Finding a Methodology for Rhetorical Criticism

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Among the things which seem to frighten students considering rhetorical criticism as a contest event are two overriding concerns. The first, simply not understanding or misunderstanding the nature of the event, can be remedied with added information about the event, sympathetic coaching, and observation of other contestants. The second problem occurs once students locate rhetorical artifacts and begin preparing them for competition. At that point they realize that they need a "methodology."[1]

Furthermore, otherwise excellent coaches may falter when confronted with the need to explain the use of a methodology simply because they may not have a clear understanding of the purpose which the methodology serves in criticism. In fact, many coaches may not know the best means for locating and evaluating methodologies.

The purpose of this article is to answer, at least in part, some frequent questions about choosing the methodology for a rhetorical criticism. First, what is a methodology? Second, how is a methodology used to critique a rhetorical artifact? Third, where do you find a methodology?

1. WHAT IS A METHODOLOGY?

Much like different camera lenses are used to provide varied perspectives on the photographer's subject, critical methodologies aid the rhetorical critic in evaluating an artifact. A methodology is a tool which allows the critic to better understand rhetoric and communicate this understanding to others. Although it is not a physical measure, a methodology operates as a concept or series of

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[1]In order to avoid a discussion of whether "methodology" or "method" is the more appropriate term, a decision has been made to use "methodology" in reference to the external critical tool applied to the rhetorical artifact. The debate over whether "methodology" or "method" is the appropriate term is left to others.

[2]Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Function and Scope," Douglas Ehninger, ed., *Contemporary Rhetoric* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972), p. 26.

Webmaster's Note: One reference in the bibliography was changed due to an incorrect first initial in the original – the reference is Ralph Smith and Russell Windes' article on innovational movements.

concepts which enable us to understand the interaction between ideas and people.[2] As one author defines it, "Rhetorical criticism is the description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of persuasive uses of language."[3]

In general, the rhetorical critic has a responsibility to increase our understanding of the unique qualities of the rhetorical artifact and offer evaluative judgments based on criteria which are clearly defined for the observer. The role of rhetorical critics in individual events competition is no different: they must explain what criteria are used to examine the artifact, apply those criteria, interpret the results of that application, and render an evaluation of the rhetorical artifact based upon this analysis.

2. HOW DO YOU USE A METHODOLOGY TO CRITIQUE RHETORIC?

This question is asked because the critic often starts with the artifact to be examined and determines, after thorough investigation of it, what characteristics most clearly explain its impact on the audience. This investigation should suggest a critical methodology which brings the artifact into sharpest focus. Of course, one may find a method first, then search for an artifact, but it must be remembered that it takes a special union of methodology and artifact to yield the best understanding of both. It is usually easiest for the novice to find the artifact first, then consider possible methodological approaches. This procedure does not entail extensive knowledge of systems of rhetoric and, for this reason, is preferable for novice competitors. Beginning with the artifact and not the method is also preferable because it reduces the likelihood that an artifact will be "force-fit" onto a method that is inappropriate for that discourse.

There are many ways to view the artifact and critics should determine which perspective most closely captures what they want to communicate about it.[4] To aid in this process, a number of questions about the artifact which focus the criticism and narrow the choice of methodologies must be asked. Among these considerations should be the following five questions:

A. IS THERE A PROMINENT ELEMENT OR SEVERAL ELEMENTS IN THE ARTIFACT WHICH DOMINATE IT?

It may be the character of the rhetor, the words themselves, or a

[3]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1972), p. 12.

[4]Craig R. Smith, *Orientations to Speech Criticism* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Modules in Speech Communication, 1976).

strong image in the artifact which dominates the effect of the discourse. Or, the artifact may depend on the audience for its impact. Since there are so many facets of any artifact, it must be examined thoroughly, reserving final impressions until the ideas, pattern, rhetor, style, context, and impact of the artifact are fully understood. The critic might choose to examine the moral qualities of the public statements of figures like Mahatma Ghandi, Mother Hale, or David Ben-Gurion, the arguments of atomic scientists on the nuclear energy question, the motivational appeals in presidential campaign commercials, the structure of the Gettysburg Address, the style of the John Birch Society Blue Book, or the unique delivery of preacher-baseball star Billy Sunday. Countless rhetorical artifacts can be examined for their use of logic, speaker credibility, motivational appeals, ideas, structure, expression, and delivery. Each of these elements can be an important factor in the analysis of rhetorical impact, and identification of a dominant element can narrow the range of choices for the critic's method.

B. IS THE RHETORIC AN EXPRESSION OF ITS CULTURAL MILIEU?

Perhaps the rhetoric reveals something about the way we live or the way others have lived. It may express a point of view which enriches our understanding of humankind and/or rhetoric itself. William Grayson contrasted the North with the South in his pro-slavery poem, "The Hireling and the Slave" and, in the process, provided for history a justification of the Southern way of life. Petra Kelly offers us understanding of the Green Movement in Europe; the 1984 presidential campaign teaches us something about our political expectations; Slim Goodbody provides a model for children in a health-conscious society; and the Olympic spirit exemplified by Mary Lou Retton and Edwin Moses reveals how we view sports. Each of these examples is an expression of its culture. Campaigns, movements, and the media all reflect social concerns and, as such, are rhetorical manifestations of culture.

C. IS THERE AN INTERACTION OF ELEMENTS IN THIS ARTIFACT WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ITS UNIQUE CHARACTER?

The nature of communication depends upon combinations of audience, rhetor, and message. The manner in which this occurs is of unending interest to the critic, particularly because it may reveal something about the nature of communication. The "rainbow coalition" of the 1984 Democratic Convention, the "silent majority"

of the Vietnam era, and the Northern "copperheads" of the 1860's all feature an interaction of values, ideas, and personalities captured in a single expression. To understand the power of rhetorical slogans, the critic can analyze the interaction of elements examining how each element affects the process of meaning creation. Countless rhetorical artifacts function in this manner including dramatic works such as the pre-Civil War productions of the stage play "Uncle Tom's Cabin," music like the hymns of John Wesley, poetry such as feminist writings of the mid-60's, popular literature such as Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, films such as "The China Syndrome," and, of course, more traditional discourse. This focus provides the critic with salient dramas, fantasies, and myths as they are expressed in popular rhetoric.

D. WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER ARTIFACTS, DOES THIS RHETORIC REVEAL UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS IT POSSESSES OR WHICH CHARACTERIZE A GROUP OF SIMILAR ARTIFACTS?

Rhetoric also may have unique characteristics which are not seen until contrasted with other rhetorical artifacts. The striking features of categories may not be readily apparent until they are seen together. For this reason, the critic may explore the rhetorical characteristics of Joan Baez's songs by discovering their common denominators or by comparing them with the music of other songwriters. Ronald Reagan's recent "State of the Union" message is compared to previous state of the union messages for consistent and unique characteristics. Popular television offers rich opportunity for comparison including evangelists such as Robert Schuller and Jimmie Swaggart as well as the advocacy advertising of multinational corporations. In each of these cases, the critic discovers common denominators of the group or unique characteristics of the individual artifact through comparison.

Critics may not find comparisons which best illustrate the function of the rhetorical artifact which is examined until they search outside of the realm of strictly rhetorical comparisons for other ways of illuminating the rhetoric. The organizational pattern/argumentative structure of a speaker might resemble the repetition of the fugue in music or the campaigner seeking a party office may resemble the courting ritual.[5] Persuasion can often be compared to personification as expressed in leading film characters or novels. One function of analog criticism can be to compare two

[5]Hermann G. Stelzner, "Humphrey and Kennedy Court West Virginia, May 3, 1960," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 37 (1971) pp. 21-33.

apparently unlike forms to yield an understanding of the rhetoric examined.

E. DOES THE RHETORICAL THEORY OF THE HISTORICAL PERIOD LEND UNDERSTANDING TO THE RHETORICAL ARTIFACT?

Occasionally, it is profitable to examine the rhetorical artifact by discovering the theory or practices which influenced the rhetorician. This is especially true when the conventions of message or audience understanding of rhetorical conventions differ from our own and shape the message of the rhetor. While contemporary rhetorical theory has much diversity to offer, it may not be able to account for previous rhetorical choices especially if those choices were made according to dictates of rhetorical wisdom quite different from our own. For example, the writings of Cicero on rhetoric can aid in our appreciation of his orations much the same as an understanding of the concept of *topoi* sheds light on Greek and Roman courtroom arguments. In the same manner, it is difficult to fully appreciate the expansiveness of eighteenth century rhetoric without relying upon the stylists of that period. One source for appropriate methodologies exists in the rhetorical theorists of the historical period.

While this list of questions by no means exhausts the possibilities, it is a starting place for analysis. The critic should also realize that more than one question can be asked of the artifact. For example, a critique of the recent television docu-drama, "Robert F. Kennedy: A Man and His Times," should discover an overriding theme: Robert Kennedy is portrayed in heroic terms. Perhaps, too, the drama reveals something about the cultural values of our political myths, such as the ability of one person to change history, and personal attributes like the importance of perserverance in the face of great odds and the support of family members in times of crisis. The drama could also be seen as a process of character development in which the camera angles, carefully edited speech texts, and development of protagonist and antagonist work together to create a new Kennedy myth. Finally, when compared to other recent docu-dramas, such as "The Atlanta Child Murders," unique characteristics of televised rhetoric may be revealed. Through such comparisons, one may realize that television is becoming a potent force in creating popular history or that American heroes and villains are depicted with increasing impact through the media. Whatever the approach, a critic should choose the perspective which gives the reader new insight into the forces of rhetoric.

3. WHERE DOES ONE FIND A METHODOLOGY?

The process of criticism is a creative one in which the critic expresses sometimes unique criteria for evaluating discourse. Despite the individual nature of criticism, broad categories or systems of critical thought have evolved over the centuries.[6] Rhetorical systems including methodologies have developed in response to the questions asked by critics. These systems focus on the elements suggested in each of the preceding questions. While these suggestions for methodologies are limited, they do cover a broad range of potential critical perspectives. (See the selected bibliography which follows this article for suggested sources of methodologies of each type.)

A. TRADITIONAL CRITICISM

If several elements dominate the rhetorical artifact, then the traditional approach, frequently called neo-Aristotelian criticism, may offer appropriate methodologies for the critic's use. Traditional criticism is based on the early Greek and Roman critics and orators. This approach to discourse has persisted into the twentieth century, and assumes that rhetoric functions as a means for discovering rational, truthful appeals to audiences. The critic focuses on logical, ethical, and motivational elements through which the rhetor operates to achieve persuasion. These three proofs are often referred to as logos, ethos, and pathos. Each of them can be divided into subcategories such as the components of ethos (speaker credibility) which usually include trustworthiness, intelligence, and dynamism.[7] The enthymeme is central to the use of logical appeals in rhetoric, and motivational appeals includes a vast array of human emotions such as loyalty, hatred, friendship, reverence, and greed.

Discourse also is examined for other intrinsic qualities such as ideas, organization, use of language, and delivery. The primary focus of the neo-Aristotelian critic is on the internal elements of the discourse. When external characteristics are examined, they tend to be viewed as effects of the discourse. Since this mode of criticism has enjoyed such persistence, a wide range of sources of explaining methodologies exist from ancient through contemporary sources.

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[6]Douglas Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), pp. 131-144.

[7]James C. McCroskey and Thomas J. Young, "Ethos and Credibility: The Construct and Its Measurement After Three Decades," *Central States Speech Journal* 32 (1981), pp. 24-34.

B. SITUATIONAL CRITICISM

If the rhetorical artifact seems to arise from the situation or the culture, the external characteristics of the rhetorical situation offer a second source of methodologies. Perhaps most frequently used in competition is Lloyd Bitzer's "rhetorical situation." This approach focuses on the interaction of audience, exigences, and contingencies in creating the opportunity for a rhetorical response which is appropriate to the situation. Various scholars have expanded on the idea of the rhetorical situation. Among them, Bruce Gronbeck and Edwin Black suggest that rhetorical timing is a critical factor framing the appropriate rhetorical response to any situation.

Another approach to the external influences on rhetoric is examination of the culture which produces it. Differences in cultural expectations or conventions can account for mis-communication as in the negotiations between agents of the Federal government and Indian tribes in the early history of this country or the explosion of racial violence in the mid-sixties. An examination of cultural differences also explains other successes and failures in international communication. For example, the Vietnam peace talks, the arms limitation agreements between the Soviet Union and the U.S., the Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the Lebanon hostage crisis can each be viewed as a confrontation of cultures. The rhetoric which surrounds these situations evidences the clash of cultures and the lack of mutual understanding of such cultural distinctions. In addition to international communication, inter-cultural communication occurs among whites and blacks, men and women, and even old and young. The assumptions which influence senders and receivers of such messages are evident in their linguistic transactions.

C. SOCIOLOGICAL CRITICISM

The current era of criticism has given rise to diverse approaches to criticism which can be characterized as sociological systems. If there is an interaction of elements in the rhetorical artifact which accounts for its unique character, then a sociological approach is justified.[8] Such systems focus on language as a response to social situations in which communication is a means of action as well as a record of thoughts, attitudes, and values. In this view, rhetoric is an interactional phenomenon. In recent years, this function of rhetoric has received a great deal of attention. At least four approaches to

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[8]Douglas Ehninger, "Introduction," *Contemporary Rhetoric* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972), pp. 2-4.

sociological criticism exist, including movement studies or agitation criticism, dramatism, reality construction, and fantasy theme analysis.

1. Movement/Agitation Criticism: Since the agitation of the Vietnam era, critics have become interested in the language and action which accompanies social movements. Since Leland Griffin's landmark article in 1952, numerous movement study approaches have been suggested.[9] Among them, John Waite Bowers and Donovan Ochs have presented a model for characterizing the escalation of confrontations between agitation and establishment groups. Their view of rhetoric goes beyond spoken language to include the rationale of instrumental, symbolic behavior in a spiraling stimulus-response pattern typical of confrontations.[10] Other rhetoricians and sociologists have also investigated and posited reasons for human verbal and physical action in movements and agitations. Such sociological systems account in varied ways for the rhetoric produced to create, sustain, and diminish the effects of social movements.[11]

2. Dramatistic Criticism: Another perspective on rhetoric (often characterized as sociological), espoused originally by Kenneth Burke, uses the theme of dramatic interaction to capture the essence of rhetoric. Kenneth Burke's complex and continuously evolving approach to rhetoric depends upon his view of humans as naturally symbol producing and using animals. Rhetoric is a means of bridging the essential estrangement in nature and society. It is the symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings who by nature respond to symbols. Any understanding of Burke must take into account the five factors which together comprise the so-called "pentad." Burke proposed that action, agent(s), agency, scene, and purpose work together in varying combinations or "ratios" in rhetorical transactions. The ratios of the pentad provide clues to the rhetorical interaction for the critic. In addition to the pentad as a tool for critical investigation, Burke provides special uses of terms such as "identification" and "consubstantiality" to reveal how the natural chasm between individuals is bridged through rhetoric. Numerous students of Burke, including Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Hugh Dalziel Duncan, and Barry Brummett,

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[9]Leland Griffin, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 (1952), pp. 184-88.

[10]John Waite Bowers and Donovan Ochs. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1971).

[11]Robert Scott and Bernard L. Brock. *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 126-127.

provide insight and explanations of the implications of dramatistic criticism.

3. Reality Construction: In addition to movement studies and dramatism, a number of other critics focus specifically on rhetoric as the means by which we create and sustain the social reality necessary to form relatively enduring governments and social institutions. Language is a primary force calculated to reinforce or bolster such relationships and maintain a stable social reality. Particularly in political rhetoric, the conventions of the process of election are assumed in the language and posturing of the candi dates. General introductions to the process of reality construction include works by Doris Graber and Combs and Mansfield.

4. Fantasy Theme Analysis: Finally, the sociological perspective can be found in the sharing of fantasies by people from small groups to entire nations. The evolution of these fantasies or rhetorical visions are the focus of rhetorical critics. Ernest Bormann made popular the identification of fantasy themes which are chained out in groups of human beings through communication. Fantasy theme analysis, as it is most often referred to, seeks to understand human action and motivation by examining the language which engages individuals in group visions.

Another form of widely rhetorical chaining of shared visions involves social images. Many sociologists and political scientists use image creation to explain the force of ideas and personalities on audiences in elections, political upheavals, and even popular social fads. Kenneth Boulding argues that images of ourselves and others are the fundamental driving forces behind all human behavior from individual interactions to international encounters. Like dramatistic criticism and fantasy theme analysis, the evaluation of images assumes a sociological bias characteristic of much contemporary rhetorical theory.

D. GENRE OR ANALOG CRITICISM

If the rhetorical artifact chosen appears to have characteristics of similar types of discourse or if it is distinct from other forms of discourse, genre criticism might be the course of a methodology. Genre criticism attempts to identify types of rhetoric through the common characteristics or functions of the members of that group. Apologia, state of the union messages, Bunker Hill orations, election day sermons, gallows speeches, Rose Garden speaking, press conferences, forensic, deliberative, and ceremonial speaking are examples of genres which have been identified. The characteristics of these categories offer potential criteria for evaluating an

artifact. The critic may discover that the genre explains the form and substance of the artifact or that the artifact provides additional insight into the functioning of the genre. That is, the determination of rhetorical type should also illuminate some of the functions or potential functions of the discourse. Once the critic can prove that the artifact belongs to a certain group or genre, he or she may reveal additional qualities of the rhetoric. For example, understanding that a recent presidential press conference is typical of that genre identifies it by category. However, the important revelation is that rhetoric of this category is usually dependent upon media coverage during prime time and it is effective only when carefully controlled questions and answers are included.

Analog criticism also establishes common characteristics, however it sets up two objects or constructs for comparison. This comparison is intended to reveal something useful about one or both of the artifacts. President Reagan's 1984 presidential campaign film might be compared to a collage constructed by an artist or his speech responding to the Korean airliner incident could contain the elements of a nineteenth century melodrama. In each case, two apparently unlike ideas provide creative insight for the critic. The striking qualities of the comparison are the unique properties of this critical approach. The critic often uses foils which are not in the traditional scope of criticism to complete the comparison with the rhetorical artifact. This possibility opens up unlimited methodological resources for the critic. It also behooves the critic to remember the tests of good methodologies. It is important to avoid the tendency to simply use a method. Rather, the method should help to explain how the rhetoric works to achieve its results. In the example of the presidential response to the KAL 007 incident, the melodrama not only asks the reader to look for villains, heroes, and crisis situations but also explains that the contrast of good and evil heightens the suspense and encourages the audience to choose sides in the dispute.

E. HISTORICALLY RELEVANT THEORY

Re-creation of the rhetorical ideas which molded the speaker's views and forms of adaptation to the rhetorical process enhances our understanding of the choices made by the rhetorician. Ideas which shaped the speaker's understanding of the world might also yield the rationale for the rhetorical artifact. The assumption that rhetoric does not spring untainted from the rhetor undergirds this form of criticism. The rhetorician is a human being living in a world of expectations shaped at least partially by the current

theory of the day. If ancient theory differs markedly from present day theory, then it is difficult for contemporary audiences to appreciate the rhetoric itself unless they understand the thinking of the historical period. Few would argue that Greek rhetoric at the height of the democracy was distinct from that produced by the Second Sophistic in ancient Rome and that both periods of ancient rhetoric are distinct from speaking in the 1980's. An explanation for the differences in rhetorical forms can be found through investigation of the theories of rhetoric prevalent in each historical period. Political institutions, educational institutions, and the heritage of the past, including the thinking of rhetorical scholars, influences the production of the rhetoric. Critics can achieve a different, and possibly better understanding of such rhetoric if they reconstruct these influences on the rhetorician. The tendency to reject all "out-dated" rhetorical theory may not be wise unless present day critics are also willing to assume that the theorists of the age did not influence the production of its rhetoric. This appears to be a foolhardy assumption or at least one which limits the potential for understanding rhetoric as a product of its times.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once a critic has found what is considered to be a potential methodology, several important questions must be answered before the methodology can be used to analyze the rhetorical artifact. First, are the criteria for evaluating the artifact clear? If the theory is too complex or confusing, then it is not an appropriate choice for competition. Second, can the methodology be communicated to others without losing its meaning? Unfortunately, the rules of competition specify time limits for rhetorical criticism and these time limits may not allow the critic to fully expand the methodology. In this case it may be appropriate to select aspects of the methodology for use or find a methodology which can be explained in the time allotted. Because distortions of complex systems of thought are not acceptable, a critic should be careful when using only selected aspects of the methodology. Third, does the methodology fit the artifact? The critic must be able to justify its use; that is, the critic should be able to defend its appropriateness for the rhetorical artifact. Finally, assuming, of course, that the methodology is clear, efficient, and appropriate, the most important question is, does the methodology reveal something new about the artifact? The use of the methodology ought to increase our understanding of the rhetorical artifact since that is the purpose of rhetorical criticism.

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Fantasy Theme Analysis in Competitive Rhetorical Criticism

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One of the newer methods of criticism was postulated by Ernest Bormann in 1972.[1] His seminal piece has spawned more than 40 works of published scholarship and the concepts he set forth have been expanded and grounded as the symbolic convergence theory of communication.[2] No one, however, has offered extended advice to assist coaches and participants in the use of this method in competitive rhetorical criticism.[3] The aim of this essay is to provide such advice.

To assist in assimilating the advice offered in this essay, the following division of materials is presented. First, the assumptions underlying fantasy theme analysis are identified. Second, the theory's nomenclature is defined. Finally, the method is applied to three diverse kinds of rhetorical artifacts.

THE ASSUMPTIONS OF FANTASY THEME ANALYSIS

Most good critical methods provide a clear schemata for analyzing rhetorical material. In the case of fantasy theme analysis, the schemata is used to describe, interpret, and evaluate the rhetorical materials (persuasive postures, specific movements, campaigns, speeches, and conversations) that comprise the symbolic reality of groups of people, be they small groups, organizational work units, political parties, or other rhetorical communities.

One's use of fantasy theme analysis is based on several assumptions. Assumption 1: Through conversations, speeches, and messages, people build a shared view of reality that, while not

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[1]Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 58(1972), 396-407.

[2]Bormann, "The Symbolic Convergence Theory of Communication: Applications and Implications for Teachers and Consultants," *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 10 (1982), 50-61.

[3]Of course, bits and pieces of practical advice can be gleaned from the various published materials concerning rhetorical visions and fantasy theme analysis.

necessarily objective, is created symbolically. People often initiate, embellish, and evolve an explanation of events that can catch fire and chain-out through a collectivity of people. Eventually, such a symbolically created explanation may encompass greater and greater numbers of people into a common rhetorical community possessing a prevalent rhetorical vision.[4]

Assumption 2: A rhetorical community's shared view of reality is best analyzed through a rhetorical concept called a fantasy theme, or complete dramatistic rhetorical statement. Typically, fantasy theme statements range from a phrase, to a sentence, to a paragraph in length.[5]

Assumption 3: Meaning, emotion, and motive for action are not necessarily in the intent, nor hidden in the skulls and viscera, of people. Rather, meaning, emotion, and motive are in the message, i.e., the dramatistic statements intrinsic to the vision, thereby providing a direct link between one's symbolic manifestation of reality (the rhetorical vision) and one's behavior.[6]

Assumption 4: As people begin to share and extend fantasy explanations of people's actions, things, objects, and events, they build up a composite dramatistic explanation of reality that is filled with heroes, villains, plotlines, scenic description and sanctioning

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[4]This is not to say that everyone's symbolically created view of reality will eventually or always be the same. Nor is it to say that people come to participate in one and only one rhetorical vision. Indeed, participants in different or competing rhetorical visions often express opposing or contrary thoughts, ideas, and conclusions (expressed through fantasy themes) to explain the exact same phenomenon. For example, participants in one rhetorical vision look at President Reagan's attempts to remove restrictions on the industrialization of public lands and offer a symbolically created view of his policy as "getting the government off the backs of the people." Others view the same policy and describe it as "allowing the robber barons to pollute and ravage the environment."

[5]Consider the revivalist's phrase, "time is of the essence if you are to receive salvation." The more complete rhetorical statement to describe the same rhetorical reality is: "God's patience is wearing thin. God accepts only those who are prepared to accept his righteousness. God will let a base sinner suffer eternal damnation should he have missed the opportunity that God is providing here tonight." The point is that the presence of either the abbreviated or the more complete rhetorical statement is representative of the method's unit of analysis called a fantasy theme.

[6]For example, there is self-evident *meaning* in the fantasy theme, "I don't feel like a person when I'm around you. You never acknowledge me." Similarly, *emotion* is bursting forth from the following fantasy theme: "I hate men. They just use you. I gave him 18 years of my life. I put him through graduate school and he abandoned me for some little chippy who's young enough to be his daughter!" Finally, *motive for action* is apparent in the fantasy theme that goes: "I've lost my job, my family, my self-respect. Nobody loves me. Nobody cares. I just can't go on living."

agents for maintaining and promulgating the rhetorical vision.[7]

Assumption 5: Rhetorical visions are often in competition about the same issues. For example, two of Bormann's associates have described the nature of competing archetypal rhetorical visions concerning the role of the U.S. in conducting foreign affairs: "Cold War," "Neo-Isolation," and "Power Politics."[8]

THE METHOD'S NOMENCLATURE

Twelve technical terms undergird the method of fantasy theme analysis.[9] While these terms may not exhaust the listing provided by all of the method's collaborators, they do provide the necessary terms to enable the competitive rhetorical critic to do criticism from a fantasy theme perspective.[10] These terms will be introduced via the discussion of basic concepts, structural concepts, and evaluative concepts from a fantasy theme perspective.

Basic Concepts. Three concepts are basic to using fantasy theme analysis in competitive rhetorical criticism: **fantasy theme, fantasy type,** and **modal societal fantasy.** The *fantasy theme* is the smallest unit of analysis, although it may vary in length from a phrase to a sentence or two to a paragraph in length. The fantasy

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[7]Such a complete symbolically created reality for one rhetorical collectivity is succinctly illustrated by the 1870s Rhetorical Vision of "Manifest Destiny": "The rich and beautiful valleys of Wyoming are destined for the occupancy and sustenance of the Anglo-Saxon race. The wealth that for untold ages has lain hidden beneath the snow-capped summits of our mountains has been placed their by Providence to reward the brave spirits whose lot it is to compose the advance-guard of civilization. The Indians must stand aside or be overwhelmed by the ever advancing and ever increasing tide of emigration. The destiny of the aborigines is written in characters not to be mistaken. The same inscrutable Arbiter that decreed the downfall of Rome has pronounced the doom of extinction on the red men of America." This editorial from the *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, March 3,1870, as cited in Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 184, exhibits all the structural elements of a rhetorical vision: dramatis personae, plotlines, scene and sanctioning agent.

[8]John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields, "Foreign Policy Communication Dramas: How Mediated Rhetoric Played in Peoria in Campaign '76," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (1977), pp. 275-289.

[9]These technical terms are: fantasy theme, fantasy type, modal societal fantasy (basic concepts); rhetorical vision, *dramatis personae,* plotline(s), scene(s), sanctioning agent (structural concepts); and rhetorical community, reality link to here-and-now phenomenon, and rhetorical strategy (evaluative concepts).

[10]For an account of the development of some of these technical terms, see Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence," and "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: Ten Years Later," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 63 (1982), pp. 288-305.

theme functions to allow individuals to present or show to the group-mind a common experience and serves to shape that experience rhetorically into social knowledge.[11] Fantasy themes are the unit of analysis that depicts the structural elements of rhetorical visions, i.e., the *dramatis personae,* plotlines, scenes, and sanctioning agents. Indeed, a fantasy theme may even mirror a complete rhetorical vision in a kind of abbreviated form (as can be seen from the paragraph length depiction of the "Manifest Destiny" Rhetorical Vision in footnote 7).

A *fantasy type* is a kind of archetypal fantasy theme that becomes archetypal because it represents a common plotline depiction across a number of visions. Another way of saying this is that fantasy types are fantasy themes that emit the same structure across the rhetorical visions of differing rhetorical communities. Typically, fantasy types are represented by comments that are more abstract, or cryptic, or more general than what has initially been characterized as a fantasy theme.[12] Quite often, a fantasy type appears to be a shorthand label for a more complete fantasy theme that depicts the major plotline of some rhetorical vision in which large groups of people participate. Shorthand phrases like "fetching good out of evil," "the proof is in the pudding," "the dawn of a new day," "they're out to get us" (conspiracy), "we can work it out," "might makes right," and "there you go again," while not an exhaustive list, may all be thought of as examples of fantasy themes that may appear as plotlines in a diversity of rhetorical visions and are thus deserving of the concept label "fantasy type."[13]

A *Modal Societal Fantasy* is a fantasy theme so intrinsic to the rhetoric of our society that it exists as a general pattern in the symbolic reality structure of individuals regardless of their association with a particular rhetorical community, stemming from longstanding values, public dreams, and rhetorical visions. What is often spoken of as the "work ethic" represents a modal societal fantasy. The work ethic's roots lie in the Puritans' rhetorical vision regarding salvation. For the Puritans, the success of hard work

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[11]Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence," p. 52.

[12]Bormann, "Fantasy: Ten Years," p. 295.

[13]Of course, this is not to say that there are not heroic or villainous fantasy types, or scenic or sanctioning agent fantasy types. It is to say that plotline fantasy types will be encountered most often by the competitive rhetorical critic. For an example of an extended rhetorical criticism using, the concept of fantasy type, see Bormann, "Fetching Good Out of Evil: A Rhetorical Use of Calamity," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 63 (1977), pp. 130-139.

was proof that they were among God's elect. Although the Puritans are no longer an identifiable segment of our country, the "work ethic" as a fantasy theme has continued to be accepted for long periods of time by major(modal) segments of our society, even as the initial Puritan rhetorical vision, of which the work ethic was only a part, has diminished in impact.[14]

Structural Concepts. Five concepts comprise the structural elements of the method: **rhetorical vision, *dramatis personae,* plotline, scene,** and **sanctioning agent.** A *rhetorical vision* is a composite drama in which large groups of people participate. The drama is composite because the rhetorical embellishments of numbers of people have contributed to the descriptions of the *dramatis personae,* the plotlines, the scene, and the sanctioning agent(s). One may best think of a rhetorical vision as a kind of merging of various shared fantasy themes, fantasy types, and modal societal fantasies to provide a broader view of a culture's or rhetorical community's symbolic reality.[15] Typically, well understood rhetorical visions are identified by some tag label such as "Black Power," "The New Deal," "Manifest Destiny," "Secular Humanism," "The New Politics," "The 'Me' Generation," "Radical Feminism," "Reaganomics," "Social Economic Justice," etc.[16] On the other hand, some symbolic realities are always being newly created. Thus, there may be important rhetorical artifacts available for criticism that are not yet characterizable or identifiable by a tag label.

The ***dramatis personae*** are the characters that are given life within the drama (vision). These characters are attributed certain qualities, depicted as taking certain actions, represented as appearing within a certain scene, and their actions are motivated or justified by the sanctioning of a certain agent. Depending upon the complexity of the vision, the characters identifiable within a vision may include both heroic and villainous *personae,* and minor and

[14]For an example of an extended rhetorical criticism using the concept of modal societal fantasy, see Donald C. Shields, "Malcolm X's Black Unity Addresses: Espousing Middle-Class Fantasy Themes as American as Apple-Pie," in John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields (Eds.), *Applied Communication Research: A Dramatistic Approach* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1981), pp. 79-91. Other modal societal fantasy themes that have their roots in older visions, but may be present in a variety of present day visions include "the power of the ballot box," "the value of education," "the great experiment in democracy," "the spirit of entrepreneurship," etc.

[15]Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence," p. 53.

[16]For an example of the "New Politics" Vision criticized from a fantasy theme analysis, see Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair: A Fantasy Theme Analysis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 59 (1973), pp. 143-159.

supporting players. The characters within a drama are called "personae" to enable distinctions to be made between the qualities attributed to a real person and the qualities that may or may not be possessed by that person.[17]

Plotline is a concept within the method that refers to the action of the drama or vision. Action simply means who is doing what, to whom, and how? Often called "scenarios," plotlines can be identified as those fantasy themes that depict the action of the drama: "good versus evil," "underdog versus colossus," "acceptance of what fate brings," "pull yourself up by the bootstraps," "business as usual," "conspiracy," etc.[18] The list is extensive, although not so exhaustive that recurring "fantasy types" cannot be found.

Scene as a concept within the schemata serves much the same purpose as the word itself implies when thinking about a play. The scene is the setting, the place where the action occurs, the place where the actors or personae act out their roles. Thus, some fantasy themes within a rhetorical vision will graphically describe the scene by telling its scope, describing its elements, identifying the vital props, etc.

Sometimes, in some dramas, the scene becomes so important that it appears to influence both the qualities attributed to the actors or characters and the plotlines within the vision. Some examples of rhetorical visions where the exigencies of the scene have been deemed sufficiently powerful to lead to the formation of a rhetorical vision include "the American frontier," "the Iron Curtain," "the Berlin Wall," "the Dark Continent," and "the Holocaust."[19]

The **sanctioning agent** is the source that justifies the acceptance

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[17]Bormann, "Fantasy: Ten Years," p. 300. A current example of the difference between the real life personality and the *persona* is made by Serge Klarsfield. Klarsfield is a lawyer representing the families of relatives who were deported to Nazi death camps by war criminal Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo Chief and "Butcher of Lyon," France. Klarsfield is quoted by the Associated Press in March, 1985 as saying: "Barbie was a local chief who dealt very harshly with the French Resistance movement and Jews. He was not a figure of the magnitude of other Nazis who have been brought to trial. The Barbie persona is greater than the real personality that will face the court. The Barbie who hid in South America, the Barbie who is accused of killing the head of the Resistance movement (Jean Moulin), he won't be on trial."

[18]For a discussion of plotline, also see, Shields, "A Dramatistic Approach to Applied Communication Research: Theory, Methods, and Applications," appearing in Cragan and Shields, *Applied Communication Research*, p. 6.

[19]One word of caution is in order. Even those visions in which scene is paramount also possess *dramatis personae*, plotlines, and sanctioning agents. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the scene in some rhetorical visions can be as dramatic as an "airport" or "hotel" or "space" for an author.

and promulgation of a rhetorical vision. Sometimes the sanctioning agent is a higher power (God, justice, democracy, etc.). At other times the sanctioning agent is a particularly salient here-and-now phenomena (the atomic bomb, a warring conflict, a crucifixion and resurrection, etc). The sanctioning agent may also be a legitimizing or moralistic framework (the Constitution, the Code-of-the-West, the Cadet Code, etc.).[20]

Critical Evaluation Concepts. Three concepts are essential to critical evaluation from a fantasy theme perspective: **rhetorical community, reality link to here-and-now phenomena,** and **dramatistic rhetorical strategy.** A *rhetorical community* from the perspective of fantasy theme analysis is comprised of those people who participate in a common rhetorical vision. Thus, it is vision participation and not locality or "groupness" that indicates whether or not one is a member of a rhetorical community. Bormann indicates that members of a rhetorical community will share "inside jokes" and will respond to shorthand fantasy themes and messages in ways that are in tune with their common rhetorical vision.[21] Thus, it may be important for the critic to distinguish between those shorthand fantasy themes that indicate the stability of participation in a rhetorical community from fantasies that are "chaining out" and catching up new participants in a rhetorical vision. Similarly, the critic might want to differentiate the preceding from fantasies that are "chaining out" and catching up participants in a new rhetorical vision.

Many rhetorical visions contain fantasy themes with strong links to reality. *Reality links* are the *here-and-now phenomena* that add credibility to the dramatistic interpretation presented within the rhetoric of a vision. As such, the reality links serve to make the vision more believable and thus make symbolic participation within the vision more acceptable. It might, however, be suggested that some visions so lack any links to the reality of here-and-now phenomena that they are often labeled "cults." Further, such cults may be so labeled, not because of the insignificant numbers of people who participate in them, but because non-participants do not see credibility in their reality links.

While the concept *of rhetorical strategy* is not new to practitioners of rhetorical criticism, the concept possesses sufficiently subtle nuiances from the perspective of fantasy theme analysis to be worthy of comment.[22] Whereas "strategy" when viewed from the

[20]Shields, "A Dramatistic Approach," p. 7.
[21]Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence," p. 53.
[22]For an example of an extended rhetorical criticism using the concept of dramatistic rhetorical strategy, see Cragan, "Rhetorical Strategy: A

assumptions of some rhetorical theories denotes concepts like "plainfolks," "common ground" or "consubstantiation" and refers to a rhetor's attempts to enhance his/her *ethos* with the audience, the concept is defined quite differently when viewed from a dramatistic fantasy theme perspective. Since rhetorical visions are created through a process of symbolic give and take, it is difficult to speak of visions from a mechanistic, rhetor-makes-choices perspective. Thus, with fantasy theme analysis, rhetorical strategy refers to the critical assessment of whether or not the message (the drama or vision) exhibits greater emphasis on character or plotline or scene or sanctioning agent. With fantasy theme analysis as well, rhetorical strategy refers to the critic's assessment of the degree of consistency between certain reality links and here-and-now phenomena and the symbolically depicted character attributes, scenic elements, and plotline actions.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS

To illustrate the range of applications of fantasy theme analysis to rhetorical material, we offer three abbreviated applications: a speech, a presentation of an issue within a series of messages, and a body of material that reflects the rhetoric of a specific movement.

Speech. President Reagan's "Address to the National Press Club," November 18, 1981, on arms control and reduction illustrates how a student might apply fantasy theme analysis to a single speech.[23] In this talk, Reagan introduced the acronym "START"—Strategic Arms Reduction Talks—as a dramatistic label for his program of disarmament. In beginning a fantasy theme analysis of this talk a student could attempt to characterize the vision implied by the acronym START. A student might first characterize Reagan's vision of a world in which nuclear disarmament might be possible. In so doing, the student could look at the players in the drama, the plotlines cited for disarmament to occur, the international scene in which arms reduction would be carried out, and the legitimizing influence that would sanction disarmament or arms reduction.

When viewing the START talk as a rhetorical artifact suitable for fantasy theme analysis, the student could note that *dramatis personae* are present including both heroes and villains. The

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Dramatistic Interpretation and Application," *Central States Speech Journal 26 (1975),* pp. 4-11.

[23]Ronald Reagan, "Arms Reduction and Nuclear Weaponry," Address to' the National Press Club, November 18, 1981, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents,* 17 (October-December, 1981), pp. 1273-78.

contestant could give a description of the attributes assigned by Reagan to the characters in the START drama, and explain what values, qualities, and vices are manifested in the descriptions of the characters in the speech. For example, the student might point out that Reagan depicted the Soviets and their satellite nations as "aggressive," "expansionist" and "threatening" communist governments.[24] Conversely, the contestant could indicate that the qualities attributed to the U.S. as heroic persona are juxtaposed against those of the communist nations:

> . . .the United States followed a different course, one unique in all the history of mankind. We used our power and wealth to rebuild the war-ravished economies of the world, including those of the nations who had been our enemies. . . .There is absolutely no substance to charges that the U.S. is guilty of imperialism or attempts to impose its will on other countries by use of force.[25]

Based on Reagan's conceptions of the good United States and the devious Soviet Union and satellites, the contestant could then describe Reagan's plotline that the U.S. should immediately build up its defenses. Reagan could be quoted as saying that the U.S. must come up with "a comparable threat to Soviet threats; in other words, a deterrent preventing the use of Soviet weapons by the counter threat of a like response against their own territory."[26] This action line is offered by Reagan to cope with a scene in which he describes a world filled with nuclear weaponry—mainly the Soviet Union's—as demonstrated by his detailed description of the Soviet nuclear build-up in Eastern Europe.[27] The student rhetorical critic might then conclude the discussion of the elements of the START vision by noting that "deterring the Soviet threat" provides the sanctioning agent for President Reagan's START program, i.e. build up now and reduce later.

Having discussed the elements of the vision, the student could then interpret the meanings, emotions, and motives for action conveyed by participation in the START vision. The critic could argue that an important meaning inherent in the rhetoric is the conclusion that there will be no arms reduction unless the Soviets act first—they must START even though that is Reagan's label for the American approach to disarmament. Finally, the critic could note that there is no motive for the U.S. to act alone or START first, since such an action would be a "rash departure from tried and true policies."[28]

[24]Reagan, p. 1274.
[25]Reagan, p. 1274.
[26]Reagan, p. 1275.
[27]Reagan, pp. 1275-76.
[28]Reagan, p. 1275.

With the discussion of vision elements and interpretation completed, the contestant could evaluate the extent to which the vision depicted by Reagan was conducive to achieving the rhetorical ends sought by him. Clearly, Reagan's fantasy of deterrence through strength is an impactful one; however, the contestant might note that the logic of disarmament or arms control through arms build up may appear spurious to those who don't get caught up in the START vision. Similarly, the critic might discuss the fantasy themes that are not present in the talk. For example, Reagan never mentions the dangers inherent in the nuclear age—nuclear winter, nuclear holocaust, pre-emptive strike—that provide some of the tried and true sanctioning agents for disarmament and arms control.

Series of Messages. The Korean Airline Incident of September 1, 1983, the military downing of a KAL Flight 007, provides illustrative material to demonstrate how a series of messages may be used to create a dramatistic explanation of a here-and-now event. In this instance, the contestant might show how the United States government reacted to the downing of the airliner through a series of statements and messages throughout the month of September, 1983. Prominent among these messages are statements from President Reagan on September 2 and September 5 and from Secretary of State, George Shultz, on September 2 and at the Madrid Meeting on September 8. These statements range from Shultz's terse remarks of September 2 which conclude that "No cover-up, however brazen can absolve the Soviet Union of responsibility to explain its behavior"[29] to Ronald Reagan's 18 minute televised address of September 5.[30]

The student could analyze President Reagan's September 2 message on the attack. Here, the student might note how Reagan labeled the Soviet attack a "barbaric act" that "shocks the sensibilities of people everywhere" as he indicated that the act was more base than "events in Afghanistan and elsewhere." The President asked "What can we think of a regime that so broadly trumpets its vision of peace and global disarmament and yet so callously and quickly commits a terrorist act to sacrifice the lives of innocent human beings."[31]

The critic might then indicate that by September 5, Reagan's dramatistic explanation of the event had become full blown. Here,

[29]George Shultz, in William R. Doerner and Ed Magnuson, "Atrocity in the Skies," *Time,* September 12, 1983, p. 11.

[30]Reagan, "The Downing of a Korean Airliner," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 49 (October 1, 1983), pp. 738-40.

[31]Reagan, as cited in Doerner and Magnuson, p. 10.

the barbaric act theme had been expanded: "It was an act of barbarism born of a society which wantonly disregards individual rights and the value of human life and seeks constantly to expand and dominate other nations."[32] Indeed, the "attack was not just against ourselves or the Republic of Korea. This was the Soviet Union against the world and the moral precepts which guide human relations among people everywhere."[33]

The critic might then establish that the plotline of Reagan's message might be described as "there they (the Soviets) go again." It could be mentioned that Reagan equates this incident with a litany of Soviet barbarous acts: "But we shouldn't be surprised by such inhuman brutality. Memories come back of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, the gasing of villages in Afghanistan."[34]

In evaluating the discourse, the critic might find that, surprisingly, Reagan does not call for vengeance or retaliation. Instead, the President calls for atonement in the form of restitution and assurances such an act will not occur again. As such, the KAL tragedy becomes the sanctioning agent for a future vision: "Our immediate challenge to this atrocity is to insure that we make the skies safer and that we seek just compensation for the families of those who were killed."[35] To that end, Secretary Shultz "is going to present him (Gromyko) with our demands for disclosure of the facts, corrective action and concrete assurances that such a thing will not happen again—and that restitution be made."[36]

Overall, the contestant might conclude that the President and the State Department used the KAL incident to legitimize their vision of the Soviets and what the appropriate response to the incident should be. For, as one administration official said of the incident, "It is further evidence that the President was right when he said that the Soviet Union is a country that is essentially evil."[37]

Movement Rhetoric. The Clamshell Alliance Movement, 1976 to 1978. Students may also find fantasy theme analysis useful in analyzing discourse from several rhetors as they flesh out the rhetoric of a social movement. The rhetoric of the Clamshell

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[32]Reagan, "Korean Airliner," p. 739.
[33]Reagan, p. 739.
[34]Reagan, p. 739.
[35]Reagan, p. 739.
[36]Reagan, p. 740.
[37]Although his competitive rhetorical criticism did not use fantasy theme analysis, Roger C. Aden in the 1984 N.F.A. Final Round of Rhetorical Criticism used this quote to illustrate how the KAL Incident "gave credence to Reagan's posture." For the statement by the administration official see Doerner and Magnuson, p. 11.

alliance group against construction of a nuclear power plant in Seabrook, NH, might provide an excellent topic for competitive rhetorical criticism.[38] The Clamshell alliance, an umbrella organization encompassing numerous anti-nuclear and environmental groups in New England, was the forerunner, if not the prototype, for antinuclear organizations during the late 1970's. Its rhetorical actions drew the first national attention to the antinuclear energy protest movement in the United States.

In applying this method, the student critic might first describe the Alliance's depiction of the *dramatis personae* within the vision. Participants in the movement might be branded big business, elite private interests as the villains, and anti-nuclear activists as the heroes within the drama. In so doing, the contestant could provide various excerpts from Clamshell rhetoric. For example, THE DECLARATION OF NUCLEAR RESISTANCE, a document published by a "consensus" of Clamshell members in 1976, states that "the present direction in energy research is based on corporate efforts to maximize profits and recoup past investments, rather than on meeting our real energy needs."[39] The critic could further support this depiction from one of the Alliance's rally songs, "No Nukes," by citing the lyrics which state that nuclear energy "rests upon the profits hungry people cannot eat" and "the darkness of its shadow gives us warning of the greed that tries to sell us more electric power than we need."[40] The student critic might then juxtapose this depiction against the Alliance's characterization of the valiant efforts of its members. For example, the contestant could note that in terming the Alliance "an affiliation of a wide range of groups and individuals" it is claiming the grassroots support of the many versus the controlling wishes of the few who want nuclear energy.[41]

The contestant might then go on to describe the plotline of the Clamshell vision. In this case, the student might indicate that the plotline consisted of a common fantasy type, the conspiracy scenario. The Clamshell vision participants viewed the elites in

[38]The Clamshell Alliance was formed in 1976 by numerous environmental and anti-nuclear groups in New England. While its primary purpose was to end construction plans for a nuclear power plant at Seabrook, New Hampshire, its rhetoric and confrontational protest techniques made it a forerunner of the anti-nuclear organizations comprising the American anti-nuclear energy movement.

[39]Clamshell Alliance, *Declaration of Nuclear Resistance* (Portsmouth: Clamshell Alliance, 1977), p. 1.

[40]Pat Decou and Tex LaMountain, "No Nukes," Clamshell Alliance, Portsmouth, 1977.

[41]Clamshell Alliande, *Declaration*, p. 1.

society (big business and private interests) as conspiring to control the masses through nuclear power by "condemning democracy to extinction." They viewed nuclear energy as representing "the ultimate concentration of political and economic power that in turn may control our personal lives, freedoms, and social fabric."[42] To the Clamshell adherents, nuclear power was inherently incompatible with a democratic society. To assist in describing the plotline of the vision, the contestant could cite "Nuclear Power and Its Alternatives," distributed by the Clamshell organizers in 1977, in which the conspiracy scenario is developed and readers are warned that nuclear energy is the "dictator of our political future."[43]

Having described the characters and the plotline of the movement drama, the contestant might note that two kinds of scenes are emphasized in the movement rhetoric. One concerns "the balanced eco-system of a non-nuclear energy world."[44] The other concerns "the effects of nuclear hazards and disruptions to the eco-system from nuclear energy."[45]

The rhetorical critic might also choose to emphasize the importance of the sanctioning agents of "safety," "preservation of the environment," and "activism" to the promulgation of this vision. The contestant could support this analysis by quoting from Rosalie Bertell of the Roswell Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York, as she spoke at a Clamshell rally: "We have learned much about the danger of radiation, and at this point in time no one would protest the fact that any exposure to it is as harmful as anything to any life system."[46] The contestant could also point out that the DECLARATION stresses the links of nuclear energy to cancer, genetic disorders, and death. The contestant could also cite the slogan appearing on most Alliance flyers during the period that states "Better active today than radioactive tomorrow."

SUMMARY

This essay has explained how students may use Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis in competitive rhetorical criticism. This essay has identified the assumptions underlying fantasy theme analysis, described the method's concepts and presented the

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[42]Syracuse Peace Council, *Nuclear Power and Its Alternatives* (Syracuse: Syracuse Peace Council, 1977), p. 13.

[43]Syracuse Peace Council, p. 10.

[44]Clamshell Alliance, *Declaration*, p. 1.

[45]Clamshell Alliance, *Labor Solidarity Resolution* (Portsmouth: Clamshell Alliance, 1977), p. 1.

[46]Syracuse Peace Council, p. 7.

nomenclature that a student may use for setting up the "method section" of the rhetorical criticism, and presented illustrative examples that show how the method may be used to analyze various rhetorical artifacts, including a single speech, a series of messages, and the rhetoric of a social movement. By allowing the student to explore alternative realities, fantasy theme analysis provides a method whereby the student can achieve both interest and depth in competive rhetorical criticism.

Coaching Contest Rhetorical Criticism

KEVIN W. DEAN*

When coaching students at the onset of a new year, explaining the concept of contest rhetorical criticism can provide an arduous task at best. With forensic coaches and beginning students in mind, this article is written to illuminate some basic principles for the critical analysis of a rhetorical artifact in a test setting. A rhetorical artifact is considered to be any set of symbols which function persuasively (intentionally or unintentionally). For the purposes discussed here, the rhetorical artifact usually takes the form of a speech although the definition obviously encompasses literary forms, movies, songs, and movements as well.

The information presented here is by no means all inclusive, nor is it intended as a formula for tournament success. Rather, the issues addressed are ones confronted by beginning students and their coaches. Specifically, this article focuses on the nature of the rhetorical criticism event and strategies for researching and presenting contest rhetorical criticism.

WHAT IS CONTEST RHETORICAL CRITICISM?

Before the student can begin, an understanding of basic communication theory is necessary. This section focuses on the nature of rhetoric and the function of the rhetorical critic. Although many viewpoints exist, it is generally agreed that rhetorical criticism should concern the persuasive nature of a given message. The link between rhetoric and persuasion was established by Aristotle when he defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."[1] This viewpoint transcends the ages and remains popular today. Kenneth Burke asserts that "the key term for rhetoric is not 'identification' but 'persuasion'. . . [the] treatment, in terms of identification, is decidedly not meant as a substitute for the sound traditional approach. Rather. . . it is but

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*_The National Forensic Journal_, III (Fall, 1985), pp. 116-127.

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[1]Aristotle, _The Rhetoric_, tr. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Random House, Modern Library, 1954), 135b25-26.

an accessory to the standard lore."[2] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell writes: "Rhetoric, then, refers to written and oral discourses that are persuasive."[3] The report of the Committee on the Advancement and Reinforcement of Rhetorical Criticism indicates that "the critic becomes rhetorical to the extent that he studies his subject in terms of its suasory potential or persuasive effect."[4] Thus, for the would-be rhetorical criticism contestant, the artifact selected for study should be persuasive.

The rhetorical critic's responsibility, then, is to identify the distinctive persuasive tactics/elements within the artifact to analyze their uses and outcomes and, finally, to render a judgment regarding the artifact's ultimate success or failure. Lawrence Rosenfield indicates that "the verdict" is an "essential" feature of criticism.[5] Chesebro and Hamsher specify "the evaluation of symbolic acts" as a component of the critical process to be considered by contemporary critics.[6] While other standards are advocated by various writers,[7] the criterion of effects is most appropriate for evaluating a persuasive artifact.

The contestant should keep these key elements (persuasion and judgment) in mind when selecting an artifact for study. A simple

[2]Kenneth Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. xiv.

[3]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 4.

[4]*The Prospect of Rhetoric,* eds. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 220.

[5]Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "The Anatomy of Critical Discourse," in *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective,* eds. Bernard L. Brock and Robert L. Scott (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 2/e p. 153.

[6]James W. Chesebro and Caroline D. Hamsher, "Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Dimensions of the New Rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 62 (1975), p. 334.

[7]Effects-centered criticisms encompass only a portion of the total field of rhetorical evaluation. For example, proponents of an effectiveness standards (comparison of rhetoric to an accepted theoretical model) include Wayland Maxfield Parrish ("The Study of Speeches," *Speech Criticism: Methods and Materials,* ed. William A. Linsley (Dubuque: William C. Brown, 1968), p. 85), and John W. Rathbun ("The Problem of Judgment and Effect in Historical Criticism: A Proposed Solution," *Western Speech* 33 (I960), p. 159). An ethics/morality standard is advocated by Marie Hochmuth Nichols *(Rhetoric and Criticism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), p. 16), and by Ernest J. Wrage ("The Ideal Critic," *Central States Speech Journal* (1957), p. 23). Karlyn Kohrs Campbell *(Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 1), Anthony Hillbruner *(Critical Dimensions: The Art of Public Address Criticism* (New York: Random House, 1966, p. 96), and Nichols (p. 70) are adherents to a standard of truth/validity of the speaker's ideas.

analogy sums up the role of the contestant by comparing the critic to a scientist who must see if the cure for a disease has been successful. The disease is the rhetorical problem (e.g., opposition to John F. Kennedy's Catholicism during his candidacy for President). The remedy is the speech or the artifact which addresses that problem (Kennedy's address to the Houston Ministerial Association). The critic's job is to see if the speech cured the problem. While the "scientist" uses investigative tools such as a stethoscope or thermometer to collect data and measure the extent to which the problem/"disease" is cured, the critic's investigative tool is the "methodology," specifically designed to assess certain information about the artifact. While none of these tools can determine with absolute certainty whether or not the disease was cured, based on the data collected by these tools, the critic/"scientist" can make an educated judgment: yes, the disease was cured (and the artifact, presumably, was a fitting response to the situation) or no, the disease was not cured (in which case the artifact failed to achieve its rhetorical goal, although other aspects of the speech may be worth studying). With this overview of the nature of rhetorical criticism and the function of the contest critic, it is now appropriate to discuss the research process.

RESEARCHING THE CONTEST CRITICISM

The research process involved in developing a contest criticism involves four major tasks for the student: selecting an appropriate rhetorical artifact for study, understanding basic rhetorical theory, gathering background information about the rhetoric and the situation in which it occurred, and selecting a methodological tool to aid in the evaluation.

The first task, selecting the artifact, seems obvious enough—yet is sends many a beginning critic into a tailspin because of the broad nature of rhetorical artifacts. It has already been established that students should select an artifact which is persuasive, but which one? Where do students turn for an appropriate subject for their study? One starting strategy is to have rhetorical criticism students list historical or current personalities, groups, or "causes" which they have studied and which have made some measurable impact on society. Furthermore, the rhetoric should be personally invigorating for the student since many long hours will be spent researching it. Once such a focus is identified, the student should begin searching for a persuasive artifact within that focus. Obviously it is possible to undertake the rhetorical criticism of a wide

variety of persuasive forms.[8] Often the beginning student will find the traditional approach (a single speaker delivering a single speech) less formidable than more involved studies of movements and non-traditional rhetorical forms (literature, film, song, etc.). Such topics are becoming more common and acceptable in contest rhetorical criticism each year, but many judges still require of the critic a more fully developed justification for the artifact(s) as rhetorical and a more sophisticated application of a methodology than more traditional formats.[9]

After an artifact is selected, a basic introduction to rhetorical theory is useful. There are numerous books and articles which provide concisely stated introductory overviews to the study of rhetoric.[10] The student should be acquainted with basic terminology which is likely to be used in the contest situation, including

[8]Clear arguments have been made by Stephen Kosokoff and Carl W. Carmichael ("The Rhetoric of Protest: Song, Speech and Attitude Change," *Southern Speech Journal* 35 (1970), pp. 295-302), James R. Irvine and Walter G. Kirkpatrick ("The Musical Form in Rhetorical Exchange: Theoretical Considerations," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (1972), pp. 272-284), John D. Bloodworth ("Communication in the Youth Counter Culture: Music as Expression," *Central States Speech Journal* 26 (1975), pp. 304-309), Mark W. Booth ("The Art of Words in Song," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62 (1976), pp. 242-249), and Alberto Gonzalez and John J. Makay ("Rhetorical Ascription and the Gospel According to Dylan," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983), pp. 1-14) for the rhetorical evaluation of song. Franklin S. Haiman ("The Rhetoric of the Streets: Some Legal and Ethical Considerations," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 53 (1967), pp. 99-114; and "Nonverbal Communication and the First Amendment: The Rhetoric of the Streets Revisited," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982), pp. 371-383) makes a case for analysis of nonverbal symbols. Jerry Hendrix and James A. Wood ("The Rhetoric of Film: Toward Critical Methodology," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 39 (1973), pp. 105-122), Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas Frentz ("The Deer Hunter: Rhetoric of the Warrior," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980), pp. 392-406), and Rushing ("E.T. as Rhetorical) Transcendence," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985), pp. 188-203) encourage the rhetorical investigation of film. Walter R. Fisher and Richard A. Filloy ("Argument in Drama and Literature: An Exploration," in *Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research*, eds. J. Robert Cox and Charles A. Willard (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 346-47) highlight the possibilities of investigation into the rhetorical nature of literary works.

[9]Kevin W. Dean and William L. Benoit, "A Categorical Content Analysis of Rhetorical Criticism Ballots," *National Forensic Journal* 2 (1984), pp. 99-108.

[10]The following will serve as good background on the nature of rhetorical criticism: James R. Andrews, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism* (New York: Macmillian, 1983); Carroll C. Arnold, *Criticism of Oral Rhetoric* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1974); William L. Benoit, "The Theory of Rhetorical Criticism: A Bibliography," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 12

Aristotle's ethos, pathos, and logos; Bitzer's exigence, constraints, and rhetorical situation; Burke's identification; and Fisher's motives—to name some of the most frequently encountered terms.

At this point the student should be gathering information about the artifact and the situation in which it occurred. Since many tournaments provide an opportunity for judges to question the student, it is helpful for the student to know as much as possible about the entire speaking situation, such as the speaker, the audience, the setting, the speech and the effects.[11] Although only a small portion of the material gathered will actually be compacted into the ten minute time limit specified by most tournament rules, having a wealth of background information from which to draw is advisable. While the primary intent of the question period is for clarification, judges have been known to ask questions specifically designed to discern the depth of students' knowledge of their subject.

Once the student has researched the speaker, the audience, the occasion, the setting, the speech, and the influences/effects, only one major task remains prior to the actual speech construction: the selection of an appropriate methodology.[12] A methodology is a set of established criteria which focus on some particular aspect of the

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(1982), pp. 295-304; Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), pp. 1-14; William Norwood Brigance, *Speech: Its Techniques and Disciplines in A Free Society* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1961); Brock and Scott, see footnote 5; Campbell, see footnote 3; Albert J. Croft, "The Functions of Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 42 (1956), pp. 283-291; Sonja K. Foss, Karen A. Foss and Robert Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1985); James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist and William E. Coleman, *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* (Dubuque: Kendall-Hunt, 1979); Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Rhetorical Timing in Public Communication," *Central States Speech Journal* 25 (1974), pp. 84-94; Herbert W. Simons, *Persuasion: Understanding Practice and Analysis* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1976), pp. 296-317; Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird and Waldo W. Braden, *Speech Criticism* 2/e (New York: Ronald Press, 1970).

[11]A. Craig Baird, "The Study of Speeches," in *American Public Address: 1740-1952* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1956).

[12]For help in selecting appropriate methodologies see: William L. Benoit and Bill D. Wallace, "Bibliographies of Several Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism," presented at SCA 1983 Short Course Program: "Coaching Rhetorical Criticism." Some commonly employed methodologies can be found in Brock and Scott, see footnote 5. For dramatistic criticism, also see: L. H. Mouat, "An Approach to Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Rhetorical Idiom: Essays in Rhetoric, Oratory, Language and Drama,* ed. Donald C. Bryant (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 161-177; Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of

rhetorical strategies (choices) made by the rhetor who strives to achieve a desired goal. The methodology serves as a tool for the critic, allowing the artifact to be opened up for more detailed exploration. Because so many influences can affect the outcome of a persuasive event (language choice, ethics, situational timing, projected image, identification between speaker and audience, etc.), it becomes the critic's goal to select the key persuasive technique(s) which is (are), in the critic's estimation, the most powerful or most unique strategy(ies) employed by the speaker. If, for example, the speaker's major thrust is the establishment of a Utopian society which the audience envisions, then a methodology highlighting the formation of visions (such as Bormann's work on "Fantasy Theme Analysis") might well be an appropriate choice.[13] In such a case the methodology provides a narrowing function so that the student can hope to fit the analysis and criticism into the ten minute framework which is mandated by the contest situation.

WRITING THE CONTEST CRITICISM

Once the background information has been collected and a methodology has been selected, the student is ready to begin writing the rhetorical criticism. In this stage, the student should give attention to the speech's structure and content.

Structure: As with any public address, whether contest, classroom or "real world," clear organizational structure is a key to success. As in any speech, the student should engage the audience with an attention-getting introduction and should leave them with a strong closing remark.[14] Also important is an easily followed organiza-

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Social Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (1972), pp. 396-407; Bormann, "Fetching Good Out of Evil: A Rhetorical Use of Calamity," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (1977), pp. 130-139; Walter R. Fisher, "A Motive View of Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970), pp. 131-139; Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke*, ed. William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), pp. 456-478; or Richard M. Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," in *Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings*, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 163-179.

[13]John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields, eds., *Applied Communication Research: A Dramatistic Approach* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1981) and Ernest G. Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985).

[14]The ballot survey in contest rhetorical criticism, by Dean and Benoit, pointed out the special attention judges in this event give to the opening and closing of the speech; students should give special notice to a creative, attention-getting introduction and a thought-provoking conclusion, which preferably ties back into the introduction.

tional pattern. Because of the sophistication of analysis and the audience's potential unfamiliarity with the details of the methodology which will be utilized, a preview (found early in the speech) and clear transitions between sections of the speech are particularly helpful for contest rhetorical criticism. In most instances the preview in a rhetorical criticism should forecast the upcoming discussion of the historical context of the artifact, explanation and application of a methodology, and the rendering of a rhetorical judgment.

Content: The material contained within the speech will showcase the student's long hours of research. Specifically, the contestant will want to be concerned with background information, justification of the artifact and methodology for this study, clear explanation and application of the methodology, effects, a final judgment, implications, and documentation for all aspects of the speech's content.

While the bulk of the speech should center on the criticism and analysis of the rhetoric being studied, some background information can add interest and clarity for the audience. Brief mention of the following should be made: a) What was the date of the artifact's presentation? b) What was the occasion of the presentation? c) Who comprised the audience at which the persuasive message was targeted? d) What were the rhetor's goals and must one distinguish between overt and covert goals? and e) Where was the text of the speech/artifact found? Brief answers to these five questions will provide the necessary background to make the criticism more meaningful.

Furthermore, the student needs to make two statements of justification early in the speech, statements which many contest rhetorical speakers fail to make.[15] First, the student should validate the artifact selected as rhetorical and significant for study. For a speech, the rhetorical nature is obvious in most situations since many speakers overtly state their persuasive purpose. For other forms of rhetoric (films, literature, songs, etc.), the student's task of proving persuasiveness may be more difficult, but is equally important. For a meaningful rhetorical study, it is up to the critic to demonstrate the persuasive potency of the chosen artifact.[16] For example, two successful, Midwestern, student competitors studied literary artifacts which functioned rhetorically. One focused on the

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[15]Wayne N. Thompson, "The Contest in Rhetorical Criticism," *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* 66 (1981), pp. 17-19, 31.

[16]William L. Benoit and Kevin W. Dean, "Rhetorical Criticism of Literary Artifacts," elsewhere in this issue.

poem "The Murder of Lidice" by Edna Saint Vincent Millay, and the second critically analyzed Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* In order to distinguish her artifact from other poems Millay wrote, the former student reported that Millay wrote in her diary that her poem was written for the express purpose of propaganda. The second student justified the rhetorical function of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by quoting Abraham Lincoln, who upon first meeting Harriet Beecher Stowe remarked, "So this is the little lady who started the big war."[17] Statements such as these clearly illustrate the presence of a rhetorical element, and thus justify such artifacts as appropriate for contest criticism. In the first instance, the rhetor herself offered a statement of persuasive intent; in the second instance, persuasive impact was attributed to the artifact being studied.

The initial justification of the artifact as rhetorical is important since an artifact's significance is based, in part, on the effectiveness of the speech in achieving both the rhetor's goals and an impact on the audience. Sometimes this will be measurable. Statisticians can count the number of dollars given by the American Jewish Federation after hearing Golda Meir's plea for funds. In other situations the impact might not be as empirically obvious. President Reagan's "D-Day Address in Normandy" which moved the audience to tears obviously stirred emotion, but it would be speculative at best to discuss long range impact. For contest purposes, the most common way to justify an artifact's significance is to argue its impact on an audience. However, other possibilities exist. The artifact may be representative of a group of rhetors or discourse. John Wesley, for instance, delivered over 42,000 sermons in his lifetime.[18] The overall impact of Wesley's Methodist movement cannot be denied, but selecting a single speech as "the most significant" in his career is clearly an impossible task. In such a case, the selection of a representative sermon for analysis would be an appropriate form of justifying an artifact for study in contest criticism.

The second statement of justification should be directed toward the chosen methodology. The basic question the student should answer is: "Why?" Why is this method of analysis fitting, appro-

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[17]Taken from the second place winning rhetorical criticism delivered at the 1983 NFA National Tournament and a 1984 NFA National Tournament semi-finalist. The speeches were presented by Melissa L. Dean of Miami University of Ohio and by Nancy Buchanan of Ball State University.

[18]"John Benjamin Wesley," in Vol. Ill of *20 Centuries of Great Preaching: An Encyclopedia of Preaching,* eds. Clyde E. Fant, Jr. and William M. Pinson, Jr. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971), p. 9.

priate, insightful, and/or unique to the given artifact? For example, Walter Fisher suggests that a speaker selects one of four motives (affirmation, reaffirmation, subversion, purification) to affect the speaker's image with an audience. While all four motives may be present in a given speech, one is usually dominant.[19] One student, who analyzed Margaret Sanger's crusade for birth control, realized that the purification of Sanger's image as a mother was a key factor in her success. By pointing this out in her speech, the student was able to illustrate why Fisher's model was an appropriate choice.[20] By explaining why particular methodologies were selected, students demonstrate their analytical abilities to astutely identify the central rhetorical strategies employed in the given artifact and allow a more in-depth and meaningful criticism.

A major portion of the contest criticism involves the methodology. For many audience members, this can be the most confusing aspect of the speech. The student should assume the role of an educator and "teach" the chosen methodology to the audience. The author and bibliographic information concerning the method should be indicated. Each element of the method should be carefully enumerated and defined. This explanation should not be a regurgitation of a pedantic essay but, rather, a concise presentation of the central tenets of the methodology utilizing clear language which, when possible, is the student's own rather than that of the journal article's explanations.

Once the method for criticism has been outlined, an application to the artifact is the student's next step. Although some tournaments limit the number of direct quotations, at every possible juncture illustrative examples from the artifact should be incorporated into the contestant's presentation. If, for example, one element of the methodology was the use of military metaphors, then the student should search for such strategies employed by the rhetor and include examples in the contest speech. For instance, in a student criticism of the rhetoric of Eva Peron, the student pointed out that Evita "metaphorically compares the common people to 'trenches of Peron,' her 'glory' to a protective 'shield,' and her 'sacrificed life' to a 'flag of glory.'"[21] Using examples will add clarity to the contestant's speech, will serve as support for assertions

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[19]Fisher, pp. 131-139.

[20]Taken from the first place winning rhetorical criticism delivered at the 1981 NFA National Tournament. The speech was presented by Denise M. Bostdorff of Bowling Green State University.

[21]Taken from the second place winning rhetorical criticism delivered at the 1982 NFA National Tournament. The speech was presented by Melissa L. Dean of Miami University of Ohio.

made, and will demonstrate the contestant's critical ability to select elements from the artifact which provide analytical insight.

After the methodology has been outlined and applied, the student can begin to measure rhetorical success by observing the artifact's effects. Wayne Thompson writes that "effectiveness is the distinctive dimension of rhetoric and this generalization should guide the critic."[22] It is difficult to assess the impact of some recent artifacts because their effects are short-term, with long-term effects yet to be determined. Regardless of the time period of the speech, however, some mention of immediate audience reaction, or short-term impact, should be made. The impact of historical events are often easily assessed simply because more documentation is available. In such cases it is often valuable to view both the short-term and long-term impact. Audiences' views toward the rhetoric of such people as Adolph Hitler, Huey Long, and Joseph McCarthy have varied over time while attitudes toward Winston Churchill and Golda Meir have remained fairly consistent. An analysis of such shifting or stable positions can also shed light on the strength or faulty qualities of the rhetoric, thus assessing the artifact's impact/effects over time.

Toward the conclusion of the speech, an overall judgment needs to be rendered by the contestant. The contestant should keep in mind that the judgment should be primarily directed toward the success or failure of the persuasive strategies. More than one judge has written "historical effectiveness does not equal rhetorical successfulness" on a ballot. While an historical outcome that results (at least in part) from the artifact is noteworthy, the critic's judgment should focus on the rhetorical attributes which contribute to that result. The basis for the final judgment should be the culmination and synthesis of *all* available material gathered for the study. Saying the speech succeeded "because it met all the criteria set forth in Burke's pentad" is both shallow and an incorrect use of the methodology. It *assumes* that rhetorical theory is omniscient, and provides no evidence of how well the artifact worked for its audience. The judgment should be holistic in its evaluation of the total communication act.

A final question which the student may wish to address in the speech is the topic of implications. The student should answer the question: "So what?" What ideas are supported by this study that could be applied to other situations? What strengths or frailties were observed that the student critics should be aware of in their own speaking or in the speech of others? What unique insights are

[22]Thompson, p. 18.

available from utilizing the given methodology? By dealing with implications, the student demonstrates the educational value of this event by showing how the study can be extended to other communication situations as well.

Source citation is a vital consideration for rhetorical criticism speakers. As with any speech, claims or information which may be unfamiliar to the audience, or which are not deemed to be general knowledge, should be documented. Many comments on ballots express concern by judges that too little support material is being utilized.[23] Thompson indicates the importance of documentation in the contest situation when he writes, "the testimony of contemporary observers and the opinions of historians are of value. . . [and] the contestant should make the most of what is available."[24] Students should be encouraged to liberally document material from different sources. The documentation should add support to assertions made in reference to the background/historical setting, the artifact and the methodology.

PRESENTING THE CONTEST CRITICISM

Once the speech has been constructed, attention should be given to the student's delivery. No matter how stylistically brilliant, how solidly documented, how clearly organized or sophisticated its analysis, a speech is doomed to failure if its ideas are not well-delivered. A study of contest rhetorical criticism ballots found that the largest category of judges' comments (30% of all comments) centered on delivery. Students were praised for conversationality, enthusiasm, use of wit, creative language choice, strong eye contact and smooth gestures. Criticism, occurring in a three to one ratio with praise, was aimed at mechanical and rapid vocal rate, lack of enthusiasm, shifty eye contact, sloppy articulation, choppy gestures, over-dramatic or "interpy" quality on quoted material, and memory problems. The most numerous delivery criticisms were levied against the use of manuscripts. While the rules of all of the tournaments used in this study explicitly permitted the use of manuscripts, it is interesting to note that many negative remarks but no positive comments were made about their use.[25] This seems to indicate little appreciation of the use of manuscripts in the contest setting. Given the cost of tournament attendance and the knowledge that ballots will likely contain comments such as "Ditch the script," it may well be more educationally and financially sound to keep students home until the speech is memorized.

[23]Dean and Benoit, p. 103.
[24]Thompson, p. 18.
[25]Dean and Benoit, p. 103.

Numerous judges consider rhetorical criticism a lackluster event. This is all the more reason to emphasize to the student the importance of an enthusiastic presentation. By selecting a topic of the student's own interest, and by communicating that interest both physically and vocally, the audience will be much more enthusiastic about listening. If students strive for a personable/ conversational delivery style, their ideas will be more easily understood and, consequently, will stand a greater likelihood of being accepted.

A final note concerning delivery deals with the potential question-answer period. Students need to feel confident about this portion of the event and should be able to respond to the judge in a poised, concise manner. Coaches should simulate tournament question sessions with students by discussing issues such as background, justification of methodology, long term vs. short term effects, speaker goals, and the intentional nature of persuasion. In addition, the coach might encourage students to always repeat the question before attempting to answer it. This assures that the student understands the judge, as well as allows added time for the student to reflect upon the answer.

CONCLUSION

Contest rhetorical criticism is a valuable forensic event, for it exposes students to some of the fundamental theories of our discipline. By becoming astute critics of speech, students can learn to improve their own speaking skills as well as become better consumers of the persuasive discourse around them. The materials presented here will serve as a guide, specifically for the student and coach who may be new to this event, and hopefully also serve as a stimulant to encourage more active participation in contest rhetorical criticism. Such an effort will not only keep contest criticism alive, but it will greatly enhance the educational understanding of the discipline as a whole.

Changing Perspectives on Rhetorical Criticism as a Forensic Event

ROBERT E. ROSENTHAL*

The nature of rhetorical criticism as a forensic event has been the subject of a number of national and regional convention programs and a good deal of debate within the individual events community. Essentially, this discussion has proceeded along the lines of the arguments originated in the controversy between classical and contemporary rhetorical theorists in the field of speech communication. Although the National Forensic Association has developed rules for the event which are indicative of the contemporary perspective,[1] there appears to be no end to the discussion—among coaches and on the ballots of students—regarding what should be considered "legitimate" rhetorical criticism.

One of the primary reasons rhetorical criticism is viewed with confusion by many members of the forensic community is the lack of an adequate definition of the theoretical purpose and function of the event. A secondary factor contributing to this perplexing problem is that too many coaches/judges have limited, if any, educational exposure to rhetorical analysis outside the forensic event. Without a basic framework from which to approach criticism, many of our colleagues have difficulty understanding the requirements of rhetorical criticism from a theoretical perspective. Furthermore, this intellectual discomfiture with the event has undoubtedly contributed to the lack of student participation in rhetorical criticism.

This essay, thus, presents a working model of rhetorical criticism as a forensic event. This will be accomplished initially by presenting a general definition of rhetoric, followed by an explanation of a critical perspective for the event. The final section of this essay articulates a specific purpose and function which appears to be

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[1]The rules for the N.F.A. event have been expanded to include "any legitimate method" of rhetorical analysis and the notion that criticism "opens up the artifact" under consideration. Thus, the organization has recognized the rhetorical significance of modern suasory forms in addition to oral discourse.

appropriate for the limitations inherent in the act of rhetorical criticism in forensic competition.

DEFINITION OF RHETORIC

In order to understand the nature of the rhetorical-critical act, it is first necessary to define rhetoric itself. This task, of course, is not as simple as it might seem since a dictionary definition is, at best, theoretically naive. It would be presumptuous to suggest that there is a specific definition of rhetoric which would satisfy all scholars in the field. Since, however, the focus of this article is forensics, a definition of rhetoric which is appropriate for the event of rhetorical criticism will be developed. This exercise in rhetorical theory may appear to be superfluous to some, but defining the subject matter of the event will serve as a critical introduction to the later discussion concerning methodology, purpose, and function.

Most of our colleagues are familiar with Aristotle's definition of rhetoric: "the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion."[2] This classical perspective of the art of rhetoric served the field as it was revived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The scope of rhetoric was limited to the spoken word, since this school of thought descended from the oral tradition of the Greeks. This view holds that rhetoric is an intentional act of oral discourse in which the speaker attempts to instruct, entertain, or persuade the audience.[3]

Contemporary theorists have broadened both the scope and the function of rhetoric. Instead of limiting its subject matter to formal oral discourse and its theoretical grounds to the discovery of the available means of persuasion, this perspective posits that rhetoric is the method by which humans symbolically structure reality.

> At the very core of the new rhetoric is the contention that what people think they know cannot be demonstrated to be factually true. Hence, in the contingent arenas of political, social, moral and religious affairs, man can do no more than hold with uncertainty those ideas which are a unique product of his selective experience.[4]

It is this basic premise that underlies the contemporary perspective. This view of rhetoric as epistemic[5] assumes that "human needs

[2]Aristotle, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle,* trans., Lane Cooper (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 7.

[3]For an excellent synopsis of this critical perspective, see Lester A. Thonssen, A. Craig Baird and Waldo W. Braden, *Speech Criticism* (New York: Ronald Press, 1970).

[4]Richard Cherwitz, "Rhetoric as 'A Way of Knowing': An Attenuation of the Epitemological Claims of the 'New Rhetoric'," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal,* 42 (1977), p. 29.

[5]Scott notes that "it is important to seek to understand rhetoric as of way of knowing not *the* way." Robert L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as

generate selective perceptions and ultimately organize and structure the basic reality in which people operate."[6] Language "is a way of sizing up reality."[7] As the world has become increasingly sophisticated, systems of symbols—in a word, rhetoric—have become the basis for social behavior.

> In complex cultures, the symbol system may be the only tool which transcends the limits of culturally diverse life-styles, classes, organizational hierarchies, and unique personalities. Thus, the symbols system may ultimately provide the common factors creating and sustaining the social and political community.[8]

In light of this cultural emphasis on language and other symbolic forms as our method of structuring reality, a different, broader definition of rhetoric has evolved. Even if the term is still to be equated with the concept of "persuasion" rhetoric can no longer be limited in scope to intentional, oral discourse. Although Aristotle may have been brilliant, he did not envision the explosion of persuasive forms witnessed in this century.

Thus, a broad definition of rhetoric would seem to be representative of the contemporary approach to the subject within the field of speech communication. Forensics, an activity with unique roots in the discipline of rhetoric, should adopt a definition which is compatible with its academic grounding. Such a definition must extend the limits of the classical perspective so it becomes inclusive, rather than exclusive, of modern forms of rhetoric: "rhetoric may be the art of persuasion, that is, it may be seen from one angle as a practical capacity to find means to ends on specific occasions; but rhetoric must also be seen more broadly as a human potentiality to understand the human condition."[9]

Although there is room for disagreement, Burke offers a definition of rhetoric which fits these criteria. Rhetoric is "rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."[10] Burke further expands the scope of rhetoric, positing that the field consists of all that has meaning, since the "naming" of something involves symbolic choices. "Wherever

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Epistemic: Ten Years Later," *Central States Speech Journal*, 27 (1976), p. 259.

[6]James W. Chesebro, "Political Communication," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 62 (1973), p. 298.

[7]Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (New York: Vintage Press, 1957), p. 5.

[8]Chesebro, pp. 298-299.

[9]Scott, p. 266.

[10]Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 43.

there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning,' there is persuasion."[11]

The differences between defining rhetoric as the study of the available means of persuasion for oral discourse and referring to it as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation are obvious. Rhetoric becomes a broad field which has as its central focus the study of the development of meaning as opposed to a narrow discipline involved with the development of oral persuasion/influence. In brief, rhetoric is now viewed by many scholars as a form of reality construction.

The point to be made at this juncture regarding criticism is rather simple, yet it is filled with tremendous implications for the student, coach, and scholar: It is not *what* we study, but rather *how* we study it, which now defines rhetorical criticism from other analytical forms. This conceptualization enlarges the scope of the subject matter for critical consideration. As the Committee on the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism at the "Wingspread Conference" noted in its report: "Rhetorical Criticism may be applied to any human act, process, product, or artifact which, in the critic's view, may formulate, sustain or modify attention, perceptions, attitudes, or behavior."[12]

Since the conferees greatly enlarged the subject matter available for rhetorical analysis, the importance of methodology as a somewhat limiting factor has become crucial. Critics are rhetorical not because they examine something called "rhetoric;" rather, a critic is rhetorical because of the types of questions asked and the methods of analysis chosen. In the past, rhetorical critics studied and analyzed speeches. Students of rhetorical criticism may continue to analyze oral discourse, yet they should now feel free to explore different, more contemporary suasory formats. While rhetorical criticism was once defined by its subject matter and its methodology, it is now primarily defined in terms of its methodological approach to critical analysis, excluding subject matter as a limiting consideration.

THE CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The shift in the concept of rhetorical criticism from subject and method limitations to methodological considerations alone as its defining factor leads to a critical perspective which is different

[11]Burke, *Rhetoric*, p. 172.

[12]Thomas O. Sloan, Richard B. Gregg, Thomas R. Nilsen, Irving J. Rein, Herbert W. Simons, Herman G. Stelzner and Donald W. Zacharias, "The Report of the Committee on the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism," in Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, eds., *The Prospect of Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 220.

from that of the traditional approach. The classical critic possessed, "A dispassionate, objective attitude toward the object of investigation . . . which enable[d] him to view facts and arrive at judgments with a minimum of emotional disposition."[13] While Thonssen, Baird and Braden's admonitions regarding overt emotionalism constitute sound advice, it should be noted that such calls for objectivity cannot be answered due to the limitations inherent in the human condition. As Swanson has argued, "understanding the nature of rhetorical criticism must proceed from the assumption that individuals, including rhetorical critics as well as social scientists, work with the experience of objects rather than with objects themselves, unfiltered by experience."[14] While Swanson's statement appears to be similar in nature to Plato's "cave allegory,"[15] Chesebro and Hamsher make the transition to contemporary social theory, noting that, "The critic, historian or not, is controlled or influenced by his or her immediate culture; critics offer rhetorical assertions about what they selectively perceive something to be, and what relative value and role they believe an event fulfills within a society."[16]

From this perspective, the critic does not create the ultimate interpretation of a phenomenon. Since meaning is relative (because it is created rhetorically) and the critic is culturally bound, the rhetorical critic presents arguments and analysis supporting an interpretation of the subject under consideration; good criticism is then based upon sound arguments and the effective application of an appropriate method of analysis. The critic, realizing the relativity of judgments, focuses upon experience itself, setting aside comparisons with the "objective world."[17]

This perspective regarding criticism-as-argument is evident in the "critic-as-artist" paradigm. "The 'critic-artist' is a rhetor who, by taking audience into account, phrases his insights, analyses, and judgments in a way that orders or reorders the rhetorical event."[18] In this model there is a tacit acknowledgement on the part

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[13]Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 22.

[14]David L. Swanson, "A Reflective View of the Epistomology of Critical Inquiry," *Communication Monographs*, 44 (1977), p. 212.

[15]In Plato's famous "Allegory of the Cave," humans were viewed as experiencing merely the "shadows" of reality until the philosopher brings them out into the "light" of day, where they may discern the Truth. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans., Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 193-196.

[16]James W. Chesebro and Caroline D. Hamsher, "Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Dimensions of the New Rhetoric," *Communication Monographs*, 42 (1975), p. 316.

[17]Swanson, p. 210. Swanson refers to this as the "reflexive attitude."

[18]Sloan, et al., p. 223.

of the audience and speaker that there is an element of persuasion involved in the presentation of a rhetorical criticism. Since the critic forms perceptions of phenomena based upon personal insight and methodological order, the audience should not accept an analysis as being filled with "objective truth." By the same token, there is a requirement on the speaker that "mind and experience must be drawn on creatively to form coherent views of the phenomena of discourse."[19] This paradigm "fits" the critical perspective acknowledging that, since reality is socially constructed, rhetorical critics must persuade the audience to accept their interpretation of an event.

The key to understanding this perspective may be in the use of rhetorical methodologies. For example, a student who chooses a method derived from Aristotle would be led, by the types of questions asked, to a different set of conclusions than a student who chooses a method derived from Burke. An analysis of the rhetoric of social movements from a classical perspective would entail the analysis of speeches which were indicative of the persuasive intentions of the movement. An analysis of the identical social upheaval from a contemporary perspective might choose to concentrate upon the rhetorical form of the movement—the stages which social crusades move through.[20] In each case, students may choose to analyze the identical event from different methodological perspectives. These perspectives may lead the students to different conclusions, yet the students may still perform legitimate, credible acts of rhetorical criticism. In each case, the critics would order an event based upon their methodological perspectives and argue for the validity of their conclusions regarding the rhetorical nature of the subject matter.

This critical perspective may have been foreshadowed in the classical approach articulated by Thonssen, Baird and Braden, when they noted that, "a rhetorical judgment embraces all the knowledge in the critic's possession; it draws upon his total resources."[21] Implicit here is an understanding that criticism is more than the application of a methodology to an event—it is not a science, rather, it is an art. A rhetorical criticism represents the nexus at which theory joins practice.

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[19]Robert L. Scott and Bernard L. Brock, *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 125.

[20]For a discussion of the form of social movements, see Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in William Rueckert, ed., *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 461.

[21]Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 12.

While the method of analysis in rhetorical criticism must be grounded in rhetorical theory, the critic-as-artist model still allows for some additional creativity. Any method of rhetorical analysis, singularly or in combination with other methods, may be used to aid the critic in the attempt to "open up the artifact" under scrutiny. This is a departure from the more traditional approach to criticism in which critics employ a single methodology in their endeavor.

This liberalizing perspective can only add positively to the forensic event by permitting students to examine contemporary subject matter which they may consider to be of greater relevance to their lives (such as music, advertising, movies) using different analytical tools. While a methodology must be clearly articulated, it is possible to perform enlightening criticism through a combination of rhetorical formats. For example, it would be naive to use a rhetorical method to analyze a song without also noting, in musical terms, concepts such as beat, tone, and melody. It is incumbent upon the rhetorical critic to use both rhetorical and non-rhetorical methods of analysis in whatever combinations appear to present the most effective analysis of the subject under consideration.

THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF RHETORICAL CRITICISM IN FORENSICS

If the rhetorical critic is virtually unlimited in the choice of subject matter, and if the methodologies, while grounded in rhetorical theory, may be creative, what is the definition of rhetorical criticism as a forensic event? While the contest rules of the National Forensic Association "fit" the perspective articulated above, additional clarification could be provided in the following definitional statement:

> Rhetorical Criticism is a persuasive event involving the description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of phenomena through the use of methodologies grounded in rhetorical theory.

This definition clearly articulates the nature of the forensic event as it has developed from the contemporary perspective. First, it does not limit the subject matter for consideration by the student-critic. As noted previously, this is not only in keeping with the current state of affairs within the field of rhetoric, it is also beneficial to increased student participation in the event. Rhetoric, through the study of contemporary suasory forms, can be made to "come alive" for our students. This would expose many more contestants to the study of rhetoric. Second, the definition acknowledges the importance of theoretical grounding for the methodologies employed in rhetorical analysis. This is both theoretically sound and pedagogically desirable.

Third, inclusion of the notion that rhetorical criticism is, in part, a persuasive event serves as an admission that the critic actually argues for a specific interpretation of a phenomenon. The event then embodies certain aspects of both exposition and persuasion, since the contestant must not only explicate the method and the inner-workings of the rhetorical act, but also serve as an advocate for an interpretation of that act.

Finally, the definition presents the four stages of rhetorical criticism (description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation),[22] including the necessity for some form of rhetorical evaluation. Good criticism should have an evaluative component. This position is articulated by many rhetorical scholars, all of whom essentially echo the position of Scott and Brock: "In some way or another, implicitly or explicitly, [the critic] says that the rhetoric, product or process, is well done or ill."[23]

In making a rhetorical evaluation, the critic should not be limited by the classical perspective, with its emphasis upon ascertaining the effect of the rhetoric. Each methodology inevitably leads the critic toward certain categories of evaluations: some are concerned with ethics; others with motive or purpose; still other methods focus upon formal consistency, genre or style. The key for the critic is to make the appropriate evaluations which are natural outgrowths of the kinds of questions asked by the rhetorical method of analysis.

Having articulated a theoretical position, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the purpose(s) of the forensic event of rhetorical criticism. Apart from the development of general speaking skills, such as organization and delivery (which are common to a number of events), the specific goals of rhetorical criticism are: 1) to instruct students in rhetorical theory and criticism; 2) to develop an understanding of the relationship among theory, criticism, and practice; 3) to pursue detailed rhetorical study of phenomena. Furthermore, ancillary purposes for the event may be to develop a greater understanding of analysis and criticism as important tools for democratic citizenship and/or to encourage students to understand their own value systems. Since criticism is both creative and reflexive, and since critics must make evaluations, rhetorical criticism can help students to gain perspective regarding their own value hierarchies. The necessity of making judgments in a rational, persuasive manner enables the students to ask questions of

[22]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1972), p, 12.

[23]Scott and Brock, p. 9. For a quick summary of the concept of evaluation in rhetorical criticism see Stephen E. Lucas, "The Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 67 (1981), pp. 1-20.

themselves. In justifying a critical evaluation, the students ultimately examine how and why they have come upon the defended position. As Wander and Jenkins conclude, "Values live in human beings; consequently, each honest effort at criticism plumbs the depths of the critic's understanding of his or herself."[24]

The question at this juncture is rather pragmatic in nature: What should be the expectations of the coach/judge concerning the essence of rhetorical criticism in forensic competition? The answer lies in a brief examination of the two distinct functions of rhetorical criticism within the field of rhetoric. Basically, criticism serves both a theory-building and a pragmatic function in rhetorical study.[25] Contributions to theory are made by critical efforts which result in "the discovery of forms that permit and evoke participation, of processes that transcend argumentative controversies and immediate situations, of transformations that restructure perceptions and create new perspectives, or syntheses of substantive-stylistic stratagems that form genres or rhetoric, and of archetypal forms of interaction."[26] This is a laudable goal for scholarly contributions to the field of rhetoric, yet it is one that may not be attainable in a ten minute speech.

The expectations of many judges regarding the mandatory inclusion of the theory-building function within a speech often result in shoddy attempts by students to "add" to rhetorical theory. Comments such as, "We can see from the application of this methodology that theory XYZ is accurate," do a disservice to this function of rhetorical criticism. This is not to say that an occasional, insightful argument is not possible; it is, however, highly improbable given the constraints inherent in the forensic event.

The other function of criticism is both practical and intellectually defensible. The pragmatic role may be defined as the illumination of phenomena in terms of its rhetorical significance. The judge should expect that the student, using a rhetorical methodology, should concentrate upon the examination and the evaluation of the subject material under consideration, explaining the "how" and "why" and evaluating the phenomenon from a rhetorical perspective. In this manner, the contestant can enlighten the audience regarding the rhetorical content of the event while avoiding commentary concerning the actual process of criticism. Intellectually, both critic and judge gain from achieving a greater understanding

[24]Phillip Wander and Steven Jenkins, "Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 58 (1972), p. 441.

[25]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Criticism: Ephemeral and Enduring," *The Speech Teacher*, 23 (1974), p. 12.

[26]Campbell, "Criticism," p. 12.

of the event and the importance of rhetoric to society in general.

Concentration upon the pragmatic function of rhetorical criticism should not be viewed as sanctioning ragged efforts in the application of theory to practice. A student still must apply an appropriate, clearly delineated rhetorical methodology to some artifact. The analysis should do more than merely "pigeon-hole" elements of the persuasive process, since good criticism involves both analysis and synthesis. The removal of the mandatory "contribution to theory" component from the expectations of judges places the emphasis upon the "opening-up of the artifact," an important critical function which is still difficult to perform adequately in ten minutes.

Concentration upon this function does not mean that speeches will be devoid of theory, nor does it mean that students will not attempt to make valuable contributions to theory-building. The key is to remove the expectation that the speech should prove something about theory, instead placing judicial emphasis on the pragmatic aspects of rhetorical criticism. Judges should continue to make helpful comments regarding the appropriate use and application of methodologies. Indeed, these criteria are actually enhanced by the emphasis upon the pragmatic function of criticism. In this light, the purpose and function of rhetorical criticism in forensics becomes unified. Some sample questions, designed to reflect this unification, which might be used by judges in order to evaluate the event include: "What have we learned about the rhetorical nature of the phenomenon under consideration?" "Is the method appropriate for this critical inquiry?" "Is the method correctly and accurately applied?" "Has the analysis shed new light on the topic?" "Is the critical evaluation a natural outgrowth of the methodology?" "Is the speaker persuasive in presenting the conclusions?"

In order to fulfill this pragmatic function of rhetorical criticism, a student must first gain significant knowledge concerning the subject of the critical inquiry. Next, an appropriate method of analysis must be selected. The methodology must then be used in order to explain the rhetorical significance of the subject, interpreting both method and artifact. Finally, an evaluation, either implicit or explicit, must be made concerning the scrutinized material. These basic steps should be the focus of the expectations of both contestants and judges regarding the event of rhetorical criticism.

The roots of intercollegiate forensics are planted firmly in the field of rhetoric. Thus, rhetorical criticism is one of the most important speaking events, since it may be used to educate students in the scholarly intricacies of the academic parent. Having

broadened the scope and direction of the event to include non-traditional rhetorical forms, the National Forensic Association has made an attempt to make rhetorical criticism more relevant to students and closer to the types of criticism found in the journals of the professional organizations. This essay has explained some of the theoretical groundings for the event rules and has advocated a perspective regarding the expectations of students and judges. In order to improve this important intellectual experience for students in forensics, the forensic community must broaden its definitions and reshape its perspectives and expectations regarding the purpose and function of rhetorical criticism.

Communication Analysis: A Survey Research Report

SUZANNE LARSON*

Communication analysis/rhetorical criticism[1] (subsequently referred to as communication analysis) is a new and growing intercollegiate forensic event.[2] Generally, a communication analysis is a "meta-communication," a speech analyzing or describing important factors influencing a communication experience. Partly due to the relative youth of the event and partly due to its status as a twig in the family tree of rhetorical criticism, communication analysis has spawned little academic interest until recent years. But even with a growing interest in communication analysis, many competitors have encountered problems interpreting what the event is designed to accomplish and determining the standards used to evaluate the event.

Individuals who have written about communication analysis recognize the problems resulting from not knowing the purposes and standards of the event. McCorkle described what she saw as "a knowledge or opinion gap between speaker and audience/judge."[3] Thompson tended to agree on this point and delineated five common problems in communication analysis. First, he wrote, speakers tend to over-emphasize form at the expense of substance; second, communication analysts typically distribute their time

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[1]The American Forensic Association event is entitled communication analysis, while the National Forensic Association event is called rhetorical criticism. Although they are definitionally somewhat different, both generally are accepted as the same event.

[2]A review of Jack Howe's compilation of *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results* shows significant growth in offerings of the event at tournaments in recent years. In 1969-70 only eleven tournaments offered some type of criticism event while ten years later 125 forensic tournaments included the event on their roster. See Jack H. Howe and Jack St. Clair, eds., *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results, Vol.* 19 (Long Beach, C A.: 1979-80), p. 19.

[3]Suzanne McCorkle, "What Place Do Rhetorical Criticism and Communication Analysis Have in the New Forensics Decade?" *The Forensic*, 68 (Fall 1982), p. 19.

poorly; third, speakers demonstrate at best a superficial grasp of the chosen methodology; fourth, no explanation of the reason for choosing a particular method is given; finally, most speakers simply attempt to accomplish too much.[4]

Interestingly enough, both McCorkle and Thompson assumed that the problems in communication analysis lay with the student competitor for not preparing a proper speech rather than with the nature of the event itself. Both authors also assumed that other forensic critics look at the same characteristics of a communication analysis as they do. This assumption has yet to be tested. Furthermore, both authors seem to expect student speakers to know what constitutes a good communication analysis. Yet, limited resources exist for students to discover this information.[5]

Hahn and Gustainis, on the other hand, indicted the tournament practice of rhetorical criticism because it bore "little resemblance to the academic discipline which also goes by that name." They contended that "rhet crit" is not analytical, judgmental, or contextual.[6] However, these charges assumed *a priori* that the objectives and practices of contest speaking should be equal to the academic discipline of rhetorical criticism.

Benoit rejected Hahn and Gustainis' comparison of tournament rhet crit to the academic discipline of rhetorical criticism. He recognized that competitive rhetorical criticism is simply not professional rhetorical criticism and should not be condemned "for not having fully met standards not meant for their educational activity."[7] Similarly, Dean and Benoit argued that scholarly and competitive rhetorical criticism are different species: "They are, quite simply put, different games with different rules and different players."[8]

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[4]Wayne N. Thompson, "The Contest in Rhetorical Criticism," *The Forensic* 66 (Winter 1981) pp. 17-19.

[5]There are a few articles where competitors can turn for information. See Dan F. Hahn and J. Justin Gustainis, "Rhet Crit: Its Not Rhetorical Criticism," *The Forensic* 68 (1982), pp. 13-17; William L. Benoit, "Response to Hahn and Gustainis," *The Forensic* 68 (1983), pp. 3-5; Kevin D. Dean and William L. Benoit, "Judging Standards in Rhetorical Criticism: A Categorical Content Analysis of Rhetorical Criticism Ballots," *National Forensic Journal 2* (1984), pp. 99-108; Deborah M. Geisler, "Rhetorical Criticism as an Individual Event: Current Practices and Concerns," *The Forensic 70* (1984), pp. 1-5; and Brenda J. Logue, "In What Ways is Argument Applied in the Prepared Speech Events?" *Dimensions of Argument: Proceedings of the Second Summer Conference on Argumentation*, George Ziegelmueller and Jack Rhodes, eds., (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1981), pp. 384-94.

[6]Hahn and Gustainis, pp. 13.

[7]Benoit, pp. 3-5.

[8]Dean and Benoit.

The blame for some of the problems in communication analysis has been heaped on the shoulders of coaches and judges. Hahn and Gustainis, and to some extent McCorkle, believed that the problems in communication analysis exist because judges and coaches do not understand rhetorical criticism and can not coach or judge the speeches they hear.[9] Basing their judgment on personal experiences and observations, Hahn and Gustainis asserted that a polished, well-delivered speech frequently is rewarded more favorably than a speech with superior content.[10]

Regardless of who is to blame for the problems in communication analysis, the student for not properly preparing the speech, the coach for not fully understanding rhetorical criticism, or the judge for expecting too much in a ten-minute speech, the fact still remains that students who compete in the event can not find a set of guidelines directing their composition of a communication analysis speech. At this point, no research has quantified the goals of communication analysis and the standards for evaluating communication analysis. Instead, students find many contradicting opinions and assumptions.[11] Since there appear to be some fundamental pedagogical questions raised concerning the event, additional research on communication analysis is desirable, especially research which evaluates the goals and standards for the event.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey of competitors and judges attending the April, 1983 American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament held in Ogden, Utah on the campus of Weber State College. A survey of the opinions of judges and competitors seemed to be an excellent starting place in order to better understand the necessary and sufficient conditions for competing effectively in communication analysis. Two research questions were posed: (1) What are the important dimensions used to evaluate communication analysis? (2) Are these dimensions the same for judges and competitors?

INSTRUMENT DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The final survey instrument was generated through two separate projects. First, an initial questionnaire was completed by critics

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[9]Hahn and Gustainis, pp. 14-5; see also McCorkle, p. 19.

[10]Hahn and Gustainis, pp. 16-7.

[11]See Norbert H. Mills, "Judging Standards in Forensics: Toward a Uniform Code in the 80s," *National Forensic Association Journal*, 1 (Spring 1983), p. 19.

and competitors at two of the nine AFA-NIET district tournaments.[12] A total of 36 surveys were completed by the competitors and the critics. The purpose of the initial survey was to generate the questions for the final questionnaire.

On the initial survey, respondents were asked to list the criteria they felt were important when judging (or writing) a communication analysis. Next, the respondents were asked to mark which criteria on their list applied specifically to communication analysis as opposed to other competitive individual events. Finally, the subjects were asked to list the similarities and differences between a communication analysis speech and a rhetorical criticism paper.

Based on the initial questionnaire, the most frequently listed criteria were selected for the final survey instrument. Analysis of the first survey revealed 15 dimensions which critics and competitors felt were important when evaluating (writing) a communication analysis speech. The criteria included: in-depth analysis, organization, significance of topic (subject matter), language choice, explanation of the analytic method, effective delivery, justification of the rhetorical importance of the event being analyzed, use of outside sources for proof or documentation, critique of the usefulness of the analytic method, justification of the analytic method used for analysis, proper support (illustration) material, an appropriate analysis, justification of the topic selected, an outline of the unique insights on the topic discovered through the analysis, and reliance on a script. Although language choice, effective delivery, and use of documentation are useful dimensions when evaluating other competitive forensic speeches, the judges and competitors felt these dimensions also held special significance for communication analysis.

The second method used to generate the dimensions on the final survey instrument was a review of the communication analysis ballots filled out by critics at the AFA-NIET District I tournament held at Fresno, California. Sixty-four ballots were checked in order to verify the importance of the dimensions generated from the analysis of the first survey. All 15 dimensions were mentioned frequently on the ballots reviewed. Based on the ballot review, one final dimension—an objective analysis—was added to the list bringing the total to 16 dimensions for the final survey instrument.

[12]District 1 (California) and District 2 (Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana) were the two districts surveyed. The District 1 tournament was held in Fresno, California on the campus of the California State University March 19-20, 1983. The District 2 tournament was held in Walla Walla, Washington on the campus of Whitman College March 19-20, 1983.

The 16 dimensions were then phrased into declarative sentences and a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was printed below each dimension. In addition to the 16 dimensions, the final survey instrument contained five open-ended questions: What is the purpose of communication analysis? How well are speakers meeting the purpose of communication analysis? How can the event of communication analysis be improved? What are the similarities between a communication analysis and a criticism paper? What are the differences between a communication analysis and a criticism paper?

The final survey was administered to competitors in communication analysis and judges critiquing speeches at the 1983 AFA-NIET. Three-hundred-and-seventeen students from 80 universities and colleges within the United States competed at the tournament. Surveys were given to the 30 competitors in communication analysis during the first round of competition in communication analysis by one of the two judges evaluating their speeches. The judge was given written instructions to give a copy of the survey to each competitor and either collect the form from the competitor or have the competitor return the survey to the information table.

All critics judging in the fourth round of the tournament had a survey attached to their ballot. Critics not judging in round four but evaluating speeches in round five had a survey attached to their fifth round ballot. The judges were requested to complete the survey and return it to the information table (ballot table) at the tournament. The survey was administered on the first day of the three-day tournament in order to give respondents sufficient time to complete the survey.

A total of 64 surveys were returned which were completed properly. Students completed 22 surveys, a return rate of 73% and critics filled out 42, a return rate of 42%. All responses to the open-ended questions were coded using the technique of tri-validation. The tri-validation procedure involves three people reviewing all of the open-ended responses, discussing the response, and then agreeing on how the responses should be coded.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Twelve of the 16 statements evaluated by judges responding to the survey received a mean of at least 5.0 (see Table 1). Of the 16 statements evaluated by the judges, nine statements had a mean score of 6.0 or higher. The statement "A student should explain properly the analytic method used in the analysis" received the highest score with a mean of 6.63. Two questions, "A speaker

should use outside sources for proof or documentation" and "A clear organization is important in communication analysis" followed closely with a mean of 6.52 and 6.48 respectively. Similarly, organization and the proper use of documentation were evaluated favorably. The statement "A student should analyze appropriately the topic in communication analysis" received a score of 6.31 while the statement "Proper support (illustration) material is important in communication analysis" scored equally well with a mean of 6.19. Judges, therefore, placed importance on organizing and use of evidence when explaining a communication phenomenon. "Effective delivery is important in communication analysis," and

TABLE 1
MEAN SCORES AND RANKINGS OF
COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS DIMENSIONS

	MEAN SCORES AND RANKINGS		
Dimensions	Judge	Competitor	Combined
Use of outside sources for proof	6.52 (2)	6.63 (2)	6.56
Appropriate analysis	6.31 (4)	6.67 (1)	6.42
Explanation of the analytic method	6.63 (1)	6.31 (4)	6.42
Clear organization	6.48 (3)	5.95 (6)	6.29
Proper support (illustration) material	6.19(5)	6.32 (3)	6.23
Significance of topic (subject matter)	6.02 (8)	6.00 (5)	6.01
Effective delivery	6.07 (6.5)	5.86 (7)	6.00
Justification of the analytic method	6.07 (6.5)	5.54 (11)	5.89
In-depth analysis	5.90(11)	5.68 (8)	5.82
Justification of rhetorical importance	6.00 (9)	5.50 (12)	5.82
Language choice	5.69 (12)	5.63 (9.5)	5.67
Unique insights	5.95 (10)	5.04 (14)	5.64
Justify selected topic	5.41 (13)	5.18(13)	5.33
Reliance on script	4.76 (14)	5.63 (9.5)	5.06
Critique of usefulness of analytic method	4.80 (15)	4.81 (15)	4.81
Objective (detached) analysis	4.27 (16)	4.36 (16)	4.30

(Number in parenthesis is ranking of the dimensions based on mean score.)

"A speaker should justify the selection of the analytic method in communication analysis" each had a mean score of 6.07. Finally the last two statements receiving ratings above 6.0 were "A speaker should justify the significance of topic (subject matter)," and "A speaker should justify the rhetorical (communication) importance of the event being analyzed" which received a mean score of 6.02 and 6.00 respectively.

Four of the 16 statements evaluated in the survey fell within the range of 5.0 to 5.9. The statement, "Students should note the unique insight on the topics discovered from the analysis" received a mean score of 5.95. "An in-depth analysis is important in communication analysis" scored 5.90, and "Choice of language is important in communication analysis," scored 5.69. The final statement falling in the 5.0-5.9 range, "A speaker should justify the topic selection in communication analysis," scored 5.41.

Only three statements received a mean of less than 5.0. Although judges viewed delivery as an important dimension in giving a communication analysis speech, they rated the statement "Students should rely on a script in communication analysis" less favorably. This dimension received a mean of 4.76. "A critique of the usefulness of the analytic method is important," received a 4.80 mean and "Students need to be objective (detached) when doing a communication analysis," scored 4.27.

Statements receiving a mean of at least 6.0 were perceived as being very important dimensions and, thus, should receive careful attention by students who write communication analyses. The statements falling in the 5.0-5.9 range, likewise, appear to be important dimensions to incorporate into a communication analysis. However, the statements receiving scores in the 4.0-4.9 range appear to be less important requirements and, therefore, students might choose to integrate these objectives if time permits or only after satisfying the other requirements.

Any discussion of standards for evaluating communication analysis would not be complete without discussing the competitors' view. Competitors gave five of the 16 dimensions mean scores of 6.0 or higher; nine of the dimensions received scores of 5.0 or better, while only two dimensions fell within the 4.0-4.9 range. However, an important question arises, Do competitors and judges agree in the ranking of the 16 dimensions?

Judges and competitors' ratings of the 16 dimensions differed in some respects when compared in an analysis-of-variance test. (See Table 2). A significant difference was found on two items: "Students should note the unique insights discovered from the analysis,"

(<.03); and "Students should rely on a script in communication analysis" (<.037). The results of the analysis-of-variance test, therefore, indicates that judges require a competitor to note the unique insights on the topic discovered through their criticism more often, while students place less importance on this point. On the other hand, judges are more liberal than students in permitting competitors to use a manuscript in competition.

TABLE 2

COMPARISONS OF CRITICS AND COMPETITORS RATINGS

DIMENSIONS	F RATIO	PROBABILITY
Use of outside sources for proof	.444	.508
Appropriate analysis	2.109	.152
Explanation of the analytic method	1.697	.204
Clear organization	1.853	.178
Proper support (illustration) material	.160	.691
Significance of the topic (subject matter)	.004	.951
Effective delivery	.324	.571
Justification of the analytic method	1.766	.189
In-depth analysis	.389	.535
Justification of the rhetorical importance of the event	1.604	.210
Language choice	.014	.906
Unique insights	4.946	.030
Justify the selected topic	.335	.565
Reliance on script	4.542	.037
Critique of usefulness of analytic method	.000	.984
Objective (detached) analysis	.038	.845

In order to determine if judges and competitors viewed communication analysis similarly the rank ordering of the 16 dimensions for both the judges and competitors was compared. The mean scores for each of the dimensions were used to determine the ranking. The highest mean score was given a rank of first, the second highest was ranked second, and so on (see Table 1).

A number of conclusions can be drawn from a comparison of the ranking. First, the computation of Spearman's coefficient of rank-order correlation was significant at the .01 level. Competitors and judges, overall then, differed in their opinions as to the rank ordering of the 16 dimensions. The largest differences, at least four rankings, were found on three dimensions, reliance on a script, the

need to justify the analytic method, and noting the unique insights learned from the analysis (see Table 3). Competitors placed more importance on not using a script while judges saw a greater need for speakers to justify the chosen analytic method and noting the unique insights discovered from the analysis.

TABLE 3

COMPARISONS OF CRITICS AND COMPETITORS RANKINGS

DIMENSION	JUDGE	COMPETITOR	DIFF.
Appropriate Analysis	4	1	3
Use of outside sources for proof	2	2	0
Proper support (illustration) material	5	3	2
Explanation of the analytic method	1	4	-3
Significance of topic (subject matter)	8	5	3
Clear organization	3	6	-3
Effective delivery	6.5	7	-0.5
In-depth analysis	11	8	3
Language choice	12	9.5	2.5
Reliance on script	14	9.5	4.5
Justification of the analytic method	6.5	11	-4.5
Justification of rhetorical importance of the event	9	12	-3
Justify the selected topic	13	13	0
Unique insights	10	14	-4
Critique of usefulness of analytic method	15	15	0
Objective (detached) Analysis	16	16	0

Although not as large, other differences in rankings surfaced. An explanation of the analytic method, the dimension with the largest mean for judges, was ranked fourth by competitors. While an appropriate analysis, ranked first by competitors, placed fourth on the judges list. Since all four of these dimensions received means of over 6.0 by both the competitors and judges, speakers should insure that they incorporate the dimensions into their speeches. Even so, the rank ordering does reveal that students and competitors do not

place equal value on each of the dimensions.

Similarly, differences of at least three rankings occurred on the dimensions of significance of the topic, in-depth analysis, clear organization, and justifying the rhetorical importance of the topic. Competitors placed more weight on the first two dimensions while judges ranked the last two higher.

Although significant differences in the rankings of various dimensions surfaced, judges and competitors ranked four dimensions the same. Use of outside sources placed second on both the judges' and competitors' list. Justification of the selected topic ranked thirteenth. Critique of the usefulness of the analytic tool placed fifteenth, and finally, an objective (detached) analysis was ranked last by both the judges and the competitors. Competitors and judges, thus, seemed to agree more on dimensions which were deemed less important.

Respondents, on the other hand, had more difficulty in agreeing on what constituted the goals or purposes of communication analysis. Answers to the open-ended questions on the survey indicated that neither critics nor students agreed as to the purpose of communication analysis. Respondents saw 13 different reasons or goals for competing in the event. Not one of the 13 thirteen responses received a majority (over 50%). The responses mentioned most frequently to the question "What is the purpose of communication analysis?" included: to critically analyze rhetoric (43.8%); to apply a tool to a rhetorical event (20.3%); to show why rhetoric is significant (17.2%); to provide a training ground to study rhetorical principles (14.1%); to judge success/no success of rhetoric (12.5%); and to reveal new insights into rhetoric (12.5%). As can be seen, there was little agreement as to what constitutes the purpose or goal of communication analysis.

The confusion over the purpose of communication analysis might explain why the question "How well are speakers meeting the purpose of communication analysis?" received a low rating. Only 3.1% of those questioned felt that communication analysis deserved a superior rating and 10.9% of those surveyed awarded communication analysis an excellent rating. However, over 62% of the respondents evaluated communication analysis with either a good rating (37.5%) or a poor rating (25.0%).

This low evaluation might be due to a number of reasons. First, the confusion over the purpose of the event might be one explanation. Since respondents had some difficulty determining the purpose of communication analysis, they may have a corresponding difficulty determining whether the event as practiced meets the

goals. This indeed may have been the case since over 14.1% of the respondents failed to answer the question.

A second explanation for the low evaluation of communication analysis might lay with the competitors. Many judges felt that students needed to improve the analysis in their speeches. Justifying their low evaluations, respondents generally saw two weaknesses in the speeches they heard or judged in competition: first, competitors superficially analyze the data; and second, competitors do not apply their method(s) effectively to the facts under investigation. Thus, Thompson's indictment that speakers demonstrate a superficial grasp of the chosen methodology and Hahn and Gustainis' claim that "rhet crit" is not analytical were views commonly held by the competitors and critics who responded to the survey.

A third explanation as to why communication analysis did not receive a favorable evaluation might lay in the confusion between the differences between a competitive communication analysis and a scholarly rhetorical criticism. Responses to the question "What are the similarities between communication analysis and a criticism paper?" revealed that the judges and competitors saw the communication analysis speech and the criticism paper as similar. Specifically, respondents saw the purpose of the criticism paper and communication analysis as the same. Also, respondents indicated that both the paper and the speech relied on similar methods, topics, and documentation. In fact, a few respondents reported that there was minimal if any difference between the event of communication analysis and a criticism paper. As a result, many judges hold competitors to the compositional standards of a professional criticism and evaluate the speeches accordingly.

There were some competitors and judges who did view the paper and speech as different. Responses to the question "What are the differences between communication analysis and a criticism paper?" revealed four differences.[13] First, a communication analysis is delivered orally where a criticism paper is written. Second, the length of time allotted for analysis differs dramatically since a criticism paper could run as long as thirty pages while a communication analysis is only a ten-minute speech, or about five pages in length. Third, due to the difference in the time allocation, respondents felt the paper and speech differed in type and quantity of analysis. A communication analysis was perceived as being

[13]In all instances Benoit's careful explanation of the differences between a communication analysis and a rhetorical criticism paper were confirmed.

more descriptive and less evaluative than a criticism paper. A criticism paper, on the other hand, employed a greater depth of analysis, and used better documentation (supportive material) than a speaker could. Finally, respondents saw a difference in the requirements for audience adaptation. Competitors in communication analysis have to confront the problem of adapting every round to a changing audience where authors of criticism papers do not have to worry about this requirement as much.

Finally, the third explanation for why communication analysis received such a low rating might be because participants and critics expect more than what is physically possible given the current time constraints of the event. As one respondent noted: "Communication analysis is similar to the oral presentation of a paper at a convention." An oral presentation at a convention can only be a skeletal outline of a much longer and more detailed paper. Likewise, a speaker delivering a communication analysis must also provide only the bare essentials of an analysis and can not afford the luxuries that a longer paper offers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EVENT

Even though there was little agreement as to the goals of communication analysis, a number of specific changes might be made which would improve the quality of the event (see Table 4). When asked the question "How can the event of communication analysis be improved?" over twenty suggestions were given by the respondents. The suggestions ranged from changing the rules for the event to improving judging standards. Some of the more popular suggestions offered for improving communication analysis included encouraging more students to participate in the event, providing the competitors with the necessary background in rhetorical and communication theory in order to compete in the event, and lengthening the time limits for the event. In the main, implementation of these suggestions falls on the shoulders of the advisors of forensic programs. Forensic educators need to encourage students to enter the event and, hopefully, with increased participation, the quality of the speeches, in turn, will improve. Forensic advisors, additionally, need to supply their students with better detailed information on how to complete a communication criticism.

Respondents also believed changing judging standards would improve the event. One person thought evaluating a manuscript as opposed to a speech would be a good idea. Others wanted critics to maintain an open and unbiased point of view and apply strict but

TABLE 4
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING
COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

SUGGESTIONS	TIMES RECOMMENDED
Improving the judging	8
Judges have open attitude	1
Judges follow consistent standards	2
Judges have better knowledge of judging standards	2
Careful judge selection (competence)	3
Improving the coaching	31
Need better coaching	5
Coaches encourage participation	13
Write more journal articles on the event	1
Better education in rhetorical theory	9
Clear up memorized/script confusion	3
Improving the competition	15
Analytic tool (model) fit the event	1
More analysis needed in speeches	5
Justify rhetorical significance	1
Better topics and research	4
Improve presentational skills	4
General problems/changes to improve the event	34
Judge manuscripts	2
Change evaluation format	1
Limit the scope (approaches) to the event	6
Scope too broad	7
Clearly define event	4
Longer time limits	8
Limit event to experienced speakers	2
Offer event at more tournaments	3
Eliminate the event	1

consistent standards when evaluating a communication analysis. In addition to offering suggestions for improving the judging of the event, some respondents felt the purpose and rules for communication analysis were not clear. For example, the difference between rhetorical criticism and communication analysis needed

clarification. Also, there was significant confusion as to whether a script should be memorized or whether it is appropriate to read the speech from a manuscript. Obviously, forensic educators need to clarify the purpose and the intent of the event.

Finally, other suggestions for improving the event were even more dramatic. One respondent wanted only advanced students to compete in communication analysis. Others argued for a limit on the methods (approaches) from which students could choose to complete their analysis and one respondent recommended eliminating the event.

CONCLUSIONS

This study does not purport to establish definitive criteria by which communication analysis must be judged, nor does it claim to provide an exhaustive list of the alternatives available to remedy the ills of the event. Yet the study offers forensic educators and competitors several guidelines for completion of a successful communication analysis. Special emphasis should be placed on using outside sources and sufficient documentation, appropriately analyzing the topic, explaining the analytic method used in the analysis, organizing the speech, and selecting a significant topic when composing a communication analysis. Speakers should discuss the usefulness of the analytic tool only if the specifications noted above have been met and time remains for further analysis. Additionally, critics should strive to create and apply a consistent set of standards when judging communication analysis. Finally, forensic educators need to continue their explorations for creative and innovative means of offering the event which would enhance the student's ability to analyze rhetorical events and the critic's ability to judge the analysis.

This study, therefore, provides but a first step toward an improved communication analysis event. Further progress will be made only if forensic educators and competitors alike continue their efforts to make communication analysis a positive component of the overall forensic experience.

Rhetorical Criticism of Literary Artifacts

WILLIAM L. BENOIT and KEVIN W. DEAN*

Rhetorical criticism began as rhetorical studies of single speeches or speakers. As rhetorical theory began to broaden its purview, so too did rhetorical criticism widen its domain, adopting a more liberal view of the nature of rhetoric. Rhetoric came to be viewed generally as attempts to influence others through symbols, and studies were undertaken of a variety of artifacts which were not public speeches. Studies of groups of rhetorical artifacts, both within movements and within genres, also flourished. Although some may dislike individual experiments and innovations in rhetorical criticism, probably no one would deny that these developments have not only invigorated the practice of rhetorical criticism but have also provided insights which would have been difficult if not impossible to obtain with traditional approaches.

This essay is intended to encourage similar experimentation in competitive rhetorical criticism. This is not to deny that some experimentation has already occurred in this individual event. The Ohio Forensic Association's state tournament, for example, recently experimented with film criticism. Individual students have undertaken criticism of literary works and other artifacts not traditionally considered rhetorical. We have already witnessed a movement toward "communication criticism" and toward a broader conception of "rhetorical criticism" at tournaments. These changes are laudable, and in a similar vein, this essay is intended to a) justify and encourage such efforts, and b) provide a theoretical framework for them. This essay is limited to one particular type of innovation—the rhetorical criticism of literary works—but many of our arguments apply by analogy to other approaches, and we encourage sound experimentation along other lines as well. Such a justification and theoretical framework could be erected on various grounds.

The phrase "rhetorical criticism" contains within it an important ambiguity, for the adjective "rhetorical" can be interpreted as modifying to the method of criticism, to the object of criticism, or to both simultaneously. This suggests that four types of criticism can

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be distinguished:

1) rhetorical criticism of rhetorical artifacts,
2) rhetorical criticism of non-rhetorical artifacts,
3) non-rhetorical criticism of rhetorical artifacts, and,
4) non-rhetorical criticism of non-rhetorical artifacts.

As we shall see later, this typology is overly simplistic. For one thing, it assumes that an artifact is *either* rhetorical *or* non-rhetorical, but not both—an assumption we explicitly reject later. Despite this limitation, it will serve as a starting point for our discussion, and we will refine it subsequently. This essay will limit its discussion of non-rhetorical artifacts to literature, and of non-rhetorical criticism to literary criticism, although analogies could be made for other artifacts, e.g., art and art criticism, or film and film criticism.

The rhetorical critic is most interested in the first sort of enterprise, where both the method and the object of study are rhetorical. Rhetorical critics, as *rhetorical* critics, are utterly uninterested in the last alternative, since neither the method of inquiry nor the object of study falls within their purview. The second type of study can be exemplified by rhetorical criticism of literary works, and the third by literary criticism of rhetorical discourse. The second and third categories do hold interest for the rhetorical scholar. The former can extend the boundaries of rhetorical criticism, while the latter gives a fuller appreciation for the artifact under investigation.

Most essays exploring the nature of rhetorical criticism[1] concern the first sort of undertaking. Except as necessary to accomplish the purpose of this paper, these works and this type of study need not concern us here. While the rhetorical theorist and critic may gain useful insights into the nature and function of rhetorical artifacts by considering the insights a literary critic can offer into rhetorical discourse, this sort of study will also be excluded from discussion here. We draw upon the literature in rhetorical theory, rhetorical criticism, and literature as guidance for contestants in competitive rhetorical criticism.

THE NATURE OF CRITICISM

Let us begin by outlining our conception of the nature of criticism, the focal point of this inquiry, and proceed then to a consideration of the distinction between rhetoric and literature.

[1]See, e.g., most of the resources in William L. Benoit, "The Theory of Rhetorical Criticism: A Bibliography," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 12 (1982), pp. 295-304.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* observes that criticism is "1. The action of criticism or passing judgment upon the qualities or merits of anything, 2. The act of estimating the qualities of literary or artistic work."[2] The conclusion that the term "criticism" refers to a process which culminates in a judgment is inescapable.

Various scholars in speech communication have also declared that the particular form of criticism which interests us here-rhetorical criticism—includes evaluation or judgment. Loren D. Reid asserts that the critic's "primary and inescapable responsibility" is "to interpret, to appraise, to evaluate."[3] For Lawrence W. Rosenfield, an "essential" feature of criticism is the "verdict."[4] Finally, Ernest Bormann claims that "the critic, to do his job fully, must make judgments."[5] Hence, many writers in speech communication consider evaluation or judgment to be an essential aspect of rhetorical criticism.

However, there are some authors, as Barnet Baskerville reports, who suggest that criticism has another end: "The ultimate aim of criticism. . .is *illumination*, the providing of insights into the work which will deepen the reader's understanding and appreciation."[6] However, these other writers being referred to, as might be supposed from the reference to "readers," are literary critics. Moreover, as Northrup Frye, a noted authority in literary criticism, observes, "The axioms and postulates of criticism, however, have to grow out of the art it deals with."[7] Although we can learn much from studying the methods of other sorts of criticism, we must not

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[2] *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 1181. This definition is consistent with those given in other dictionaries, e.g., *Random House College Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 317; *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language: Student's Edition* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981), p. 227; or *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), p. 314.

[3] Loren D. Reid, "The Perils of Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 30 (1944), p. 422.

[4] Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "The Anatomy of Critical Discourse," in *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective*, eds. Bernard L. Brock and Robert L. Scott (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 2/e, p. 153.

[5] Ernest Bormann, *Theory and Research in the Communicative Arts* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1966), p. 229.

[6] Barnet Baskerville, "Rhetorical Criticism, 1971: Retrospect, Prospect, Introspect," *Southern Speech Journal* 37 (1971), p. 118. See also Mark S. Klyn, "Toward a Pluralistic Rhetorical Criticism," in *Essays on Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Thomas R. Nilsen (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 150-51.

[7] Northrup Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 6.

uncritically accept their ideas and approaches since they deal with different objects of criticism than the rhetorical critic confronts. Therefore, rhetorical criticism should render an evaluation or judgment. This is consistent with the meaning of the term "criticism"; it is consistent with usage by various rhetorical scholars; and we ought not be dismayed if it differs from usage in other disciplines. Many useful investigations of rhetoric exist which do not include judgments. However, strictly speaking, they should be referred to by a different label, since a study must evaluate if it is to qualify as "criticism." Competitive rhetorical criticism ought to conform to this usage as well, unless compelling arguments are adduced. At this point it is appropriate to consider the nature of rhetorical and literary discourse.

RHETORIC AND LITERATURE

Drawing a distinction between rhetoric and literature will aid us in understanding the nature of rhetorical criticism, as well as in distinguishing rhetorical and literary artifacts. We adhere to a functional definition: rhetoric concerns persuasion, attempts to alter or strengthen the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the audience. With few exceptions, rhetorical theorists have considered rhetoric to be the art of persuasion. In the fifth century B.C. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."[8] Sextus Empiricus reports that one of Aristotle's chief competitors in Athens, Isocrates, "asserts that orators pursue nothing else than the science of persuasion."[9] More recently, Richard Weaver writes that rhetoric is "persuasive speech in the service of truth."[10] Kenneth Burke, one of the theorists most frequently considered to be a "new rhetorician," explains the relationship between ancient conceptions of rhetoric and his conception:

> Traditionally, the key term for rhetoric is not 'identification,' but 'persuasion.'. . . Our treatment, in terms of identification, is decidedly not meant as a substitute for the sound traditional approach. Rather, as we try to show, it is but an accessory to the standard lore.[11]

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[8]Aristotle, *The Rhetoric,* tr. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Random House, Modern Library, 1954), 1355b25-26.

[9]Sextus Empiricus, "Against the Rhetoricians," *Against the Professors,* tr. R.G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1944), 62. See also Quintilian, *Institutio Oratorio.,* II.xv.4.

[10]Richard Weaver, *Life Without Prejudice* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965), p. 116.

[11]Kenneth Burke. *Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. xiv.

While there are exceptions in the long history of rhetoric,[12] most rhetorical theorists agree that the essence of "rhetoric" is persuasion.

Not surprisingly, many rhetorical critics concur with this conception of rhetoric. Marie Hochmuth writes that "whatever the end the speaker has in mind, his specific purpose is to speak with persuasive effect toward that end."[13] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell asserts that "Rhetoric, then, refers to written and oral discourses that are persuasive."[14] Thus, even scholars writing from diverse perspectives, like Hochmuth (Nichols) and Campbell, agree with the contention that rhetoric means persuasion. This is generally the view within the forensic community as well.

What then is literature? Carroll C. Arnold explains that "We usually use the term literature to refer. . . to ... imaginative, enduring works."[15] Wilbur Samuel Howell explains that:

> the poetical utterance differs from the rhetorical utterance by virtue of the fact that the words used in the latter refer directly to states of reality, and the words used in the former refer directly to things that stand by deputy [symbols] for states of reality.[16]

Thus, the poetic or literary work is imaginative, symbolic, and enduring.

A much more difficult issue to resolve is the one of the relationship of rhetoric and literature. A wide diversity of opinion exists here, which can be placed roughly on a continuum. The more traditional writers, like Hoyt H. Hudson, while admitting that "poetry in some of its more usual forms is more or less strongly tinged with a rhetorical element,"[17] distinguish rather sharply between rhetorical and poetic discourse: "poetry is for the sake of expression. . . Rhetoric is for the sake of impression."[18] Bernard Weinberg offers a similar analysis:

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[12]For example, Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39 (1953), p. 404 includes both "informative and suasory discourse" in the realm of rhetoric.

[13]Marie Hochmuth, "The Study of Speeches," in *Speech Criticism: Methods and Materials,* ed. William A. Linsley (Dubuque: William C. Brown, 1968), p. 80.

[14]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 4.

[15]Carroll C. Arnold, *Criticism of Oral Rhetoric* (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1974), p. 4.

[16]Wilbur Samuel Howell, "Literature as an Enterprise in Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 33 (1947), p. 418.

[17]H. H. Hudson, "Rhetoric and Poetry," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 10 (1924), p. 154.

[18]Gordon E. Bigelow, "Distinguishing Rhetoric from Poetic Discourse," *Southern Speech Journal* 19 (1953), p. 83.

> The poet does not begin by determining the character of his audience; he does not proceed by adapting the form of his poems to the particular expectations of particular readers. He writes his poem, and if he has written it well, the audience will respond to it as it should, will be subject to the appropriate effect.
>
> This is not a rhetorical effect. It is not an effect of persuasion. It depends neither on the character of a speaker nor on the character of an audience; it contains no proofs—logical or ethical or pathetic. It is an aesthetic effect, one that consists for each person in the arousal of a specific range of feelings proper to the emotions within the poem.[19]

These theorists hold literature or poetry quite apart from rhetoric, although even Weinberg admits that he speaks of "pure" rhetoric and "pure" poetry.[20]

This conception of the nature of literary discourse is markedly different from that of, say, Burke or Booth. Kenneth Burke observes that "Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning,' there is 'persuasion.' "[21] Obviously, all symbolic works, including literary ones, are rhetorical by this approach. Wayne C. Booth declares that "dramatic necessity and rhetorical function seem, then, to be thoroughly united."[22] More strongly, he argues in support of the claim "that the rhetorical dimension in literature is inescapable."[23] One final representative of this approach is the essay by Walter R. Fisher and Richard A. Filloy, which explains that:

> Our position is that a rhetorical interpretation of a work arises whenever it is considered in regard to an audience's response, the ways in which people are led to feel or to think or to act in regard to a symbolic experience. We have no quarrel with the notion that poetic discourse is rhetorical when it advances a lesson or a moral. Nor do we have difficulty with the fact that fictive and nonfictive genres share specific language forms, that one can find rhetorical features in poetic discourse and poetic features in rhetorical discourse. The difference between our approach and those of Booth and Burke is that we focus not on authorial techniques or specific individuated forms but on audience response, the mental moves made by an audience on interpreting a work. Where they stress the ways in which poetic forms are made rhetorical, we concentrate on the ways in which poetic forms are experienced rhetorically.[24]

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[19]Bernard Weinberg, "Formal Analysis in Poetry and Rhetoric," in *Papers in Rhetoric and Poetic*, Ed. Donald C. Bryant (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1965), p. 40.

[20]Weinberg, p. 40.

[21]Burke, p. 172.

[22]Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 108.

[23]Booth, pp. 105-06.

[24]Walter R. Fisher and Richard A. Filloy, "Argument in Drama and

Thus, these two activities, rhetoric and literature, have much in common. They both employ verbal symbolic messages as the means to their peculiar ends. In both, the source (rhetor or author) and receiver (audience or reader) play important and similar roles. They often employ/recommend analogous notions (e.g., organization of ideas, selection and arrangement of words) in their artifacts. These similarities are not surprising, given the fact that the modern discipline of rhetorical criticism developed out of literary criticism under the guidance of Herbert A. Wichelns.[25] Most importantly, for the purposes of this essay, given artifacts partake of both—that is, novels or poems are persuasive, and orations qualify as great literature. Persuasion is not the essence of literature. Rather, literature is evocative or representational. However, discourses which are literary can also possess persuasive characteristics, and these persuasive elements, when present, render literary works susceptible to rhetorical criticism.

What is important here is that no matter where one falls on this continuum, rhetorical criticism of literary works is justifiable. Whether one subscribes to the view that "some literature is 'tinged' with rhetoric," or that "literature is inherently rhetorical," it must be admitted that (at least some) literature is amenable to rhetorical criticism. The former provides minimal justification for our goal, while the latter provides emphatic support for it.

Implications do exist for the contestant at this point, though. Those on the liberal end of the continuum might not insist on any justification of the persuasiveness of a literary document being subjected to rhetorical criticism. However, a more conservative judge might require that the contestant present a rationale for considering that particular literary work rhetorical. One possible solution is for the contestant to suggest that it will become readily apparent that the artifact under investigation is rhetorical as the rhetorical method is successfully applied to it. Whatever the choice, our experience indicates that the student in rhetorical criticism needs to address this issue in some fashion.

We now consider the question of what basis might a judge with a more traditional viewpoint accept a literary work as rhetorical. Works which are both intended to be persuasive and which function rhetorically (have persuasive effects) are unquestionably rhetorical. Works which are either intended to be rhetorical or

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Literature: An Exploration," in *Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research,* (Eds.) J. Robert Cox and Charles Arthur Willard (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 346-47.

[25]Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," in *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism,* pp. 40-73.

which have rhetorical effects are arguably susceptible to rhetorical criticism.[26] Application of rhetorical principles to artifacts which are neither intended to be nor which function rhetorically seems futile at best, and misleading at worst.

This leads us to refine the four types of criticism posited initially, in keeping with the ideas just explicated. The critic can profitably engage in four types of criticism:

1) rhetorical criticism of artifacts which are primarily rhetorical,
2) rhetorical criticism of artifacts which, while not primarily rhetorical, possess rhetorical qualities,
3) non-rhetorical criticism of the non-rhetorical aspects of artifacts which are primarily rhetorical, and,
4) non-rhetorical criticism of artifacts which are primarily non-rhetorical.

Other writers have recommended or engaged in these sorts of studies in the second category, the very sort we encourage students to pursue.[27]

Several important benefits can be obtained from this sort of scholarly endeavor. First, students can expand the boundaries of rhetoric by studying the rhetorical elements of artifacts which are not archetypal instances of rhetorical discourse. It is possible to obtain insights which would be impossible or unlikely in traditional sorts of studies. Second, this type of study can help competitors to better understand the nature of rhetoric, through the effort of distinguishing rhetorical from non-rhetorical phenomena. Third, it is important to become critical consumers of persuasion, so that students are not persuaded unawares. By studying the persuasiveness of artifacts which are not primarily rhetorical—but which do have rhetorical aspects—we can help avoid this undesirable out-

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[26]"Intent" can be a troublesome concept. We do not argue that the rhetorical critic is forced to grapple with it; however, if the critic can determine the rhetor's intent it can be most illuminating. If an artifact is persuasive, the critic can attempt to trace the rhetorical elements believed to be responsible for those effects regardless of whether the rhetor intended them or not (one must of course avoid commenting on the *rhetor*, and limit comments to the rhetoric itself in this situation). For contest criticism, however, if intent can be identified, then a) we can render judgments of the rhetor, and b) this knowledge may help the critic identify the rhetorical elements most relevant to the effects of the discourse. So, while intent is often difficult (if not impossible) to assess, it is not necessary for rhetorical criticism, although it can be useful.

[27]See, e.g., Walter R. Fisher, "Toward a Logic of Good Reasons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64 (1978), p. 378; or the works in Edward P. J. Corbett (Ed.), *Rhetorical Criticism of Literary Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

come. Contestants who realize that literature can be persuasive, and who study the techniques of these attempts, become increasingly aware of these influence attempts. This is important, because they may not ordinarily expect literature to be persuasive, which may enhance its effectiveness because their defenses are lowered. Finally, it encourages the valuable kinds of interdisciplinary studies which are necessary if we are to keep specialization from fragmenting scholarly communities. All of these reasons point to the same conclusion: that students should be encouraged to do rhetorical criticism of the persuasive aspects of literary works in competitive rhetorical criticism. This is not to say that such studies should be the sole, or even the major approach employed in that event, but that it should be recognized as a legitimate and important one.

Another way to look at our central contention is this: We should stop attempting to neatly categorize the artifacts we study. The law of the excluded middle (something is either x or non-x; it is either rhetorical or non-rhetorical) simply does not apply here. Instead, we should recognize that almost any artifact can have rhetorical aspects or can be rhetorical in certain circumstances, and concentrate on a more important task than classification: identification of those elements of an artifact which are potentially rhetorical, investigation of their effects (if any), and explanation of those effects.

Forensic Forum

What changes, if any, should be adopted in the use of questions in rhetorical criticism?

This section is designed to provide an opportunity for forensic educators to articulate a position on a controversial issue. One topic which generates considerable controversy, and at the same time is not a major aspect of any of the papers in this issue, is the use of questioning in competitive rhetorical criticism. Student competitors, coaches, and judges alike have diverse and strong opinions on what changes, if any, ought to be adopted for this aspect of rhetorical criticism which is unique to the individual event of rhetorical criticism. While space does not permit every possible perspective to be represented, diverse viewpoints are articulated below, contributing to the on-going discussion in this area.

WILLIAM L. BENOIT
Special Issue Editor

Forensic Forum

What changes, if any, should be adopted in the use of questions in rhetorical criticism?

CRITICIZING THE CRITIC: THE VALUE OF QUESTIONS IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Since the introduction of rhetorical criticism as a contest event we have labored over one critical concern: did the *student* write the speech? Praised as the most academically valid of the contest events, it is clear that rhetorical criticism requires something more of the forensic competitor. As a result, the coaches and judges of the National Forensic Association proposed a question to validate the student's individual work in this event. Initially, I believe, this was rooted in the fear that students could not critically examine a rhetorical artifact without a dependence upon their coach. However, I believe the time has come to recognize the advancements of a second generation of student critics and withdraw the question. For if we yet harbor doubts about the ethical nature of contest criticism, the time has come to quit questioning the student and begin questioning the coach.

As mentioned earlier, the requirements for a good rhetorical criticism are unique to forensics. Bright, motivated undergraduates can survey literature to find a prose selection or poem that speaks to them. An industrious, conscientious undergraduate can read voraciously and file diligently to prepare for limited preparation events. A thorough, creative undergraduate can research a topic or

satirize a foible of society to prepare a public address event. However, the process of invention is different for a student writing a rhetorical criticism. Methods of critical analysis tend to be buried in the jargon of speech journals; as a result, they are unattainable or unintelligible to but a very few of our brightest students of communication. In addition, as classes in undergraduate rhetorical criticism have been rare at the universities I have known, a reliance upon the forensic coach for the instruction in rhetorical theory and criticism is required. Thus a unique, interdependent relationship is fostered between the coach and student predicated upon the academic roots of contest criticism. This relationship is the basis of our concern over the authorship of the rhetorical criticism and, I believe, the reason we initiated the questioning of competitors.

Some will say that my primary assertion is unfounded. They have argued that the question in rhetorical criticism is not a negative but rather a positive tool which allows students the opportunity to expand on their research. A second concern is the students' desire to keep the question. Since students voted overwhelmingly at a recent national business meeting to retain the question, why should we change something they seem to want? Others have claimed that in a closely contested round the handling of questions is the basis of their decisions, only that the question is a valuable asset to judging and should be retained.

Forgive me the indulgence of trouncing my own strawmen. Anyone who teaches or coaches rhetorical criticism recognizes the limitations of a ten minute time limit. Many students I have coached began with a ten, fifteen, or in one case a thirty page critical essay. While encouraging them to submit this written work to a conference or convention, we would begin the arduous task of cutting the paper to contest time limits. Thus I empathize with those students or coaches who favor the questions because it allows contestants time to elaborate on their research. However, I must ask, if questions are valid means of demonstrating additional knowledge or effectively judging contestants, why do we not use them in other events as well? Persuasion, extemp, or even the interp events could benefit from the interaction of contestant and judge. Of course such a plan would extend rounds from the conventional one-and-a-half hours to two or two-and-a-half hours in length. Subsequently weekend tournaments would become just that as extra days were built in to accommodate the longer rounds. And of course, for nationals, well, instructors and graduate students could take unpaid leaves of absence in the Spring as the tournament became even longer than its current schedule. Clearly we cannot go

further in the use of questions in contest forensics because of the administrative and bureacratic problems entailed in their time consumption at tournaments. Therefore let us be consistent in our administration of contest rules. If we do trust contestants in rhetorical criticism, let us treat them no differently than other students. We should discontinue the question in rhetorical criticism.

The other two concerns—students' desire to save the question and my assertion that the primary purpose of the question is to verify authorship—may be dealt with together. Having examined one of the basic reasons students wish to keep the question, time, the core of these remaining questions are the same: credibility. Students who struggle with a rhetorical method and a suitable artifact to produce a worthwhile piece of criticism have a right to take pride in their work. The lingering criticisms or gossip that suggest undergraduates do not *really* understand what they are doing or that, at best, only juniors and seniors should be competent enough to do criticism is absurd. Yet these pervasive myths remain and taint some of the fine work that is being done in contest criticism. It is little wonder that students wish to vindicate themselves from this spectre of doubt by answering any questions the judges might have. Ask any student who has "beaten" a pompous judge by responding to the seemingly unanswerable question, the feeling is one of personal satisfaction.

Credibility from the other side of the desk and ballot is another matter entirely. In recent years several convention papers and critics have asked, "who has the right to judge rhetorical criticism?" However, limited judging pools and an increasing number of hired judges have consistently brought the answer: anyone. Among the "most qualified" persons are regular coaches who are untrained in rhetorical theory, graduate students who may have less training in rhetoric than the contestants, or former competitors who "know the ropes" of forensics but have never studied communication. These individuals invariably ask questions because the rules say they should; however, they have no basis for the evaluation of the rhetorical method or the criticism. Doubts which may exist about a speech will not be clarified by these judges, for they cannot question the authenticity of that which they are incapable of evaluating.

Virtually everyone who has ever been to a tournament has a "forensic horror story" about the interrogation of a student by a pompous graduate student or an unfriendly judge. The time has come to put an end to this behavior. Let us police our activity internally rather than offering public executions of questionable speeches. Students who wish to fabricate or plagiarize a rhetorical

criticism will have difficulty doing so without the knowing or unknowing consent of their coach. For as I contended earlier, few students have the capacity to write a rhetorical criticism without the assistance of a speech professional in finding a method of analysis. The coach who does not verify the authenticity of a student's work is as guilty as the coach who writes a student's speech. Therefore I believe we should extend contestants in rhetorical criticism the same courtesy we extend all other forensic competitors: accept their work as original without the aid of a question. And if we still feel the urge to question the interdependent relationship between coach and student, then we must recognize that the trouble is not within the students but within ourselves.

DANIEL J. O'ROURKE
Purdue University

ON QUESTIONS IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Human fallability has diminished the glow of some of our best inventions. Somebody probably thinks the birth of the alarm clock was a momentous occasion. Simply push a little button, and you're sure to be to work on time. Funny, that has not been my experience with the machine that screeches at me several mornings each week. Whether we turn them off in our sleep or throw them at the wall, due to some action on our part, alarm clocks don't always work. While proper usage can increase the likelihood of our punctuality, mechanical difficulties can still occur, and we might still be late.

The use of questions in rhetorical criticism seems to be suffering from some human fallability and some mechanical difficulties. The glow of the invention has dulled and it's time to evaluate our continued use of questions. While I accept that the original justifications for using questions were honorable, my position is that the practice is, and will continue to be, inherently flawed.

Asking questions, just as setting an alarm, should have worked in achieving what I can only speculate were its original goals. Judges who ask questions will make better decisions, because they will have the chance to clarify their perceptions of the student's presentation. Coach influence will be kept within appropriate parameters because the competitors will be responsible for explaining their analysis. Students will become better rhetorical scholars, because they know they face the prospect of being questioned.

Optimistically, it seems as though questions should have been a simple check and balance; the quality of the competition should have been enhanced. I would argue the system has not produced

this result. Rather, our fallability or, less kindly, our lack of expertise in the study of rhetoric and our lack of empathy for students has kept the addition of questions from meeting its original goals.

Regardless of my perceptions of the quality of the judging in rhetorical criticism, I do not hear questions of clarification being asked in rhetorical criticism. It is rare that I judge a round of criticism at an invitational tournament, but if my most recent judging experience is any indication, questions are being used by judges to flaunt their knowledge of criticism or to harshly expose the student's lack of theoretical background in rhetoric. The most valid question I have ever heard in criticism concerned a factural matter in the student's presentation; the question truly was one of clarification, and was significant in the evaluation of the round. The most invalid questions I have heard are those which challenge the student to justify his or her methodology over whatever critic the judge understands.

In terms of minimizing over-coaching in a difficult event, one question is not going to stop anybody from doing anything. It is as easy to prepare for questions, and to be given the right answers, as it is to memorize a speech.

If students have become better rhetorical scholars, the nature of the items they are choosing to criticize doesn't indicate their increased level of awareness. I am not sure Aristotle would approve of a contest that seems to reward that speaker who is most entertaining, over the speaker who is most rhetorically sophisticated.

When we have abused our alarm clocks to the point of in-operability, we usually search for a new appliance, louder and sturdier than its predecessor. Consistently, when we find a few flaws in anything we try to fix it. We can change our behaviors or we can change the product. I wish I believed the judging community was going to change its behaviors in regard to the use of questions in rhetorical criticism. As optimistic as I would like to be, I believe many of us will continue to abuse the privilege of questioning.

We have attempted to compensate for our fallability by making some mechanical changes, such as only allowing one question from each judge, for each competitor. I don't see this adjustment as changing the system significantly; it merely limits the potential abuse, rather than doing something to prevent it.

In attempting to be as clear as possible in my analysis, I have waited to explain that I perceive the art of questioning to be one of the finest arts to be learned and that rhetorical criticism teaches

skills that no other event can. My affection for questioning is diminished, however, by what I see as an inherently flawed practice. If there is an adaptation that can make the system work, I hope we try it. The current system is not working, however, and mechanical and human limitations suggest no improvement is likely to be seen in the near future. To continue to pursue unobtainable, yet admirable, goals is counterproductive for all of us. It is time to learn from the chronically late individual who, rather than continuing to invest in alarm clocks, invests in an evening job because she knows the system just doesn't work for her.

DENISE M. GORSLINE *Eastern Michigan University*

"WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS GOOD FOR THE GANDER": TOWARD A CONSISTENT POLICY ON QUESTIONS IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Currently, the National Forensic Association (N.F.A.) stands alone among national forensic organizations in its decision allowing for each judge to ask each speaker entered in the rhetorical criticism event a question at the conclusion of the speech. The event descriptions of other national forensic organizations such as the American Forensic Association, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, Pi Kappa Delta, and Phi Rho Pi do not allow contestants to be questioned by critic-judges in any event. Further, this N.F.A. policy is not consistent across events; rhetorical criticism is the only event of the N.F.A.'s nine national events that includes the provision for questions in its description.

This inconsistency with other organizations as well as within the N.F.A. itself leads to two important questions: 1) Is there an inherent value in the policy of allowing critic-judges to question contestants in the rhetorical criticism (communication analysis) event? and 2) If this policy is of value, should it be expanded to include all individual events?

Is there an inherent value in the policy of allowing critic-judges to question contestants in the rhetorical criticism (communication analysis) event?

To answer this quesiton, it is necessary to consider three major issues: the nature of the questions asked, the purpose of these questions in light of the goals of the event, and the role of critic-judges in the event. Currently, the event description provides no parameters for the types of questions that may be asked by critic-

judges. While some critic-judges restrict their questions to those that clarify, others often use this opportunity to display *their* knowledge of rhetorical criticism in an attempt to impress students and even other critic-judges by making statements (not necessarily in the form of a question) that serve only to belittle rather than add to the student's educational experience. The diversity of questions asked by the critic-judge reflects a wide range of topics and styles. Some critic-judges focus on methodology choices by asking students to defend the use of methodology "K" as opposed to methodology "L," "M," or "N," while still others require that students compare the speech under analysis to another speech by the same speaker or to a speech given by another speaker. Additionally, some critic-judges ask students multiple-questions-in-one, while yet others ask "follow-up" questions even though the N.F.A. event description restricts the critic-judge to a *single* question.

Not only does this diversity of questions exist *among* critic-judges, it also exists *within* the single critic-judge in any given round of competition. For example, critic-judge "Z" in Round 1, Section B of rhetorical criticism may ask student #1 a single clarification question, student #2 a leading question, student #3 a closed question, student #4 a question to compare the speech under analysis to another speech, student #5 a series of questions, and student #6 no question at all. Such diversity in questioning techniques minimizes the consistency (and therefore reliability) of the questioning process.

For the sake of argument, however, let's assume that this diversity can be minimized by establishing a clearly-defined set of parameters to which critic-judges can be forced to adhere. Even then, in order to determine the broader philosophical issue of whether there is an inherent value in asking questions in rhetorical criticism, it is appropriate to examine the purpose of this process in light of the goals of the event. Simply stated, the goals of rhetorical criticism include developing the student's understanding of communication through analysis and/or evaluation of a prior communication act initiated by someone other than the student by employing a critical approach that will serve to "open up" understanding of that communication act. Rhetorical criticism, as well as all other individual events, have as an additional goal teaching students to make choices concerning how best to present their "findings" clearly and concisely given certain time constraints. Since the student may be given the opportunity to clarify ambiguities as well as explain omissions or errors in the speech during the question and answer period, it is possible to conclude that by

allowing such questions forensic educators are not upholding the goal of teaching students to be as clear and concise as possible. If this is so, then students should not be held accountable for their choices. Instead, the critic-judge is thrust into the position of asking the "right" question to insure as complete an understanding of the message as possible. This shift in responsibility from the student to the critic-judge does not serve the educational goals of the event.

Finally, the role of the critic-judge is to provide appropriate critical feedback to assist students in their development as communicators. The current practice of writing comments to each student that reflect a multitude of strengths and weaknesses provides the feedback necessary for the student's growth and development far more effectively than any *single question* posed in a public forum. Assessment of these written comments in subsequent student-coach interaction can serve as the basis for future speech development and refinement by the student. Also, if critic-judges are expected to ask questions, this obligation may force them to take time away from listening to each student's speech for the purpose of formulating the single "right" question to ask. If the goals of the event include developing the ability to analyze and/or evaluate a communication act and present this analysis and/or evaluation in a clear and concise manner, then asking a single question not only distorts those goals for students but may place critic-judges in direct confrontation with students to whom they must eventually assign rankings and ratings. This evaluation process should reflect an assessment of what students have chosen to include as well as exclude rather than what they can "fill in" after the conclusion of the speech. To do so effectively the critic-judge must remain as objective as possible.

Given the concerns outlined, analysis thus far would suggest that the forensic community should abandon the practice of asking questions in rhetorical criticism employed at some tournaments; there appears to be little if any evidence of an inherent educational value associated with this practice. Nevertheless, let's assume that after extensive evaluation by the forensic community the conclusion is reached that there *is* an inherent value in continuing the policy of allowing critic-judges to question contestants in the rhetorical criticism event. This decision, then, should logically lead to the second major question.

If this policy is of value, should it be expanded to include all individual events?

To answer this question, it is necessary to examine current tournament schedules as well as the nature of the various individual

events. The argument has been advanced that asking questions in rhetorical criticism can impede the attempts of tournament directors to run tournaments on schedule. However, this argument alone should not prevent the extension of questions into the other events as well. If the inherent educational value is sufficiently strong, then asking questions (and the resulting educational value) should be extended to include all students regardless of the events in which they choose to participate. It seems logical that the way to maximize this inherent educational value is not to shortchange non-rhetorical criticism enthusiasts, but instead to alter tournament schedules to accommodate a question and answer period for all participants in all events.

One may speculate, however, that the rationale advanced years ago by some members of N.F.A. that led to asking questions in rhetorical criticism focused on the complex nature of the event. Unfortunately, no one at that time (or since that time) has chosen to address persuasively the complex nature of the remaining individual events as well. As is too often the case, once an organization's rules have been established, they become set in concrete and the original rationale is lost in the passage of time. Repeated attempts on my part to unearth the original rationale have been unsuccessful. (Suggestions that the question was added to insure that the rhetorical criticism was indeed the work of the student have been rejected since no one would argue that a single question at the end of a speech could serve to verify or deny authenticity in this or any other event.) One can only assume then that a reasonable case was made for the unique complexity of rhetorical criticism alone, while the other events were not considered in a similar vain. As a result, the N.F.A's event descriptions stipulate the question and answer period in only one of its nine events.

Certainly rhetorical criticism is unique in that it is the only national event that requires speakers to present formal critiques of speeches or speech acts that were originally created by someone other than the contestants themselves. While a case can be developed for the unique and complex nature of the rhetorical criticism event, especially by those colleagues with an educational background and special love for rhetorical criticism, the contention that every individual event is unique and complex in its own way could also be advanced. Maybe it is only because of my somewhat unique background (M.A. with a major in rhetoric and public address, minor in oral interpretation; Ph.D. with a major in oral interpretation, minor in rhetoric and public address) that allows for

viewing *all* of the events as unique and equally complex for students striving to master them. Granted, a student can pick up a short story and just "read" a portion of it in competition with little or no effort, while the same can't be said of the student in rhetorical criticism given the nature of the original, prepared events. Nevertheless, the serious student interested in mastering prose interpretation must commit to a process of intensive internal as well as external analysis, adaptation, selection and justification of performance options, and practice that is as comprehensive, challenging, and time-consuming as any student desiring to master the rhetorical criticism event. Thus, it is only because of ignorance that one would claim "their event" as the most unique or complex.

The forensic community must embrace the notion that *all* national events are unique and sufficiently complex to challenge the student's development as communicators. Rejecting this notion suggests that certain events should be dropped from national competition because they do not rigorously adhere to the educational goals of the forensic activity of individual events. Until such action is taken and assuming that the question and answer session is an educational necessity, then all students should partake. In the persuasive speaking event, for example, questions might focus on the nature of the problem, the extent of the problem, documentation, further amplification of evidence, or consideration of alternative solutions. Questions in the prose interpretation event might focus on thematic concerns, narrator attitude or motivation at any point in the selection, the impact of language choice, use of specific literary devices by the author, discussion of the impact of the setting, nature of relationships, adaptation, or performance choices made by the student. Hopefully, these brief examples provide the reader with an appreciation for the range of questions that might be addressed to the competitors in any individual event assuming that the critic-judge has sufficient expertise to formulate appropriate questions.

It seems clear then that there can be no adequate justification for the inclusion of a question and answer period by critic-judges in only one of the N.F.A.'s national events to the exclusion of the other eight events. If the educational process is significantly strengthened as a result of such questions, then *all* students in *all* events should receive these educational benefits; to do otherwise is to allow a false sense of elitism to flourish. Truly, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Either questions promote the educational goals of the activity and thus should be applied to all events, or they are superfluous and should be eliminated from the one event in which

they sometimes appear. The "elitist" posture of a vocal few should not be allowed to prevail over the educational goals designed to benefit the many.

BRUCE B. MANCHESTER
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ON QUESTIONS IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Rhetorical Criticism (Communication Analysis) has been the subject of controversy from its inception and subsequent acceptance as a national tournament event. The concept of the question has remained a polarizing element in this controversy for students, coaches, and judges. Arguments in support and against the question abound, yet no decisive trend concerning the nature, function, and scope of the question has emerged from this ongoing dialogue.

I confess to once aligning myself with the group of forensic educators who advocate abolishing the question. I viewed the question as counterproductive to a student's forensic education for various reasons (e.g., time constraints in rounds; questions that rivaled student speeches in complexity and length; the absence of questions in other national events). My work last year as chair of the NFA Rules Committee compelled me to re-evaluate my position on the efficacy of the question.

The 1984 Rules Committee was asked to consider a motion to abolish the question in rhetorical criticism. The committee surveyed coaches before the National Assembly convened in April at the N.F.A. Nationals. Before reporting to the National Assembly, we presented our findings to the Student Assembly along with noting our intent to recommend that the motion be carried. We fully expected to hear resounding support for our position from the students. Instead, the students emphastically discouraged abolishing the question. It was immediately obvious in the student repsonses that they viewed the question as a potentially positive experience. They took no issue with the intent or purpose of the question; they were disturbed with the way in which critic/judges wielded the privilege of asking a question in competition rounds. The students' position eventually led to a committee recommendation that the motion to abolish the question be rejected.

Much thought and further dialogue with competitors who participate in rhetorical criticism has goaded me to advocate the question as a valuable tool. But I offer my support with a qualification: that

we cease abusing the right to ask a question of competitors in this event. The question-answer session is more often than not a grueling, defensive experience for competitors when it should be both positive and constructive. The notion of a question-answer session per se is not the problem. It is our lack of focus on effective utilization of that time. If critic/judges think carefully about what is reasonable in terms of the parameters of questions, the students to whom they are addressing questions, and how they are phrasing questions, the result will be more fair and insightful questions from the critic/judges and more insightful answers from the students. Our guiding through as critic/judges should resemble an adage with which I was once comforted: "there are no bad answers, only bad questions."

First and foremost, the event rules stipulate that "judges may ask one question each at the conclusion of a speech." That does not imply that it is necessary for a judge to pose a question if he or she does not wish to ask one. Nor does that imply that a judge may ask his or her question in a way that requires a competitor to give five answers. The rule simply gives critic/judges the privilege of asking a question should they see fit.

As we should not feel obligated to question each and every student, we should not assume a necessary guilt in reference to their knowledge or skill about the event. Judges should not approach the question-answer process as an opportunity to "trip those competitors up," to expose their weaknesses and attack their efforts. Rhetorical Criticism competitors are not—nor should they be—required in their answers to attack or defend the entire field of rhetoric, a theory or method that they do not utilize, or a judge's position on the validity or efficacy of a critical method. We critic/judges do not presume to "know it all" concerning the rhetorical tradition; why should we then expect undergraduate students to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge in their answers to our questions?

Our questions will be most valuable to the student and revealing to us if they are *content specific* to the student's speech. Our questions should be positive in tone: they should allow students to bolster their credibility, to illuminate and expand ideas presented in the speech. Questions should give students the chance to be on the offensive, not the defensive, in their answers. I suggest that as critic/judges we should be examining a student's ability to argue analytical statements effectively. The phrasing and substance of our questions should promote that goal. Our students should demonstrate reasonable understanding of their subject matter and

rhetorical perspective in their speeches via insightful and sound argument. Thus our questions should encourage students to further demonstrate knowledge of their subject and method, and reasonable understanding of the rhetorical tradition in light of their undergraduate education.

The controversy surrounding the issue of questions in Rhetorical Criticism will not dissipate overnight. But we forensic educators can be a force in resolving the controversy by taking two steps. First, we can encourage more tournament directors during the regular competitive season to allow questions at their tournaments (whether the event be labelled "rhetorical criticism" or "communication analysis"). We critic/judges can surely benefit from the practice. Second, we can take care in exercising the right at the national tournament by keeping our queries reasonable and succinct.

CHRISTINA L. REYNOLDS
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QUESTIONING IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM: A SOCIAL VALUE APPROACH

I must confess at the outset that I have experienced some difficulty completing this assignment. When I agreed to write this position paper I assumed that I would defend asking questions in rhetorical criticism on the grounds that the practice enhanced the educational validity of the activity. The difficulty began when I sought to isolate the educational values of forensics and to identify their actual operation in competition.

Upon further reflection it occurs to me that the differences between theory and practice reflect two values existing in dialectical opposition to one another—an "idealistic" value of educational attainment opposed by a more "materialistic" value of competitive success.[1] These values, and the dialectical tension between them, underly the entire forensic activity. The tension becomes conflict as students, coaches, and judges make their respective decisions regarding the creation, maturation, and evaluation of competitive forensic discourse. While the conflict exists in every form of forensic competition, I believe it is seen most clearly in rhetorical criticism.

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[1]Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz, "The Rhetoric of 'Rocky': A Social Value Model of Criticism," *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, XLII, 2 (Spring, 1978), pp. 63-72.

With this understanding in mind, I propose to discuss the following in this essay: First, an explanation of the idealistic value of educational attainment. Second, an explanation of the materialistic value of competitive success as embodied by the forensics "game." Finally, an application of the competing values to rhetorical criticism leading to the central question of the essay, the validity of questions in rhetorical criticism.

FORENSICS AND IDEALISM: In discussing the role of forensic competition in the education of students, one must identify the overall purpose or purposes of education. Despite the current "Yuppie" credo, a successful education is not determined by the type of job obtained upon graduation. I offer a broader view that is grounded in the philosophy of Robert Maynard Hutchins, namely, that the purpose of education is the creation of a trained mind. To me this orientation views education as a process rather than a product in that teaching people *how* to think is far more important than teaching them *what* to think. I look again at Emerson's famous discourse on "The American Scholar" and, overlooking his sexism, find myself in agreement with his depiction of the educational ideal of "man thinking."

Forensics, of course, trains minds and teaches a process. Competition in debate, interpretation, and public address events helps students learn the process of analysis and critical thinking. These skills are, by and large, developed as the student prepares for competition. While preparing, a student learns principles of research, organization, composition, empathy, and the like. The point to be made here is that competition serves education in that it provides a compelling opportunity for learning. I would assert further that some forensic events provide a unique opportunity for learning in that they demand that students create answers and "think on their feet." These events seem to require a mastery of process as well as product, and as such occupy a place of particular value educationally.

I would also note that forensics provides an added dimension to the educational process—effective communication. James J. Murphy explains the value of effective communication to education in his discussion of the ancient Greeks and their admiration of the man who "possesses both wisdom and rhetorical skill to express his wisdom effectively." Murphy explains that the Greeks believed that "thought is useless without a way to convey it, and mere expressive ability is worthless" if a speaker has nothing important to say.[2] The reference to "mere expressive ability," of course, leads

[2]James J. Murphy, ed. *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric.* (Davis, CA: Department of Rhetoric, University of California at Davis), 1983, p. 4.

naturally to a consideration of the forensic game.

FORENSICS AND MATERIALISM-THE GAME: Competition produces winners. After all, that's why they keep score, isn't it? Our society loves winners and is willing, even eager, to tolerate great deviance from people who "win." The obvious example is inter-collegiate athletics, where students often do not graduate and some do not learn material while in class. In forensics, it matters not whether material was used in high school or was written by another student or even by a coach. If it wins, love it. As soon as a technique, theory, argument, or cutting becomes "successful," it is copied.

As I view it, debate and individual events are oriented almost exclusively toward competitive success, measured traditionally by trophies and championships, but more recently by "margins of victory" and "years of consecutive championships." With this orientation, the educational benefits discussed previously occur at best by accident, if at all. I isolate the following as specific manifestations of the "game" orientation to forensics: denying students the opportunity to learn from failure by having coaches do the work for them; tolerating and encouraging an attitude that forensic competition is the most important aspect of a student's educational career; administrators treating forensic coaches like athletic coaches and ignoring deficiencies in teaching and scholarship; worst of all is the practice of hiring faculty with no academic responsibility save coaching. I can think of no clearer polar opposite to Hutchins than the Al Davis philosophy of "just win, baby" and don't worry about anything else. The essence of this value is treating forensic students as athletes, which leads naturally to the exaltation of "mere expressive ability."

RHETORICAL CRITICISM—QUESTION AND THE CONFLICT: With the possible exception of "impromptu" speaking, which is, after all, an exercise in adapting a situation to a pre-fabricated pattern of analysis, I know of no forensic activity as game-oriented as rhetorical criticism. It is impossible to conduct a meaningful, in-depth analysis of a worthwhile rhetorical artifact within the time allowed for the event. On the other hand, with the possible exception of debate, I know of no forensic activity having the educational potential of Rhetorical Criticism. Done properly, Rhetorical Criticism is the essence of "man thinking" and is a perfect encapsulation of the goal of training the mind via process rather than filling it with products.

Students in Rhetorical Criticism can, and do, mislead their judges. They claim the ideas of others as their own. They misapply

or short-circuit a method. They misrepresent an artifact. They lie about its effect. These things are done in all forensic events, but they can be done with impunity in rhetorical criticism because of the limited pool of truly qualified judges. It is difficult to keep up with the literature in rhetorical criticism, and coaches who follow the athletic model don't even try. It is further impossible to schedule a tournament so that only qualified personnel judge rhetorical criticism. In the absence of a judge who knows as much or more about the method and the artifact as the competitor, the opportunity for abuse is functionally irresistible.

Given the above analysis, I find no recourse but to endorse the practice of asking questions. If students know that they will be questioned, I believe they will make a greater effort to understand their material and to present it fairly. A qualified judge can ask questions which will prove insightful to other, less qualified critics. A "good" question enables students to extend their analysis as a partial remedy to the time constraints which strangle the event. Questions almost inherently require that students think on their feet, and few questions can be answered satisfactorily without a thorough understanding of the subject matter and the method used to gain insight. Once again, this is "man thinking" in that questions pose unique problems for the student to solve. A competitor who is "playing the game" will often (but not, unfortunately, always) be discovered in their deception.

In sum, I endorse the practice of asking a question in rhetorical criticism on the grounds that questioning advances the value of educational attainment while combatting the value of the forensic game. While I recognize that not all questions are "good" in the sense of requiring students to think creatively and that "poor" questions can undermine the educational benefit of rhetorical criticism and function to promote the "game" mentality, I believe that the benefits outweigh the risks. Because questions can and do probe the wisdom of a particular rhetorical criticism, they can and do counter the "mere expressive ability" that is sufficient to garner success in most forensic events. If the ancient Greeks were running modern forensic tournaments, I believe that they would insist upon asking questions in rhetorical criticism, and perhaps in a few other events as well.

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Review of Professional Resources

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BOOK REVIEW ESSAY: RHETORICAL CRITICISM

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Many useful books have been written on rhetorical criticism, and book reviews have been written for most of them. Rather than attempt to duplicate the efforts of specific reviews currently available, this essay provides an overview to resources available in this area. Thus, it is designed for beginning coaches and students of rhetorical criticism (rather than for advanced readers), to provide guidance on the question of where to turn for additional material in the areas that interest them. Accordingly, this essay will focus on books devoted primarily to exploring the nature or theory of rhetorical criticism, and it will exclude critical applications[1] and books which are primarily collections of speeches.[2] It is designed to briefly describe available resources, not to evaluate or criticize them.

Classification of the books on rhetorical criticism is not easy, given the fact that no organizing scheme has been accepted by the field. This essay will begin with the more traditional (and, generally, earlier) approaches, and end with more pluralistic and (again,

[1]Illustrative of these works are Waldo W. Braden, (Ed.), *Oratory in the New South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Braden, (Ed.), *Oratory in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970); William N. Brigance (Ed.), *A History and Criticism of American Public Address* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1943), 2 vols.; Martin J. Medhurst and Thomas W. Benson, (Eds), *Rhetorical Dimensions in Media: A Critical Casebook* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1984); G. P. Mohrmann, Charles J. Stewart, and Donovan J. Ochs (Eds.), *Explorations in Rhetorical Criticism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1973); Marie Hochmuth Nichols (Ed.), *A History and Criticism of American Public Address* (London: Longmans Green, 1955) vol. 3; or Loren Reid, (Ed.), *American Public Address: Studies in Honor of Albert Craig Baird* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1961).

[2]See, e.g., A. Craig Baird (Ed.), *American Public Address 1740-1752* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1956); Carl G. Brandt and Edward M. Shafter (Eds.), *Selected American Speeches on Basic Issues (1850-1950)* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960); James H.McBath and WatlerR. Fisher (Eds.), *British Public Addresses 1828-1960* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1971); Ernest J. Wrage and Barnet Baskerville (Eds.), *American Forum: Speeches on Historic Issues, 1788-1900* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960); Wrage and Baskerville (Eds.), *Contemporary Forum: American Speeches on Twentieth-Century Issues* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

generally more recent) approaches. The order of the works in between is neither wholly topical nor chronological, but partakes of each approach. A bibliography of the books discussed, along with some of the specific reviews available on them, is appended to the end of this essay.

In 1948, Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird collaborated on the first textbook published in this area, *Speech Criticism.* Over twenty years later, with the assistance of Waldo W. Braden, they revised this classic work while retaining its fundamental approach. They survey rhetorical theory and selected critics (ancient, intermediate, and modern). Their approach is now considered traditional and includes such considerations as verification of the authenticity of texts, reconstruction of the speech setting, and investigation of the speaker and the speaker's background. Evaluation consisted of consideration of the arguments, appeals to emotions, speakers's credibility, organization, style, delivery, and audience response. Their approach is painstaking, thorough, and—while including speaker and audience—it clearly had as its focus analysis of the message from the standpoint of classical rhetorical theory.

Anthony Hillbruner's *Critical Dimensions* has many similarities in its approach, dividing criticism into extrinsic factors (e.g., audience, occasion, biography, effects) and intrinsic factors (e.g., ideas, organization, delivery). Carroll C. Arnold's book *Criticism of Oral Rhetoric* argues explicitly that oral (as opposed to verbal) discourse merits separate and sustained inquiry, and adopts a fundamentally traditional approach, informed by Bitzer's notion of the rhetorical situation.[3] In the wake of the Developmental Conference on Rhetoric,[4] which argued that the scope of rhetoric be broadened to include persuasive aspects of non-speech artifacts, this is an unusual approach. Arnold also includes sample speeches and criticisms. Robert S. Cathcart's *Post-Communication,* now in its second edition, includes treatment of argument, organization, style, and delivery. The most recent book included in this area, published in 1983 by James R.Andrews, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism,* examines the nature of criticism, context and audience, the speaker, and the text (see also his earlier work, *A Choice of Worlds).* It is one of three books which begin with introductory chapters by the author and then conclude with sample speeches and illustrative rhetorical criticism, a very useful pedagogical

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[3]Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric 1 (1968): 1-14.*

[4]Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Eds.) *The Prospect of Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971).

approach (the earliest textbook with this approach is Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric,* discussed below, and the second is Arnold's text, previously mentioned). It is unique in that it provides several sample criticisms of a single speech, which illustrates how one artifact can be viewed from a variety of approaches, as well as an exchange between two of these competing authors. I hasten to add that this rough classification is not intended to imply that these books are merely "rehashes" of Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, or that they are limited to just those topics in *Speech Criticism,* only that they share, in large measure, a generally traditional orientation.

Three books on rhetorical criticism are collections of lectures which are also largely traditional in perspective: Donald C. Bryant's *Rhetorical Dimensions in Criticism,* Marie Hochmuth's *Rhetoric and Criticism,* and *Understanding Discourse,* by Karl R. Wallace. The traditional critic can find a variety of interesting insights and observations from these resources. William A. Linsley's edited work *Speech Criticism* is divided into two sections: the former reprints essays on the nature of rhetorical criticism while the latter includes sample speeches.

A book which stands alone in this field is Edwin Black's *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method,* which, focusing in large part on fifteen essays from *A History and Criticism of American Public Address,* discourses on the limitations of the neo-Aristotelian approach to criticism (traditional approach). Black offers an alternative portraying speeches as falling on a continuum from calm deliberation to extreme demagogury. This is essentially a generic approach, classifying and criticizing rhetorical artifacts according to situation. This book, and certain other forces less clearly identifiable, served as a stimulous for rhetorical criticism to experiment with a variety of alternatives to the traditional approach.

Some texts foster a more pluralistic approach. Thomas R. Nilsen edited a work *Essays on Rhetorical Criticism,* reprinting (with some revisions as well as additions) an issue of *Western Speech.* A more systematic approach is Robert L. Scott and Bernard L. Brock's *Method of Rhetorical Criticism,* recently revised as Brock and Scott. The latest version includes sections on traditional, experiential, new rhetorics, and movement and genre studies. This book contains both theoretical essays and applications of those approaches. Campbell's work *(Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric)* contains chapters on rhetoric, language, and criticism; the process of rhetorical criticism; three systems of rhetorical criticism (tradi-

tional, dramatistic, and psychological); in addition to the sample speeches and criticism alluded to earlier.

Several books have appeared which are devoted to a particular, non-traditional, approach. In 1976 the Speech Communication Research Board and the University of Kansas co-sponsored a conference on "Significant Form in Rhetorical Criticism," which resulted later in the publication of *Form and Genre,* a book devoted to exploring, both theoretically and in practice, generic rhetorical criticism. John F. Cragan and Donald S. Shields edited *Applied Communication Research,* a volume dealing with Ernest Bormann's fantasy theme or rhetorical vision method, collecting together both published and unpublished essays on this approach. Bormann has just published a new book on this topic, *The Force of Fantasy; Restoring the American Dream,* consisting of a theoretical essay and application to American Public Address from the puritans to Lincoln. Finally, Charles J. Stewart, Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton collaborated to produce *Persuasion and Social Movements* which discusses several perspectives on movement criticism and includes several applications to specific rhetorical movements.

Science Research Associates publishes a series of short monographs on particular topics in communication. Six deserve mention here. Craig R. Smith's *Orientations to Speech Criticism* includes an overview of rhetorical criticism and focuses on three criteria for critical judgments: pragmatic, aesthetic, and ethical. Another broad introduction, albeit from a different perspective, is Karl W. E. Anatol's *Fundamentals of Persuasive Speaking,* which considers persuasion generally, and the audience, credibility, and message structure and content. *Fundamentals of Evidence and Argument,* by Stephen Robb, and *Orientations to Rhetorical Style,* by Michael Osborn, address specific components of rhetorical discourse. Finally, two other monographs in this series provide a theoretic structure and then focus on actual discourse, campaigns, and movements: Kathleen M. Jamieson's *Critical Anthology of Public Speeches,* and James W. Chesebro and Caroline D. Hamsher's *Orientations to Public Communication.*

The most difficult question to answer is: which book is most useful? The simplest, most correct, but least satisfying, answer is that no book is best—each one has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. The "best" book is the one which most directly addresses the critic's needs. For example, a critic who believes that particular discourse is best approached from a fantasy theme/rhetorical vision should consult Cragan and Shields and Bormann;

the neo-Aristotelian critic at minimum should examine Thonssen, Baird, and Braden and Black; the intending critic of a movement should examine Stewart, Smith, and Denton, and so on.

However, many intending critics have no notion of what approach best suits the discourse they wish to criticize. Students who need a brief introduction to rhetorical criticism in general should read some introductory material, like the first chapter in Brock and Scott, Smith's first chapter, or the first two chapters in Campbell. Students who need exposure to a variety of methods in order to obtain a feel for the variety in available approaches could look at Campbell's third chapter or at Brock and Scott. Then, the critic can turn to more specialized and detailed dicsussions of the appropriate method. Nor is this account intended to slight other resources, like the myriad articles published in our journals—it is just that some limits needed to be imposed on this undertaking. However, this discussion, as general as it is, should provide beginning students and coaches with some idea of the resources available to aid in the development of their rhetorical criticism, and a broad notion of their basic thrust.

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Abbreviations:

CE	*Communication Education*
P&R	*Philosophy & Rhetoric*
QJS	*Quarterly Journal of Speech*
SSCJ	*Southern Speech Communication Journal*
SSJ	*Southern Speech Journal*
TS	*Today's Speech*

**Books marked with an asterisk should be in print in 1985.*

ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE: PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATIONS

by James Edward Sayer

Sherman Oaks, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., 1980

Textbooks in all areas of speech communication abound. The process of choosing among them frequently follows the old adage: You pay your money and you take your choice. All such books have strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, a strength to one reader can be a weakness to another. All of these observations are true for James Edward Sayer's *Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Applications.*

For some teachers and some courses, Sayer has written an outstanding, excellent text. For other teachers with different, but equally sound, objectives, this text would be considered inappropriate. Sayer's objectives are clearly stated in his preface:

> *Argumentation and Debate:* is designed to acquaint you with the principles of argumentation and debate and to show their pertinence to all our argumentative encounters, formal (such as debates) and informal (such as daily conversations and decisions). To meet that twofold goal, this book is structured to take you through the unique experience that is argumentative communication.

As with most texts, especially those which can be utilized at beginning and intermediate levels, the author(s) rarely completely meet their goals(s). Such is the case in this instance. Chapters 11-18 treat "formal debate" (by which Sayer seemingly means academic, competitive, contest, tournament debating, utilizing propositions of policy). While the emphasis on both of these areas is fairly evenly divided, it obviously does not encompass *all* argumentative encounters.

Those areas which the text covers, it covers well, and it does so in a concise, well-written, jargon-free style. Therefore, if your teaching emphasis is in one or more of these areas, this is a fine text. To that extent, if you teach a basic course in Argumentation and/or Debate, this text is worthy of your consideration for adoption. If you teach a course in debate which emphasizes debate on propositions of policy, this text is worthy of your consideration for adoption. If your orientation toward debate reflects a Whatelian concept of presumption, and a judicial judging paradigm, this text is worthy of your consideration for adoption. If you find that the last paragraph of this review applies to you in total, look no farther; *Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Applications* will be an excellent, if not ideal, text for you to use.

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