of pursuing critical method even in the absence of philosophical unity. And so let us look at critics who claim to be doing rhetorical criticism. We find at once that they are using the word "rhetoric" in different and sometimes conflicting ways. Now, if I were looking for philosophical unity that would be a problem, but I'm going to claim that for a teacher of rhetorical criticism those different usages of "rhetoric" as a theoretical construct are not a problem but a resource, a ready-made topical system suggesting a variety of ways to approach a text. In what follows, I will describe some of the senses of rhetoric that I have found most useful in suggesting to students how to unravel a text. That they overlap logically, or sometimes contradict each other, is not our immediate concern. We want to know, rather, what does this critic or group of critics mean by "rhetorical" and how does it aid in the reading of a text? You will note, by the way, that some critics use more than one of the following

senses, but for our present purposes that is not a problem.

1. The critic whom I shall call the intentionalist is interested in symbolic forms deliberately constructed as persuasion, argument, or propaganda, but which occur in forms other than straight public speaking or written argument. It is often helpful to have external evidence suggesting a persuasive intent, but, especially for students, the search for external evidence should not be allowed to interfere with close reading. Given internal evidence of persuasive intent, the critic typically wants to understand the shape of the text and its potential effect--the question of actual behavioral effects is frequently a blind alley for student critics. A prime example of a work suited to the intentionalist critic is Upton Sinclair's The Jungle--a work clearly designed as propaganda. But the most interesting questions for a critic of The Jungle do not stop with Sinclair's stated intentions or statistical evidence of audience response. Far more interesting, from a rhetorical point of view, is the question of the interaction of form and reader: Sinclair wanted to persuade, and relied upon the vividness of the novelistic form to popularize his argument. But the novelistic form also vitiated his argument, resulting in a work of curious power that misfired as propaganda and fails as a novel. Sinclair's intention got it all started, but the critic's attention must quickly shift to rhetorical resources and social and psychological contexts to make a reading of the text.

2. Our second critic is the social critic, interested in the effects of inadvertent persuasion; if the intentionalist critic takes in works obviously structured to persuade, the social critic takes in these and all other works which, regardless of intent, reflect and influence social and political norms. Roland Barthes, for instance, writes of the implicit

mythologies of popular culture: a recruting poster, a wrestling match, or a child's toy, and suggests that these ephemera perform political offices incidentally and inadvertently.[8] Insofar as he is a critic, as opposed to a scientist, the critic of social effects works by explication of the hypothetical or potential effects of a given text. The effects critic asks what values the artifact asks us to share. The premier case of this sort of criticism is in the emerging body of work which has tended to reveal the dynamics of racism and sexism inherent in our popular culture, but it also goes back to S. Karacauer's work with German film in From Caligari to Hitler.[9] In a more traditional vein, Keith W. Stavely argues that the style of Milton's prose tracts carries its own political side effects, apart from the content of the tracts.[10]

3. A close cousin of the effects critic, but deserving a separate category because of a difference in interests and methods is Wayne Booth, whose interest in The Rhetoric of Fiction is not in the broad social effects of a work but in the persuasion to a temporary state of thoughts and feelings needed to apprehend a work of art. Booth's concept of the implied author (and its necessary correlative, the implied audience), together with the critical method it entails in its examination of person, narrator, distance, and privilege, provide a way of talking sensibly about the way works of art become available to audiences--without having to subject such discussions to the charge of philistine disregard of the aesthetics of art.[11] Booth's contribution to the rhetorical analysis of fiction, though still under debate, is now widely accepted. But there is much to be done: so far as I know there has been no published attempt to explicate the film as a narrative using Booth's methods.[12]

4. Our next two senses of rhetoric both have to do with an interest in the study of rhetoric within the work. The first of these is the critic of imitative rhetoric: The rhetoric addressed by one character to another within a dramatic or narrative work. This sort of rhetoric is the dianoia and ethos of Aristotle's Poetics, and is a well-known and potentially valuable topic in any rhetorical critic's system. In addition to such traditional studies as Nicolas Gross' "Alcestis and the Rhetoric of Departure," and Mary Maher's "Internal Rhetorical Analysis and the Interpretation of Drama," there is other recent work looking for the patterns of communicative relationship in fiction and television commercials as models of interpersonal rhetoric.[13] Diane Kowalski's 1976 master's thesis is a convincing demonstration of the rhetorical roles parcelled out to men and women in selected television commercials, and Lynn Kelley is currently examining the rhetoric of men and women in a soap opera.[14]

5. The other major sense of rhetoric within the work is that which looks for rhetorical patterns and forms as elements in the structure of works not necessarily rhetorical in intention. It inquires into the inventional, dispositional, and stylistic resources available to and used by the author. A comprehensive work of this type is Sister Miriam Joseph's Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language.[15] This sort of criticism, essentially formal in its approach, goes beyond purely formal criticism to enlighten us about historical and biographical matters, since it tells us what was traditionally available as the compositional resources of an author, and gives an indication of the sort of equipment a contemporary audience could draw upon to understand a work. Hence, even a formalist rhetorical

critic is interested in a work as something made and understood in the context of its own time. This sort of rhetorical formalism can, it is true, produce some uninteresting catalogs, as in those ponderous revelations that, yes, indeed, such-and-such a speaker did use ethos, logos, and pathos. Once again, literary criticism is in advance of film criticism in its application of formalist rhetoric but that is partly because it would be difficult to show that any film maker worked from a system of composition as coherent and traditional as renaissance rhetoric. A critic could apply the system of rhetoric only post hoc: certainly no film director ever drew upon it as his major compositional scheme. A film critic's alternative is to find an analogous formal system in film theory--the rhetorical equivalent of Spottiswoode's Grammar of Film or Metz' Language of Film.

6. Our next critic, the genre critic, is interested in how a message constitutes a type, how that type creates resources and obligations for the author's invention, and how it also invokes a context that will influence an audience's anticipation of and response to the work. The theory of genres as the search for fixed and immutable types has had a long and fitful history, productive of many definitions, but doomed to failure. But a rhetorical approach to genre, centered on the notion of genre as contexts for composition and response, holds much promise. Kathleen Jamieson has demonstrated the usefulness of the concept of genre as a constraint upon rhetors: And in criticism of the arts, genre criticism can help to combat the fallacious notion of the work of art as singular and independent by noting that response to the work depends in part upon what sort of a work the audience takes it to be.

In film criticism, the generic approach has too often searched unprofitably for the final, fixed definition of, say, the western, or the documentary. A rhetorical critic would be more likely to speak of genre as a pattern of actions by artists and audiences, guided by conventions that can inform and enrich a single work that extends the genre, or that can diminish a work the response to which is simply a matter of habit. We can enjoy a well-made gangster movie like Public Enemy because we have learned how to watch it, and we can respond fully to Godard's Breathless only if we can draw upon habits of response to gangster movies that Godard invokes and then contradicts and transcends.

7. Another school of critics is interested in the author's "implicit rhetorical theory." In the presentation of his own communication, and in the depiction of the interaction of characters in a novel, film, or play, the author frequently employs, in passing, metaphors that refer to the process of communication. Close examination of these metaphors may reveal that the author has a coherent, if not explicitly stated, theory of rhetorical interaction. For instance, Bonnie Johnson found that radical groups in conflict with each other are likely to profess a theory of communication that implies the sinister control of mindless followers. The search for implicit rhetorical theories is in its infancy, but is likely to be an important and productive line of inquiry. The explication of implicit rhetorical theories can tell us much about the models of communication our society is likely to share, since we derive our view of what is real in large part from our arts. And further, rhetorical theory itself is likely to be enriched by close examination of the rhetorical insights of creative artists, whose intuitive grasp of

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symbolic interactions is likely to be, in many cases, richer than that of academic theorists.

8. Our next critic is the idealist rhetorical critic, whose concern, in examining particular works, is to evaluate the extent to which they fulfill the promise of rhetorical theory as an ethical system. The idealist critic is not a utopian, but does insist upon recalling that rhetoric originated as more than a technique of persuasion, that it is a comprehensive system of being, knowing, [redacted], a mode of public symbolic interaction, linking men through speech.[18] All applications of rhetorical criticism to the arts and to media other than public speaking are thus partial and incomplete. I believe that there are important gains in drawing upon rhetorical traditions for an understanding of the arts and of modern media, but that it is also crucial not to deceive ourselves into thinking that we have thereby constituted a rhetorical culture. Rhetorical criticism of the arts can help us to understand certain processes and effects in symbolic modes other than public address, but the fallacy of equivocation is a constant temptation, and one duty of the rhetorical critic is to keep alive rhetoric as a mode of public action in a society constantly tempted away from rhetorical modes of action by scientism, technicism, privatism, aestheticism, and supernaturalism.

9. The final critic in our list is the eclectic, the one who, asked which of the eight critics we have mentioned so far he recognizes himself as, answers, all of the above. Although there may be certain logical problems in placing all eight in one system, there are, especially for student critics, advantages in trying each to see what it will provide. The eclectic rhetorical critic is interested in rhetoric as

the study of what gives effectiveness to form, in the pragmatics of communication. Hence, he is interested in the technical apparatus of each system of communication (film theory, versification, rules of dramatic construction); in rhetorical technique as it might be applied to a variety of systems; in the effects, both private and public, of given works; in how works are experienced by audiences; in how social contexts and artistic conventions govern the experience of a particular work; in the ways imaginative works depict how people communicate; and in rhetoric as an ideal of culture. All of these have at various times been advanced as the stated objects and methods of people calling themselves rhetorical critics, and all have demonstrated considerable benefits. Conversely, each of these questions has been asked by other critics whose work is uninformed by rhetoric as a system of thought, and whose work is therefore diminished in explanatory power.

The nine types of rhetorical critics I have described provide a useful critical agenda for beginning students. A more rigorous logic would probably reduce the number of types from nine to perhaps two or three; a more discriminating historical survey would certainly multiply the nine by a factor of two or three. But for the purposes of raising major questions, I have found this set of critical agendas a useful starting point, a learnable and flexible set of topoi for beginning critics. In classroom use, each of the topoi needs to be further elaborated, to show how a given perspective implies a series of questions about a given work. And once we have identified a self-described rhetorical approach, noted its critical assumptions, and elaborated the method by which it analyzes a text, we can go one step further and ask

how it might help in domains to which it has not been applied: for instance, rhetorical approaches to genres and to narrative techniques have been little used in film criticism.

For each of the senses of rhetoric described in this paper, it is possible to find examples of practical criticism by critics who call themselves rhetoricians. But for most of these senses, there are also critics who do not call themselves rhetoricians but are pursuing similar lines of inquiry.[19] A major task on the agenda of critical theory is to trace the possibilities for cross-fertilization among rhetorical critics and critics of literature, film, television, and other nonoratorical forms: the domain of the semiologist.

One's aim is to give a student the minimum amount of critical method to stimulate the maximum appreciation of a text, its form and content, its context, and its communicative potential. The topical system I have described has been helpful to me and my students, but has yet to be fully tested in teaching and practical criticism. And the final test of a critical theory is not in its adherence to a static logic of fixed forms but in the ways it opens up understandings of particular symbolic actions.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For some recent views, see Kenneth Burke, "The Party Line," QJS, 62 (1976), 62-68; Wilbur Samuel Howell, "The Two-Party Line: A Reply to Kenneth Burke," QJS, 62 (1976), 69-77; Howell, Poetics, Rhetoric, and Logic (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); Donald C. Bryant, Rhetorical Dimensions in Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

[2]Kenneth Burke, "Rhetoric and Poetics," Language As Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 307.

[3]Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Edward P. J. Corbett, ed., Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[4]Rhetorical criticism provides a way of discussing the author without having to see his work as a puzzle or a symptom.

[5]John F. Wilson and Carroll C. Arnold, Public Speaking As a Liberal Art, 3rd ed. (Boston: Alyn & Bacon, 1974), pp. 72-82.

[6]Carroll C. Arnold, Criticism of Oral Rhetoric (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1974).

[7]Thomas W. Benson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Invention and Dispo-

sition in Upton Sinclair's The Jungle," unpublished M.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1961. Jerry Hendrix and James A. Wood, "The Rhetoric of Film: Toward Critical Methodology," The Southern Speech Communication Journal, 39 (Winter 1973), 105-122.

[8]Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972). Barthes speaks of these myths as "depoliticized speech," that is, as symbolic forms that exercise the influence of, and occupy the niche of political talk but that implicity deny they are political: they seem "natural." We might call such persuasions "de-rhetorical."

See also Roland Barthes, "Literature as Rhetoric," Sociology of Literature and Drama, ed. Elizabeth and Tom Burns (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973). For a semiological critique of the New Criticism as out of context, see Terence Hawkes, Structuralism and Semiotics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 151-160.

The relation of structuralism and semiotic to rhetoric is problematic. Structuralism, and one wing of semiology, regards human symbolic action in reductionist ways, as does sociobiology. For them, the symbolic form is a symptom of deep structure. But rhetoric is committed (as is another wing of semiology) to the significance of the symbolic form as human action: for the rhetorician, a symbolic form constitutes an experience important for its own sake and for its implications as being, knowing, and doing. For the rhetorician, a symbolic form is a mode of experience and action; for the structuralist, a rhetorical action is a relatively superficial derivative variation of an invariant substructure. Semiology and structuralism have provided some important

tactics for symbolic analysis, and have forced attention to wider domains of symbolic behavior, but may be fundamentally antithetical to rhetoric and to criticism. This is the difference between Kenneth Burke and Ernst Cassirer, between Roland Barthes and Claude Levi-Strauss. A rhetorician attends to symbolic actions, a structuralist to symbolic forms.

[9] See, for example, Marjorie Rosen, Popcorn Venus (New York: Avon, 1974). Siegfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947). There are many other studies of this type. A sample: T.W. Benson, "Joe: An Essay on the Rhetoric of Film," Journal of Popular Culture, 8 (Winter 1974), 610-618; T.W. Benson, "Videology: Space and Time in Political Television," The Pennsylvania Speech Communication Annual, 31 (1975), pp. 23-38; Marshall McLuhan, The Mechanical Bride (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967); Craig R. Smith, "Television News As Rhetoric," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 41 (1977), 147-159; William R. Brown, "The Prime-Time Television Environment and Emerging Rhetorical Visions," QJS, 62 (1976), 389-399; Thomas S. Frentz and Thomas B. Farrell, "Conversion of America's Consciousness: The Rhetoric of The Exorcist," QJS, 61 (1975), 40-47.

On literary criticism as the explication of the method of a text and its relation to a social and phenomenological context, see also Sacvan Bercovitch, The Puritan Origins and the American Self (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); Pane Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (London: Oxford University Press, 1975). The social critic asks: What values does this work ask me to share, or assume that I share with it? How?

[10]Keith W. Stavely, The Politics of Milton's Prose Style, Yale Studies in English, 185 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 2. Siegfried Kracauer describes a politics of style for film in Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

[11]See, for instance, Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," Against Interpretation (New York: Dell, n.d.), p. 14: "In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art." And, p. 12: "The best criticism, and it is uncommon, is of this sort that dissolves considerationsof content into those of form." The critics to whose work Sontag is objecting typically approach even non-didactic drama and narrative by identifying its "theme," which they often take as synonymous with its "meaning." Booth and the other "Chicago critics" also object to such structural reductions. Booth inquires into the technique of creating aesthetic experiences--the states of thoughts and feelings the work invites in a reader, and the means by which those thoughts and feelings are invited.

[12]Variations on Booth's method in the criticism of fiction include W. R. Irwin, The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976); Warwick Wadlington, The Confidence Game in American Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). Robert Secor, The Rhetoric of ShiftingPerspectives: Conrad's Victory, The Pennsylvania State University Studies, No. 32 (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 1971). See also Nick Brown, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of Stagecoach," Film Quarterly, 39 (Winter 1975-76), 26-38.

[13]Nicolas P. Gross, "Alcestis and the Rhetoric of Departure," QJS, 60 (1974), 296-305; Mary Z. Maher, "Internal Rhetorical Analysis and the Interpretation of Drama," The Central States Speech Journal, 26 (1975), 267-273.

[14]Diane Irene Kowalski, "How Do Selected Television Commercials Depict Male-Female Interaction?" Unpublished M.A. Thesis, The Pennsylvania State University, 1976.

[15]Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (1947: rpt. New York: Hafner, 1966); see also Thomas O. Sloan and Raymond B. Waddington, eds., The Rhetoric of Renaissance Poetry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[16]Kathleen M. Jamieson, "Antecedent Genre As Rhetorical Constraint," QJS, 61 (1975), 406-415. The standard text on the rhetoric of genres is in Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

[17]Bonnie McD. Johnson, "Images of the Enemy in Intergroup Conflict," Central States Speech Journal, 26 (1975), 84-92. The term "implicit rhetorical theory" is Professor Johnson's. For another treatment, see T. W. Benson, "Poisoned Minds," Southern Speech Journal, 34 (1968), 54-61.

[18]T. W. Benson and Gerard A. Hauser, "Ideals, Superlatives, and the Decline of Hypocrisy," QJS, 59 (1973), 99-105; T. W. Benson, "Rhetoric and Autobiography: The Case of Malcom X," QJS, 60 (1974), 1-13; Richard A. Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976);

Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "An Autopsy of the Rhetorical Tradition," The Prospect of Rhetoric, Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, eds. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 64-77.

A rhetorical ideal specifies certain political and ethical relations, and the means by which they are realized through intentional, public, rational/affective, answerable, oral, probabalistic discourse. None of the symbolic forms or critical approaches we have touched upon fully realizes these rhetorical ideals and so each is non-rhetorical. But each of the symbolic forms occupies in some measure and performs to some degree the offices that rhetorical discourse would; and the rhetorical criticism of such forms can call attention to ways in which such forms constitute de-rhetorical speech. De-rhetorical speech is any symbolic form that performs the functions of rhetoric, or occupies the ecological niche theoretically alloted to rhetoric, but which does not or cannot accept the obligations of rhetoric as a mode of being, knowing, and doing. This is not to say that aesthetic forms have no business influencing attitudes. On the contrary, as Robert Joyce has shown, human subjectivity is largely a product of aesthetic experience. See Robert Joyce, The Esthetic Animal: Man, The Art-Created Art-Creator (Hicksville: Exposition Press, 1975). To point out that a symbolic form is non-rhetorical is an act of description; to argue that it is de-rhetorical is an act of political judgment. But in an age when acts of pure rhetoric are discouraged by the social context, rhetorical criticism can still be useful as a perspective and a method by which to notice what is happening—and what is not happening.

Rhetorical critics, in their stampede away from the analysis of public discourse, may be abandoning something of value and risking a trivialization of the new media that now engage their attention.

[19] For example, many recent critics of mass media are following lines of inquiry parallel to rhetorical theory. See Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds., The Manufacture of News: A Reader (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973); Glasgow University Media Group, Bad News (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976); Stuart Hall, Ian Connell, and Lidia Curti, "The 'Unity' of Current Affairs Television," Cultural Studies, 9 (1976), pp. 51-93; Michael J. Arlen, The View from Highway 1 (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1976); Robert R. Smith, Beyond the Wasteland: The Criticism of Broadcasting (Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1976); Colin Seymour-Ure, The Political Impact of Mass Media (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1974); Horace Newcomb, ed., Television: The Critical View (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); David L. Altheide, Creating Reality: How TV News Distorts Events (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1976); C. Richard Hofstetter, Bias in the News: Network Television News Coverage of the 1972 Election Campaign (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976); Steve Chibnall, Law-and-Order News (London: Tavistock, 1977); Garth Jowett, Film: The Democratic Art (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976); Andrew Tudor, Image and Influence: Studies in the Sociology of Film (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies (New York: Random House, 1976); William Stott, Documentary Expression and Thirties America (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).