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Acknowledgements

Preface

This volume is the third publication of the Canadian Society for the History of Rhetoric. It was impossible to publish all the papers given at the 1989 and 1990 conferences; however, the present volume offers a selection of the full range of studies of rhetoric since its present revival of interest.

As appropriate, Part One presents scholarly investigation of the nature and practices of rhetoric during its long history. Giuseppe Mazzara sets out the contentions about rhetoric in its earlier period, when sophists and anti-sophists attempted to determine the relation between logical truth and persuasive argumentation. Beth Bennett presents the influence of the sixth-century rhetorician Cassiodorus in transmitting Classical theory into the medieval era. Mirela Saim shows the strong presence of rhetoric in the art and thought of Dante expressed in *The Divine Comedy*. John Chamberlin studies McLuhan's theory of an emerging post-medieval literacy by examining the differences between monastic and scholastic learning in the fourteenth-century sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester. Grant Boswell sets forth how the Spaniard Juan Luis Vives in the sixteenth century transformed the theory of argumentation by noting the practical goals of discourse. Finally, John Stephen Martin shows how Marxist argumentation had its basis in a rhetorical "problematic" whose solution enabled phenomenal experience to validate ideological concepts.

Part Two deals with the changes within the critical theories underlying rhetoric today. In each of these three papers, it is clear that rhetoric is more than "correctness" or "style"; and that rhetoric has actually regained that cohesion with philosophical logic that it lost in the eighteenth century. David Goodwin notes how "stasis theory" is integral to the invention of logical argumentation. Douglas Brent presents important correlations between current critical theories of literature and the emerging analytic theories of rhetoric, implying thereby that rhetoric shares a common origin with cognitive psychology and esthetics yet to be determined. With a somewhat similar intent, Takis Poulakos examines the rhetorical character of all historical accounts of the rhetorical tradition, and makes comparisons between these accounts and the theories of historiography.

Part Three provides some examples of rhetorical analysis in contemporary informational discourse, suggesting how argumentation governs our perceptions of a communication. Maryse Souchard focuses on the factors of argumentation in news stories, and Robert Seiler offers an investigation of the form that an interview takes, suggesting how the sense of information is determined by the points of engagements between interviewer and interviewee.

In sum, these essays evidence the current revival of rhetorical studies in a wide spectrum. In this revival, rhetoric demonstrates its traditional role as the central factor of human thought, subsuming and controlling virtually all the arts and sciences which define human existence and values.

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PART I

HISTORY OF RHETORIC

GORGIAS, ISOCRATE, PLATON, ARISTOTE: VRAISEMBLANCE ET PERSUASION

Giuseppe Mazzara

Dans le *Phèdre* (262a), Platon se demande, à propos des rapports entre la vérité et la persuasion: "Sera-t-il possible que quelqu'un, ignorant la vérité de chaque chose, puisse reconnaître la ressemblance, petite ou grande, de ce qui est ignoré par rapport aux autres choses?"[1] Il répond en disant que celui qui connaît la vérité pourra tomber victime de certaines tromperies qui, parce qu'il procède d'un pas à l'autre, rendront semblable ce qui ne l'est pas. Par conséquent, il conclut que celui qui veut tromper l'autre, mais qui ne veut pas se tromper, doit reconnaître ce qui fait ressembler et dissembler les choses.

Afin d'éclaircir cette exigence, il cite comme exemple l'éloge de l'âne fait par son maître, éloge qui aurait convaincu un récepteur de l'accepter en échange de son cheval: la cause d'une telle faute serait l'ignorance où se trouvaient et l'orateur et son récepteur sur les qualités supérieures du cheval.

Sur la base de cet exemple, Platon juge aussi, dans les deux lieux où il la prend en considération (267a-b; 272d-274a), la théorie du vraisemblable offerte par Tisias et par Gorgias.

Dans la seconde citation, en particulier, après avoir répété ce qu'il considère comme la distinction quasi absolue entre la vérité et la persuasion, surtout en ce qui concerne la pratique des tribunaux, il affirme que la persuasion consiste à baser des arguments sur le vraisemblable, et que celui qui veut parler avec art doit s'en occuper. Il ajoute, en outre:

> Il ne faut pas même raconter les faits qui arrivent, s'ils ne sont pas arrivés de façon vraisemblable; il ne faut raconter que les faits vraisemblables, soit pendant l'accusation, soit pendant la défense; bref, un orateur n'a pas d'autre chose à faire que de suivre les choses vraisemblables et de saluer la vérité, parce que tout l'art se réduit à suivre le vraisemblable tout le long de son discours.

Ensuite, afin d'éclaircir l'attitude de Tisias envers la vérité, et pour confirmer le strict rapport entre le vraisemblable et l'opinion du public, Platon cite un autre exemple, celui de deux litigants. Il s'agit de deux hommes, dont le plus faible, étant aussi le plus courageux des deux, aurait donné des coups au plus fort. Platon dit que s'ils devaient se présenter à la cour du tribunal, ni l'un ni l'autre n'avoueraient comment les faits s'étaient vraiment passés. Le lâche dirait plutôt que le courageux n'était pas seul à le frapper, tandis que l'autre dirait qu'ils étaient en effet seuls, ce qui l'amènerait à proposer l'argument suivant: "Comment aurais-je pu, petit comme je suis, frapper ce dernier, fort comme il l'est?"

Comme on peut facilement le remarquer, Platon vise à interpréter la théorie de Tisias en faisant appel au faux critère employé dans l'exemple de l'âne échangé pour le cheval: l'ignorance exhibé par l'orateur et par son public. La raison en est que tous les deux acceptent la doxa qu'offre l'opinion publique et ne cherchent pas celui de la vérité.

A mon sens, cette manière d'interpréter la théorie du vraisemblable n'est pas corrigée par cette analogie. Car, tandis que dans le cas de l'âne et du cheval les deux interlocuteurs ignorent réellement le cheval, dans le cas des litigants, au contraire, tous deux connaissent très bien le déroulement des faits. Et, s'ils choisissent de parler en se servant du vraisemblable, c'est par opportunité, ou *kairos*, et donc par méthode, plutôt que par manque de connaissances.

Par conséquent, on peut se demander comment cela se fait-il que Platon soit tombé dans un si évident malentendu.

Il me semble que Platon ne distingue pas entre le vraisemblable de type méthodologique et celui de type mimétique. Il ne semble pas distinguer non plus entre la vraisemblance "simple" (*haplos*) et la vraisemblance "relative" (*pros ti*). Pour lui il existe seulement le vraisemblable "simple", c'est-à-dire celui qui signifie la ressemblance "absolue" avec la vérité. Ce qui s'éloigne de la vraisemblance comme reproduction iconique de la réalité n'y participe pas. Cette notion se définit comme suit dans le *Sophiste* et cette définition s'accorde assez exactement avec son origine latine *verisimile*: "Quelle définition donnerions-nous, donc, de l'image (*eidôlon*),

étranger, autre que de l'appeler un autre (*eteron*) pareil ressemblant à ce qui est vrai?" (240a).

Selon ce dialogue, l'argument de Tisias ne décrit pas l'être tel qu'il est, mais tel qu'il n'est pas. L'argument est donc faux pour deux raisons: 1) parce qu'il ne fait pas correspondre les faits aux mots; 2) parce qu'il sacrifie la vérité aux exigences du public, qui juge selon ce qui lui apparaît convenable et non pas selon ce qui est réellement.

Ce jugement sévère est possible parce que Platon semble disposer de deux aspects du vraisemblable, tous deux de nature mimétique, et donc, gnoséologique. L'un est celui que je viens de discuter, théorisé dans le *Sophiste*, selon lequel toutes les imitations ne sont pas vraies, qu'elles soient iconiques ou fantastiques, puisqu'elles n'ont pas la réalité de ce qui existe (239e-241b). Voilà aussi la raison pour laquelle les représentations iconiques sont plus véritables que les fantastiques, car elles sont plus semblables à l'objet représenté. L'autre aspect du vraisemblable est celui discuté surtout dans l' *Euthydème* (305c-e), dans lequel Platon identifie l'être avec le paraître, car il reconnaît à ce savoir-là sa sphère de compétence (le "convenable", *tinà euprépeian*). C'est ce dernier qu'il identifie avec le "discours vraisemblable" (*ex eiktos logou*), et qu'il distingue de la vérité.

L'application concomitante de ces deux concepts gnoséologiques du vraisemblable fait en sorte que Platon opère, avec trop de force peut-être, le passage immédiat du second type au premier. Il me semble qu'il contraint le niveau du *pithanon* et de l'*euprépeia* à répondre aux mêmes exigences gnoséologiques que celles qui dans le *Sophiste* il applique à ce qui concerne leur aspect méthodologique.

Ainsi faisant, Platon finit non seulement par identifier la sagesse doxique directement avec l'ignorance, selon les critères du *Gorgias* (mais contre ceux de la *République*, 477a-480a), où il attribuait à l'opinion un rôle positif, bien que subordonné à la vérité; Mais même là, il finit par dévaluer la remarquable attention qu'il avait réservée au témoignage des sens et de l'expérience (*empéiria*). En effet, dans le *Sophiste*, Platon distingue le sophiste du philosophe, en se basant sur le fait que les imitations du second

cueillent la réalité des faits à travers les affections sensibles (234d); d'où il les appelle "historiques" (267d-e).

A mon sens, Platon laisse échapper le sens de la dimension méthodologique du vraisemblable, dimension qui est impliquée dans la théorie de Tisias. Platon l'assimile plutôt à certains artifices, dont il parle dans le *Gorgias* (459d) et qui sont employés afin de tromper les ignorants.

Platon trouve un précurseur illustre de cette aptitude à méconnaître l'aspect méthodologique du discours: Isocrate. Celui-ci, dans *l'Éloge d'Hélène* (1-6), déplore d'un côté qu'il se trouve des orateurs qui acceptent de traiter avec tolérance *(anektôs)* des hypothèses absurdes et paradoxales; de l'autre, il compare les hypothèses énoncées par divers théoriciens (Antisthène, Platon, Protagoras, Gorgias, Zénon, Melissos et les Éristiques), sur le fait qu'elles ne sont pas réfutées discursivement mais plutôt par les faits. En cela, Isocrate semble procéder comme fait Platon. En effet, en ce qui concerne l'aspect paradoxal de la position prise par Gorgias ("aucun être n'existe"), Isocrate ne considère pas le fait que Gorgias aurait pu faire une présentation paradoxale à des fins purement méthodologiques: c'est-à-dire, afin de favoriser l'acceptation par le public de ses thèses, quoi qu'il pensât de leur vérité. Le seul problème lui est causé par le fait qu'une telle thèse ne correspond aucunement à la réalité. Personne ne l'aurait donc entendue sans ennui ou incrédulité.

Cependant, Isocrate montre qu'il connaît très bien ce vraisemblable méthodologique, parce que, pour créer un exemple de la crédibilité, il a construit l' *Antidose,* où il a réussi à inventer tout un procès qui n'a jamais eu lieu.

Mais alors, ne pouvons-nous pas nous demander pourquoi Platon se serait tellement scandalisé à l'égard de Tirésias et de Gorgias? La raison en est, à mon avis, qu'il voit dans leurs discours un renversement radical des faits, puisque, en tant que rhéteurs, ils visent uniquement la persuasion de juges qui ignorent les faits véridiques. De tels juges, selon lui, sont obligés de juger non pas sur ce qui est, mais sur ce qui n'est pas. Selon Platon, c'est la dimension référentielle du langage qui doit représenter le but principal de tout discours. Platon se révèle préoccupé par le fait que devant le tribunal c'est le discours le plus fort qui puisse

l'emporter sur un discours véridique. C'est pour cette raison-là qu'il est peu disposé à faire des concessions à l'invraisemblable et aux discours qui s'en inspirent.

Contre cette critique platonicienne, Gorgias avait fait valoir, dans son *Palamède*, l'objection théorique suivante: "si, donc, la vérité des faits peut se manifester pure et claire au travers des mots, le jugement sera désormais facile, sur la base de ce que j'ai dit" (# 35). Par cette remarque, Gorgias répond à Platon en faisant observer que, s'il est juste de rechercher la dimension enseignable de la vérité, sans encourir à l'urgence de la clepsydre, il est également juste de ne pas prétendre bloquer tous les procès, ou transformer les salles de tribunal en autant de salles d'Académie. Celui qui fait des discours sans consulter les faits accepterait la pensée de Gorgias dans son *Peri toû mè ontôs*. Il y soutient que la vérité n'est pas dans les faits mais dans les arguments. Comme dit Gorgias (*Palamède*, 4), la vérité est plus apte à dresser des pièges qu'à persuader un juge.

De cette façon, Gorgias veut justifier non seulement les techniques de tromperie et de séduction de l'opinion, comme il le dit dans *l'Éloge à Hélène*, mais il veut aussi justifier l'usage de certaines autres techniques qui visent à transformer le vrai en vraisemblable et à éviter de provoquer chez le public de la haine ou de l'incrédulité. Il préfère plutôt susciter chez eux de la sympathie et en créer du consentement.

Contre la pensée de Platon exposée dans le *Gorgias* et dans le *Phèdre*, Gorgias a montré que la technique du discours (l'*orthôs* et le *kalôs*) ne s'en tient pas à la vérité mais au vraisemblable. Gorgias opérait en effet avec le même concept du vraisemblable que Platon, mais, comme Tisias, il disposait également de l'usage méthodologiquement fallacieux d'un "absolu." C'est-à-dire qu'il présentait comme ayant une valeur particulière ce qu'il savait avoir une valeur universelle. *Le Peri toû mè ontôs* pourrait en constituer un cas, mais en fait, Gorgias nous y présente sous forme paradoxale des apories réelles de la pensée philosophique de son temps.

Face à ces problèmes, Aristote semble, en un premier moment, répéter la conception du vraisemblable exposée dans le *Sophiste* de Platon. Il me semble qu'on peut considérer comme une des

expressions de cette phase le jugement suivant tiré de la *Rhétorique:*

> Aucun autre art ne peut conclure les contraires; la dialectique et la rhétorique sont seules à le faire; car l'une et l'autre s'appliquent pareillement aux thèses contraires. Non pourtant que ces sujets puissent être d'identique valeur; toujours, absolument parlant, les propositions vraies et les propositions plus morales sont par nature plus propres au raisonnement syllogistique et à la persuasion (I.1. 1355a 33-38).

Cela pourrait avoir une plausibilité plus grande, si l'on considère que, dans le même passage, Aristote déclare que "la rhétorique est utile parce que le vrai et le juste ayant une plus grande force naturelle que leurs contraires, si les jugements ne sont pas rendus comme il conviendrait, c'est nécessairement par leur seule faute si les plaideurs ont le dessous" (I.1. 1355a 21-24). A mon sens, dans une telle logique, il serait plutôt difficile de trouver une place pour une rhétorique qui vise la vérité comme ce qui est plus apte à préparer des pièges qu'à persuader. Car l'orateur qui n'est pas à même de persuader par la vérité cherchera des expédients plus ou moins falsificateurs. Tout cela me semble contraire à la logique exposée dans la *République et* dans le *Phèdre,* selon laquelle il faut juger les faits pour ce qu'ils sont.

Mais, dans une seconde phase, Aristote, me semble-t-il, a poussé en avant la révision de la logique du *Phèdre* et même du *Sophiste,* s'approchant ainsi plus encore de la conception que Gorgias en avait formulée. Aristote définit ainsi le "nouveau" vraisemblable:

> Le vraisemblable est ce qui se produit le plus souvent, non pas absolument *(haplôs)* parlant, comme certains le définissent; mais ce qui, dans le domaine des choses pouvant être autrement, est relativement à la chose par rapport à laquelle il est vraisemblable, dans la relation de l'universel au particulier *(hôs to katholou pros to katà méros,* I.2. 1357a 34-b 1).

En outre, il ajoute dans un autre passage:

> Et encore, comme dans l'éristique, considérer une chose d'abord comme, absolue, puis comme non absolue, mais

particulière produit un syllogisme apparent; par exemple, dans la dialectique, dire que le non-être est, attendu que le non-être est non-être; et encore que l'inconnaissable est connaissable, attendu que la proposition: l'inconnaissable est inconnaissable est chose connaissable; ainsi en rhétorique, un enthymème apparent se fonde sur ce qui n'est pas probable absolument, mais sur un particulier probable; cette probabilité particulière ne doit pas être entendue absolument comme le dit Agathon: "Tout ce qu'on peut dire de vraisemblable, c'est qu'il arrive aux mortels bien des choses invraisemblables". En effet l'invraisemblable arrive; donc ce qui est invraisemblable est vraisemblable. . . . Mais pas absolument (II. 24. 1402a 3-14).

Selon Aristote, donc, il existe un vraisemblable "universel" (*katholou*), un "particulier" (*ti eikos*) et un autre invraisemblable (*to parà to eikos*). Entre eux, Aristote reconnaît seulement le premier comme absolu; tandis qu'il ne nie pas la valeur de la vraisemblance à ces choses qui, d'elles-mêmes, ne seraient pas vraisemblables, parce qu'elles arrivent rarement. Et il ne la nie non plus à ce qui est tout à fait invraisemblable.

Par conséquent, l'allusion que fait Aristote à ceux qui définissent le vraisemblable en se référant uniquement au sens absolu du terme, devrait s'entendre probablement comme désignant Platon et aussi peut-être comme une critique de sa propre position sur cette question. A mon avis, l'allusion ne réfère pas à Gorgias.

Aristote me semble agir ici en médiateur entre l'intransigeance de Platon et l'absence de préjugés de Tisias et Gorgias. Il semble concéder à Platon que le "vrai" vraisemblable est fourni seulement par le type absolu. Par contre, il semble accorder à Tisias et à Gorgias la validité de l'usage fallacieux du vraisemblable particulier et même de l'invraisemblable, comme des méthodes spécifiques du domaine stochastique de l'opinion.

Mais il me semble que Platon sort affaibli de cette tentative-là de médiation de la part d'Aristote, si l'on considère l'exemple des deux litigants. En effet, Aristote reprend le même exemple et le traite selon sa nouvelle perspective:

> C'est des applications de ce lieu que se compose la *Techné* de Corax: si un homme ne donne pas prise à l'accusation dirigée contre lui, si par exemple un homme faible est poursuivi pour sévices, sa défense sera qu'il n'est pas vraisemblable qu'il soit coupable; si l'inculpé donne prise à l'accusation, si, par exemple, il est fort, sa défense sera qu'il n'est pas vraisemblable qu'il soit coupable, parce qu'il était vraisemblable qu'on le croie coupable (II.24 1402a 17-20).

Aristote fait le commentaire suivant sur cet exemple, et, ce faisant, ne laisse, à mon avis, aucun doute sur sa position anti-platonicienne:

> Il en est pareillement des autres cas; car nécessairement ou l'on donne prise ou l'on ne donne pas prise à l'accusation; or les deux cas paraissent vraisemblables; mais l'un est réellement vraisemblable; l'autre est vraisemblable non pas absolument, mais dans la mesure que nous avons dite (*Ibid.,* 21-23).

Sur la base de cette nouvelle formulation, l'homme faible qui, dans l'exemple de Platon, aurait commis le crime, pourrait plus facilement convaincre le juge que l'homme fort, qui est innocent. C'est que celui-là dispose d'un vraisemblable absolu, tandis que le fort ne peut faire appel qu'à un vraisemblable particulier. C'est par cela qu'il doit démontrer que la chose n'est pas vraisemblable; et cela n'est pas facile, dit Aristote.

Cela signifie, à mon sens, la négation de la logique du *Phèdre* et du *Gorgias,* parce qu'on y introduit à nouveau la possibilité que dans les tribunaux la logique du plus fort puisse faussement prévaloir.

Alors, Aristote, en concédant à Platon la supériorité du vraisemblable absolu, lui en a concédé certainement la forme, mais non pas tout le contenu.

Ainsi faisant, Aristote a, dans le début programmatique de sa *Rhétorique,* donné une très grande autonomie à la rhétorique, la rendant vraiment l'*antistrophé* de la dialectique. Mais il finit aussi, à mon avis, par perdre de vue la raison pour laquelle Platon avait écrit le *Phèdre,* qui était d'insister le plus possible sur la ressemblance entre la rhétorique et la dialectique, en les faisant

concourir à un même but, la persusion acompagnée d'enseignement. Et la "Palinodie" pourrait être considérée en former un exemple éloquent.

Il me semble donc que le concept de "jeu" échappe à Aristote, concept qui apparaît dans le *Phèdre* (275b, 276d) et aussi dans les *Lois* (769a; 803c; 804b). Selon ce concept-là, la rhétorique s'identifie à la dialectique à cause de la conjonction du mythe (aspect rhétorique) avec le raisonnement (aspect dialectique).

Mais cela nous rappelle à nouveau la question soulevée dans l'*Éloge à Hélène*, où Gorgias avait parlé lui aussi de jeu (*paighnion*).

Gorgias n'a pas construit cet ouvrage de façon naive, il avait pleinement conscience de ce qu'il faisait. En effet, Gorgias se montre bien conscient que ses hypothèses ne peuvent cueillir une évidence complète. La plausibilité, selon lui, sort de la correction du raisonnement (*to déon orthôs*), qui exprime exactement ainsi l'instance du vraisemblable absolu au niveau le plus élevé.

Il me semble que Platon reprend l'esprit de cette "savante ignorance" gorgienne, pour ainsi dire, mais plutôt au niveau de la vérité qu'à celui du *pithanon*. A travers la correction du raisonnement dialectique, il parvient à entrevoir le règne du monde suprasensible. Mais Platon n'est pas capable de dire avec clarté la vraie nature de ce monde; il le décrit uniquement par des images.

Platon se trouve ainsi, lui aussi, après l'avoir durement critiquée, dans la situation de Gorgias. Platon construit, en effet, l'image du coche ailé, sans connaître clairement de quoi il s'agit. Et il contravient ainsi aux exigences du *Sophiste*, de manière que la recherche relative à ce que le *Phédon* désigne la "seconde navigation" en reste contruite sur un vraisemblable dénué de vérité. C'est pour cela que, à mon avis, la dialectique même, aussi bien que la rhétorique, risque de sombrer dans l'ignorance.

Cependant, Platon se montre bien conscient de ce problème, comme l'était d'ailleurs Gorgias (*Ménon* 98a; *Phèdre* 265b-c). Mais il s'en serait soucié assez peu, à mon avis. Car, la pensée humaine est telle qu'elle ne peut répondre qu'à la correction du raisonnement, comme le disait Gorgias.

En effet, Gorgias, sur la base de sa conscience des limites de la pensée humaine et des fondements de notre savoir, et donc de nos catégories morales aussi, juge que celui qui croit attribuer aux écrits une grande stabilité (l'allusion me semble désigner Isocrate), change ce qui n'est qu'un jeu en chose sérieuse. Le vrai jeu, par contre, est le jeu de mots, qui crée des discours fantasmatiques au sujet de la justice et des autres vertus (*Phèdre* 276e).

Ici, on peut le remarquer, l'identification de la dialectique avec la rhétorique ne pouvait apparaître plus clairement.

Platon semble reprendre le même concept dans les *Lois* (711e-712e) lorsque, en parlant de Nestor, il dit que celui-ci a pensé que sa sagesse s'écoule par la bouche comme les paroles d'un oracle.

Alors, nous pouvons nous demander si par hasard Platon faisait allusion à Gorgias, quand, en distinguant l'usage public de l'usage privé de la rhétorique, il cachait le nom d'un sophiste sous celui de Nestor. Il me semble que c'est bien possible. Il y a là peut-être quelque chose de positif à l'égard de Gorgias que Platon n'a pas voulu dire explicitement. Si ma supposition est vraie, Platon ressemble beaucoup plus à Gorgias qu'il n'ait voulu reconnaître. En fait, comme Gorgias, il avoue qu'il existe une scission structurelle involontaire entre la persuasion et la vérité, parce que lui aussi persuade sans bien connaître l'objet de son discours. Le parallèle est donc clair: dans son éloge d'Hélène, Gorgias parle sans connaître la cause véritable qu'il défend; dans le *Phèdre* (246a), Platon parle sans connaître clairement l'idée de l'âme.

En conclusion, il me semble que les rapports entre les concepts de persuasion et de vraisemblance subissent, au début de l'histoire de la philosophie et de la rhétorique, un développement plutôt tortueux, fait de reconnaissances et de malentendus, d'allusions plus ou moins claires et peut-être aussi d'auto-critiques implicites. En particulier, il me semble que Platon est plus voisin de Gorgias qu'il ne l'a dit; et qu'Aristote, dans sa tentative, d'une part, de donner une complète autonomie à la rhétorique, et de l'autre, de se faire le médiateur entre Platon et Gorgias, a fini par perdre un aspect du *Phèdre* qui me semble bien remarquable. Je parle de la conjonction entre le fantastique et le raisonnement dialectique.

NOTES

[1]Les traductions en français de Platon et de Gorgias sont de moi.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CASSIODORUS' *VARIAE* TO THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL RHETORIC

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Cassiodorus Senator (c. 484-c. 584) is most often recognized by rhetorical scholars as the author of an instructional manual for monks, the *Institutiones* (c. 562), which contains one book devoted to religious studies and one to secular studies. The second book, which presents a somewhat encyclopedic discussion of the seven liberal arts, served as an important source of rhetorical doctrine for subsequent writers, including Isidore of Seville. Thus, on the basis of this work, James J. Murphy has labeled Cassiodorus "the first Christian encyclopedist" in the history of rhetorical theory (Murphy 64-66). While this title helps identify the significance of the *Institutiones* in the transmission of Classical rhetorical theory during the Middle Ages, it fails to acknowledge the political career of Cassiodorus as a practicing rhetorician in his own age.

Cassiodorus, an Italian nobleman, had a long and varied career-- from politician to scholar to educator. His political career flourished under the reign of the Ostrogoth, Theoderic. Later, when Cassiodorus decided to quit politics, he left Italy and began his work as a Christian scholar in Constantinople. After returning to Italy, in 554, he settled at Vivarium, the monastery he had established near his birthplace. The *Institutiones* was written in this last period of his life at the monastery (O'Donnell 202-22). For this reason, despite its subsequent influence, the work does not reflect Cassiodorus' skill as a practicing rhetorician, nor does it reveal how rhetoric was being used in secular Italy of the late fifth and early sixth centuries. To gain such information, rhetorical scholars need to examine Cassiodorus' *Variae*.[1]

The *Variae*, published around 538, is a collection of 470 official documents, arranged in twelve books. Cassiodorus composed these documents as an official of the Italian court in the name of Theoderic and his successors and in his own name, as Praetorian Prefect. The collection includes various royal edicts, proclamations, legal *formulae*, and individual letters which exhibit Cassiodorus' rhetorical skill. As Murphy characterizes the work:

[With the *Variae*,] Cassiodorus thus represents one of the last major examples of the artistic letter-writer in the Ciceronian mode, relying on his own literary abilities in composing messages. He does not follow rigid formulas, nor does he enunciate theoretical principles about the craft of letter writing. . . . [Still] His *Variae* were distributed widely throughout the middle ages, ranking second in popularity only to the letters of Cicero. (198-99)

Cassiodorus claims he completed the work at the insistence of learned friends "in order that future generations might recognize the painful labours which I had undergone for the public good, and the workings of my own unbribed conscience" (*Var*. Praef., 133). Yet, the work has a clear propagandistic intent. It constituted the written record of the Ostrogothic reign in Italy, a record which Cassiodorus tried to present in the most favorable way. As historian P. D. King notes:

> [Cassiodorus] seeks to cultivate a positive appreciation of the especial merit of the Romano-Gothic polity which [had] come to exist. Cassiodorus in short, was a professional royal propagandist--and, it should be said, an outstandingly successful one; the image of Theoderic 'The Great' which flourishes still today is in the greatest measure his creation. (132)

The purpose of this essay is to discuss why the *Variae* needs to be studied by rhetorical scholars. Even more than the *Institutiones*, which is obviously derived from the Classical tradition, the *Variae* is a true product of its age, revealing many aspects of medieval rhetorical practice, especially in terms of arrangement and linguistic style. But, before considering these aspects of the *Variae*, we must have some understanding of the historical-political context in which Cassiodorus was writing. This context may be understood best, I think, by recounting first the general political situation which existed in Italy and then the role Cassiodorus had as a high-ranking official of the court.

The Gothic reign of Italy actually began late in the fifth century, with the dethroning of the man whom historians label "the last of the western Roman emperors," a youth named Romulus Augustulus

(Thompson 61). In August of 476, following a complicated series of political maneuvers, an Ostrogothic general named Odovacer (Odoacer, Odovacar) assumed control of Italy and returned the imperial insignia to Constantinople, thereby pledging his allegiance to the eastern ruler, Zeno, as emperor over both halves of the Empire. During the next few decades, as relations between the eastern and western parts of the Empire deteriorated, largely over religious dogma, Zeno never conferred any official status upon Odovacer but allowed him to rule as a self-named "king of the Goths and Romans" (Thompson 65-68). By 489, however, Odovacer had abandoned any appearance of allegiance to Zeno, and Zeno sent a young Ostrogothic general, Theoderic (Theodoric), as his deputy to Italy. The result was that by 493, Theoderic had secured military control of Italy, executed Odovacer, and established himself as the sole ruler of Italy, with Zeno's sanction (Jones 246-47).

Thus began the reign of Theoderic which spanned three decades and brought a period of relative peace and prosperity to Italy. Theoderic established a dualist state, designed to calm Roman resentment over being dominated by barbarians and to present his regime as one committed to the continuity of *civilitas*, i.e., the combination of peace, harmony, and Roman culture (Thompson 92). According to King, Theoderic fostered the separate development of the Goths and the Romans by keeping them legally separate, by prohibiting interracial marriages, and by maintaining their religious distinction: Goths were Arian, whereas Romans were Catholic (131). Also, while the army was the exclusive domain of the Goths, the Senate was Roman. So, throughout his reign, Theoderic took pains to show the proper deference to the members of the Senate, in order to help "soothe [their] wounded pride and flatter [their] vanity" (Hodgkin, *Letters* 27).

This brief account, then, depicts the political situation of Italy when Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator was born. His family had a long record of active service to the State, from his great grandfather's efforts against the Vandals to his father's service to the State under Odovacer and later as Praetorian Prefect for Theoderic (Hodgkin, *Theodoric* 160-61). Not unexpectedly, Cassiodorus became involved in politics at an early age. According to Thomas Hodgkin, "When his father was made Praetorian Prefect (about the year 500), the young rhetorician received an appointment as

Consiliarius, or Assessor in the Prefect's court . . ." (*Theodoric* 161). James J. O'Donnell remarks that since Cassiodorus was rather young, probably mid to late teens, at the time of this appointment, we may presume that this position was not one closely monitored by the king (58). Still, it was in this capacity that Cassiodorus first attracted the attention of Theoderic--by means of an oration praising him-- which won for Cassiodorus the "illustrious" office of Quaestor, a type of chief rhetorician for the State. As Hodgkin claims, the job required him "to reply to the formal harangues in which the ambassadors of foreign nations greeted his master, to answer the petitions of his subjects, and to see that the edicts of the sovereign were expressed in proper terms" (*Theodoric* 162). So, between 507-511, while not yet thirty, Cassiodorus became one of the most influential members of Theoderic's court. Cassiodorus himself describes this influence in the *Variae*:

> No Minister has more reason to glory in his office than the Quaestor, since it brings him into constant and intimate communication with Ourselves [the King]. The Quaestor has to learn our inmost thoughts, that he may utter them to our subjects. Whenever we are in doubt as to any matter we ask our Quaestor, who is the treasurehouse of public fame, the cupboard of laws; who has to be always ready for a sudden call, and must exercise the wonderful powers which, as Cicero has pointed out, are inherent in the art of an orator. He should so paint the delights of virtue and the terrors of vice, that his eloquence should almost make the sword of the magistrate needless. (*Var.* 6.5, 300-01)

Although specific dates have not been fixed for all the documents in the *Variae*, the largest number written for Theoderic date to this early period of Cassiodorus' political career. Certainly, most of the letters in Books 1-5 and probably those in 6 and 7 were written during his quaestorship (Skahill xix and O'Donnell 60).

Cassiodorus' rhetorical service to Theoderic continued past his tenure as Quaestor, formally or otherwise, until Theoderic's death in 526. At that time, Cassiodorus was serving officially as *Magister Officiorum*, master of the offices, and was therefore confronted not only with the loss of a sovereign he had served since his youth, but also with the problems of the new reign. In fact, O'Donnell (63) states that the termination of Cassiodorus' tenure in this office

relatively soon afterwards suggests that Cassiodorus was on the political outside in the new reign. Letters from this period appear mainly in Book 8 of the *Variae* (O'Donnell 60).

Theoderic was succeeded by his grandson, a mere boy, Athalaric. The actual head of the government became the boy's mother, Amalasuentha (Amalasuntha, Amalasuintha), who conducted her regency with a genuine enthusiasm for Roman culture, winning for her the approval of Senate members and the disapproval of her own Gothic warriors (Hodgkin, *Theodoric* 293-94). Hodgkin describes her as

> [A] woman of great and varied accomplishments, perhaps once a pupil, certainly a friend, of Cassiodorus, [who] ruled entirely in accordance with the maxims of his statesmanship. . . . During the whole of her regency we may doubtless consider Cassiodorus as virtually her Prime Minister, and the eight years which [her regency] occupied were without doubt that portion of his life in which he exercised the most direct and unquestioned influence on State affairs. (*Letters* 38)

In fact, it was during this regency that Cassiodorus finally gained the State's most prestigious position, Praetorian Prefect. But he had been Prefect for little more than a year when young King Athalaric died, October of 534. Within seven months, Amalasuentha, who sought to rule as Queen, was betrayed by her cousin, Theodahad, and murdered. Theodahad as nearest male heir to Theoderic then took over as king for about a year. Then, Gothic warriors deposed him and elected their own successor, Wittigis (Thompson 93-95; Jones 274-76). Wittigis (Vitigis, Witigis) lost no time in executing Theodahad and went on to rule for the next four years, until the forces in the eastern part of the empire again took control, in 540. Cassiodorus remained in office through this period of betrayal and murder until 537. Most of the letters he wrote for others during this period are in Book 10 of the *Variae*. Books 11 and 12 contain letters he wrote on his own authority as Prefect (Skahill xix).

With this understanding of the historical-political context and Cassiodorus' role within that context, let me turn to the *Variae* itself. Here, I focus primarily on the inherently rhetorical nature of the work, much of which has already been acknowledged by historians

and Classical scholars but regrettably ignored in rhetorical scholarship.[2] As stated initially, Cassiodorus obviously designed the *Variae* to enhance the public image of the monarchy. Most scholars agree that with the publication of these letters, Cassiodorus not only was serving his own needs for recognition, but also was creating a record of the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy which could have reconciled, or at least not offended, the different factions who potentially constituted his audience. As O'Donnell notes, whether read in Rome, or Constantinople, or Campanian villas, or Ravenna, the *Variae* would have been seen as "a nonpolemical treatise, threading carefully through the events of the preceding decades, glossing over disturbances past and present, emphasizing only the happy and the successful" (68).

Though everyone Cassiodorus mentions in his sanitized account appears honorable, even Theodahad and Wittigis, it is Theoderic who emerges in truly heroic proportions. O'Donnell remarks:

> Whatever he may have been in real life, the King we meet in the *Variae* was a gentle man, always happy to praise his subjects for their faithful service to his kingdom and . . . to virtue and justice. (84)

Additionally, though Theoderic was most certainly incapable of reading or writing in Latin, Cassiodorus has him quoting and interpreting various Latin sources to his people (Skahill xxi). The result is that the Theoderic presented in the *Variae* is the ideal leader--the wise and benevolent monarch (Jones 264). This image is evident in a letter at the end of Book 5, where Theoderic is establishing a peaceful reconciliation with the King of the Vandals. The letter reads:

> You have shown, most prudent of kings, that wise men know how to amend their faults, instead of persisting in them with that obstinacy which is the characteristic of brutes. In the noblest and most truly kinglike manner you have humbled yourself to confess your fault . . . and to lay bare to us the very secrets of your heart in this matter. We thank you and praise you, and accept your purgation of yourself from this offence with all our heart. As for the presents sent us by your ambassadors, we accept them with our minds, but not our hands. Let them return to your Treasury, that it may be

seen that it was simply love of justice, not desire of gain, which prompted our complaints. We have both acted in a truly royal manner. Let your frankness and our contempt of gold be celebrated through the nations. It is sweeter to us to return these presents to you, than to receive much larger ones from anyone else. Your ambassadors carry back with them the fullest salutation of love from your friend and ally. (*Var.* 5.44, 293)

This general propaganda function is also conveyed through the arrangement of the documents within the collection. O'Donnell has noticed that though these documents tend to be grouped according to time periods in Cassiodorus' political career, they are not strictly chronological in order. Rather, chronology is often sacrificed to show honor, so letters to emperors characteristically appear *only* at the beginning of a book and barbarian kings at the end (O'Donnell 77-78). In addition, several books end with groups of letters carrying a particular theme which illustrates the culture or benevolence of the Ostrogothic reign. O'Donnell asserts: "If the first letters in each book demonstrate the public grandeur of the kingdom in its negotiations with great monarchs, the last letters give an elegant picture of the whole life of the kingdom and its society" (80).

Despite the obvious propagandistic nature of the *Variae* as a collected whole, and not discounting the questions scholars have raised about the authenticity of these letters as original historical documents,[3] it seems apparent that each individual letter was more than just a governmental communiqué. Whether by the direction of his monarch or by his own design, Cassiodorus seems to have composed these various letters in ways specifically suited to serve the best interests of the State. So, for example, Cassiodorus depicts the Goths' military domination of the Romans not as a ruthless act of aggression but as a selfless task undertaken for the common good:

Let both nations hear what we have at heart. You [o Goths!] have the Romans as neighbours to your lands: even so let them be joined to you in affection. You too, o Romans! ought dearly to love the Goths, who in peace swell the numbers of your people and in war defend the whole Republic. It is fitting therefore that you obey the Judge whom we have appointed for you, . . . and thus you will be

found to have promoted your own interests while obeying our command. (*Var.* 7.3, 322)

Perhaps the most consistent impression conveyed by the letters individually is the importance of *civilitas*, a Romanized view of good citizenship. As Cassiodorus writes for Athalaric, "the true praise of the Goths is *civilitas* preserved" (*Var.* 9.14, 397). This ideological goal was established in contrast to *praesumptio*, a term used throughout the *Variae* (over 125 times) to refer to any kind of behavior the State wanted to discourage or declare undesirable (O'Donnell 98). Regardless of the degree of responsibility owed to Cassiodorus for the conception of this governmental policy, it is apparent that his penning of the policy placed it in action (Skahill xviii). Furthermore, Cassiodorus was responsible for adapting this purpose and others to suit the particular subject and occasion of each document. Unfortunately, this dimension of his talents is more difficult to determine. O'Donnell rightly observes, "there is doubtless substantial tailoring of the more important letters to the individual recipients in a way that is inaccessible to us, since the private details of the relationships between this people . . . and their king are lost to history" (87). Still, it is clear from reading the letters that the attempt at individual tailoring was made.

Thus, the *Variae* as a collective whole may be viewed as a rhetorical effort, but so, too, may the individual documents collected therein be seen as rhetorical efforts. Why, then, have rhetorical scholars generally dismissed the *Variae* in their efforts to signify Cassiodorus' place in the history of medieval rhetoric? Perhaps it is Hodgkin, the only scholar to attempt to translate the whole of the *Variae*, who provides the best answer:

> The style [of these documents] is undoubtedly a bad one, whether it be compared with the great works of Greek or Latin literature or with our own estimate of excellence in speech. Scarcely ever do we find a thought clothed in clear, precise, closely-fitting words, or a metaphor which really corresponds to the abstract idea that is represented by it. We take up sentence after sentence of verbose and flaccid Latin, analyze them with difficulty, and when at last we come to the central thought enshrouded in them, we too often find that it is the merest and most obvious commonplace, a piece of tinsel wrapped in endless folds of tissue paper. (*Letters* 17)

O'Donnell, too, acknowledges that the content of the *Variae* is not very accessible to modern readers. He blames the letters' strong topical interest, the deletion of names and dates, and the absence of attached *breves*, which contained specific data modern readers would find interesting (93). Though we might not appreciate Cassiodorus' rhetorical style, it certainly increased the work's attractiveness at that time.

The most characteristic feature of Cassiodorus' style is his use of digressions, especially of natural phenomena.[4] Many of these seem to be derived from Ambrose's *Hexameron* (O'Donnell 89). A particularly effective example of Cassiodorus' digressive style is found in a letter addressed to "all Goths and Romans and those who keep the harbors and mountain-fortresses." It is from Theoderic, angered by the murder of a master by his slaves, who compares human behavior to vultures:

> We hate all crime, but domestic bloodshed and treachery most of all. Therefore we command you to act with the utmost severity of the law against the servants of Stephanus, who have killed their master and left him unburied. They might have learned pity from birds. Even the vulture, who lives on the corpses of other creatures, protects little birds from the attacks of the hawk. Yet men are found cruel enough to slay him who has fed them. To the gallows with them! Let *him* become the food of the pious vulture, who has cruelly contrived the death of his provider. That is the fitting sepulchre for the man who has left his lord unburied. (*Var.* 2.19, 181-82)

Except in this manner, Cassiodorus makes little use of Classical sources, acknowledged or not. He does, however, share the preference of late classical writers for etymologies. In his 1945 study, Joseph van den Besselaar identifies 43 uses of etymology in the *Variae*.

Scholars who have studied such factors as terminology, syntax, clausulae, and vocabulary in the *Variae* have concluded that the language Cassiodorus uses is derived from the Latin literary tradition and is obviously uninfluenced by Gothic elements.[5] Cassiodorus uses a lot of newly coined words which seem to have had more specific

meaning than their classical synonyms, yet his linguistic style is completely consistent with the rhetorical training taught in late antiquity.[6]   In fact, Rev. Bernard Henry Skahill concludes that Cassiodorus seldom breaks from the standards common to Latin prose of antiquity:

> [W]here Cassiodorus' syntax, either nominal or verbal, and his vocabulary diverge from classical norms, a precedent can be found for his usage in the writings of the Silver Age or in the Earlier Late Latin Writers, profane and ecclesiastical. He deliberately, then, takes counsel of the past and adopts in the main the linguistic usage of earlier authors. The result is a work that is highly artificial. (260)

We must remember that regardless of contemporary standards, Cassiodorus *was* an effective rhetorician, one of the best his age produced, and his work the *Variae* has long been recognized by historians as both characteristic of and important to that era. If we as rhetorical scholars are truly interested in understanding medieval rhetoric, we must begin examining the *Variae* and works of its type which represent actual rhetorical practice; we must not restrict our attention to works such as the *Institutiones* which trace only the way in which Classical rhetoric was transmitted in abbreviated or distorted form through the ages. Particularly in the case of Cassiodorus, a man living in an age of transition, the significance of such study should be apparent. As Hodgkin comments:

> His position, . . . which was in more senses than one that of a borderer between two worlds (i.e., between ancient and modern, or Roman and Teutonic), gives to the study of his writings an exceptional value. (*Letters* 1)

NOTES

[1] The *Variae* has been edited most recently by Ake J. Fridh in the Latin series of *Corpus Christianorum*. Translated passages cited in this essay are from Thomas Hodgkin's *The Letters of Cassiodorus* and are noted by book number, letter or form number, and the page reference in Hodgkin.

[2] Herein, I cite mainly the comprehensive account provided by Cassiodorian scholar, O'Donnell (73-102).

[3] O'Donnell (84-85) provides a helpful discussion of how much latitude Cassiodorus probably exercised with these documents in creating the public image of Italy's rulers. Skahill (xxi) discusses the degree to which Cassiodorus' words transform even Theodahad, "one of the meanest insects that ever crawled across the page of history," into "a holy and devout man." On the problem of authenticity, refer to Skahill (xix and xxi).

[4] O'Donnell 88-89; cf. the studies of H. F. A. Nickstadt and Ake J. Fridh, *Terminologie et formules dans les "Variae"* 18-19.

[5] For example, refer to the three studies by Fridh on the language of the *Variae*, to Skahill's work on its syntax, and to O. J. Zimmermann's study of the vocabulary of the *Variae*.

[6] O'Donnell 95; cf. E. R. Curtius 273-301.

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LA RHETORIQUE PROFERATIVE ET PROFESSIONALE DANS *LA DIVINA COMMEDIA*

Mirela Saim

Le renouveau de l'intérêt pour l'étude des pratiques culturelles médiévales du point de vue de leur impact sur le discours littéraire a déjà prouvé son utilité, puisqu'il a ouvert des voies nouvelles à la compréhension et à la revalorisation de nombreux textes importants, justifiant ainsi l'approche socio-culturelle à la littérature.

En même temps, les problèmes du dialogue ne cessent de susciter l'intérêt et les théories. Dans ce sens, l'étude du dialogue, sous le double aspect d'une rhétorique générale de l'argumentation et d'une rhétorique plus spécifiquement littéraire semble privilégier une recherche qui engage la condition communicationnelle du texte et de son contexte discursif ample, en ce qu'il s'agit d'une "projection à l'intérieur d'un discours énoncé de la structure de la communication" (*Le Dialogue* 1985) propre à toute activité discursive: qu'on y voit, avec C. Kerbrat Orecchionni un "trope communicationnel," un déploiement des stratégies conversationnelles textualisées ou, simplement une technique argumentative de mise en place des présuppositions (O. Ducrot), ou même, comme J. M. Klinkenberg, un point de rencontre de la rhétorique de la persuasivité avec la rhétorique de l'élocution, le dialogue continue de susciter l'intérêt des chercheurs.

Dans ma contribution je vais essayer d'examiner un fragment de *La Divina Commedia* dans la perspective offerte par les études sur le dialogue et par les éléments relativement neufs apportés par l'étude de la *disputatio* médiévale.

Il s'agit des chants XXIV-XXVI du *Paradis*, chants qui mettent en texte une dispute scolastique: avant d'accéder au territoire de la pure connaissance intellectuelle, connaissance qui le conduira à la vision suprasensible de l'image divine, le poète est soumis à un examen en bonne et due règle. Cet examen vise autant la manière de conceptualiser les trois vertus théologales que l'intensité de leur vécu psychologique, l'expérience pratique de la foi: "*S'elli ama bene, e bene spera e crede*" (*Par.*, XXIV, 40-41).

L'analyse de la séquence montre qu'elle se construit comme une unité rhétorique à thématique propre: dans cette perspective on comprend qu'il s'agit ici d'une recodification à plusieurs niveaux de la structure narrative fondamentale du poème, qui a pour élément diégétique principal la montée vers le Paradis. Dans une macro-structure à la fois dialogale et narrative l'épisode en question fait place à une microstructure dialogale à sens communicationnel institué, puisqu'il se constitue par une représentation mimétique d'une pratique culturelle spécifique, la *disputatio*.

Le modèle de la dispute scolastique universitaire est introduit dans le texte par un couple de segments analogiques. Ainsi, à la première demande du premier questionneur, S. Pierre, le narrateur remarque la similarité de la situation présentée avec celle du bachelier:

> Si come il baccellier s'arma e non parla
>> fin che il maestro la question propone
>> per approvarla, e non per terminarla;
> cosi m'armava io d'ogni ragione. (*Par.*, XXIV, 46-49)

Dans le chant suivant, un peu plus loin, le poète revient à sa condition de participant à une dispute académique:

> Comme discente ch'a dottor seconda
>> pronto e libente in quel ch'egli è esperto,
>> perché la sua bontà si disasconda (*Par.*, XXV, 64-66).

On constate ainsi l'existence d'une similarité structurale des deux segments: la référence à la pratique de la *disputatio* se fait chaque fois sur le mode analogique, car elle est toujours introduite par une comparaison figurative où la *phore* (de la dispute) renvoie au thème identitaire (du subjectif) par un dispositif d'enclenchement syntagmatique qui se réalise au niveau interactantiel. Cette insistance sur un seul type figuratif, fortement marqué par le rapport analogique, signale déjà un *implicite textuel* qui engage l'image de la dispute dans une configuration des significations--spécifique au contexte socio-discursif pluriel de la *Commedia*. D'un côté on a le discours argumentatif de la dispute propre, qui se construit selon les lois du discours théologique pour prendre en charge une transposition combinée des rituels discursifs dominants--d'un autre le fait que la séquence toute entière de la dispute se constitue en

figure significative par un effet de mimétisme institutionnel qui superpose, justement, les formalités instituées du discours pour les employer à la constitution sémiotique du poème.

Le mode de la dispute suit les structures consacrées par l'argumentation scolastique: le procédé principal est celui du questionnement. On verra ainsi s'articuler une suite de *quaestiones* qui produisent la segmentation relative du discours d'argumentation. Comme on le sait, l'enseignement médiéval a très bien développé la technique du questionnement, car il l'a mis à la base d'une méthodologie complète de connaissance et d'apprentissage. C'est cette méthodologie, structurant l'ensemble de la pratique pédagogique qui a reçu pour fonction d'établir le lien entre le texte consacré de la source patristique ou scripturaire et son commentaire actualisé.

Par conséquent, on rencontre dans la littérature médiévale spécialisée une vaste typologie de formes et formules de questionnement: *la quaestio quesita, la questio querens, la quaestio dissertiva, la quaestio dialectica,* etc.[1] Leur noms même nous montrent que ces questions avaient des fonctions très précises, encadrées qu'elles étaient dans un système serré et fonctionnel de production du discours de savoir. Les études récentes sur la scolastique médiévale ont suffisamment insisté sur la qualité d'outil épistémique de l'érothétique médiévale.

Mais, en revenant au fragment de la dispute intégré dans *La Divina Commedia,* on voit que la situation énonciative du questionnement (l'examen-dispute) est telle qu'elle change effectivement la fonction *dialectique,* de controverse, des énoncés interrogatifs: on assiste donc à la construction d'une série des questions qui impliquent des réponses pré-établies et qui n'apportent rien de neuf, car le locuteur connaît d'avance la bonne réponse. Du point de vue de la théorie du questionnement, qui définit la question comme une demande d'information, leur valeur épistémique est nulle.

Ce genre de questions fait aussi partie du groupe des *questions sûres,* en cela que la question implique et anticipe ou pré-oriente la réponse--qui ainsi ne peut aucunement être manipulée par argumentation. La fonction de ce type de question est d'introduire dans les réponses des notions déjà connues: ces réponses reçoivent

alors une dimension citationnelle évidente et font la preuve d'une connaissance déjà validée, appartenant à la masse topique de la doctrine acceptée, reconnue et contrôlée par l'autorité idéologique instituée.   Et je pense que c'est justement cette fonction d'appartenance à un savoir contrôlé et, de ce fait, dogmatisé, donc accepté formellement par la communauté, qui caractérise l'épisode en question ici et qui indique qu'il s'agit d'une *disputatio* à signification particulière: la *disputatio* de licence.

En tant que preuve d'habileté magistrale, la *disputatio* de licence constituait un acte de pratique sociale bien réglé, acte inséré dans un ordre institutionnel à signification figée.   Elle recevait en fait toutes les qualités cérémoniales du rituel, phénomène évident surtout en plan discursif: la parole prononcée est accompagnée d'effets méta-discursifs ayant pour fonction la de faire la preuve de l'engagement et de l'appropriation d'un savoir déjà acceptée.   Le caractère d'appartenance à un groupe corporatif est alors prouvé par la reproduction d'une argumentation préétablie. Or, c'est bien cette fonction qui vient de s'accentuer par la dispute de la *Commedia*.

Le caractère "répétitif" du savoir mis en texte est conséquemment soulignée à tous les niveaux du récit-dialogue. Ainsi, la dispute sur la foi est conduite par S. Pierre et procède par un questionnement en six demandes, auxquelles l'examiné répond par un discours d'argumentation raisonné de type scolastique: on établit la différence entre substance et argument par une opération de *distinction*, on discute les modes du syllogisme conformément à la tradition aristotélique (latine) et on finit par le recours à la preuve scripturaire.   La deuxième série de questions, qui a pour maître S. Jacques, porte sur l'espoir: elle est aussi organisée selon les règles techniques du discours d'analyse scolastique: l'examen de la question se développe par définition, mode et lieu: *quel che'ell è, come e onde* (*Par*, XXV, 46-47).   La troisième partie de la dispute, conduite par S. Jean, a pour objet la charité et est plus breve: on y trouve seulement deux questions auxquelles on répond *"per filosofici argomenti e per autorità."*

La séquence de l'examen est articulée par un questionnement magistral qui agit comme outil de déploiement d'un savoir stéréotypé: *l'inventio* est remplacée par *l'actio* et par la *memoria*, car c'est la pragmatique de l'énonciation, l'acte de profération

concrète, orale, qui reçoit ici la fonction principale. Ainsi, non seulement que les réponses données par l'examiné sont déjà connues, mais on connaît déjà le fait que l'examiné sait les réponses!

Mais regardons un peu la fonctionnalité de la profération orale, qui--d'ailleurs est mise en évidence par le texte du poème:

> S'elli ama bene e bene spera e crede,
>> non t'é occulto, perchè il viso hai quivi
>> dov'ogni cosa dipinta si vede;
> ma perchè questo regno ha fatto civi
>> per la verace fede, a gloriarla,
>> di lei parlarla è buon ch'a lui arrivi.
>>> (*Par.*, XXIV, 40-48)

Ainsi, dans le contexte de la dispute, texte modelé par la réalité institutionnelle de la licence, on voit la profération reproductive du savoir dogmatique recevoir la fonction de preuve absolue--ce qui dans la rhétorique aristotelicienne renvoie à la théorie des *tekméria* et au statut de la certitude et de l'évidence.

Dans cet ordre d'idées, il est donc à constater qu'au Moyen Age l'énonciation orale, la profération rituelle, du savoir institué est le moment le plus important de ce qu'on pourra nommer la *rhetorica docens*.

Il dévient maintenant évident que le dialogue de la *dispute n'appartient pas au registre délibératif, comme il aurait été normal, mais à l'épidictique*, constitué comme il l'est par une topique apologétique. Ce qui signale l'appartenance du dialogue médiéval de la dispute à un discours fortement axiologisé, qui vise à renforcer l'adhésion de l'auditoire aux valeurs inscrites dans le discours. Il s'agit là de la fonction principales des pratiques discursives comme la prédication ou la catéchèse, mais encore moins signalée pour le dialogue. Or, ce changement fonctionnel du dialogue me semble de la plus grande importance: non seulement qu'il coïncide avec le développement général du discours chrétien savant, développement qui explique la genèse des disputes médiévales *de fide* mais il montre aussi le point final de fixation historique de ce pratique culturelle à l'intérieur de l'institution médiévale universitaire qui l'a produit: la fonction apologétique,

exprimée dans une rhétorique de type épidictique, transforme la dispute, et d'outil de connaissance elle devient outil de reconnaissance. Cette transformation fonctionnelle du dialogue de controverse à l'intérieur de la culture médiévale a pour corrélatif d'autres transformations dans les structures narratives codifiées du poème épique: ainsi, au niveau du code prohaïrétique, le dialogue-dispute marque le passage du narrateur--"Dante" vers un état supérieur de connaissance mystique.

Par son examen--à valeur de témoignage performatif, car il prouve ainsi sa compétence en théologie, Dante est finalement reçu dans le groupe d'élite--*le cercle fermé*--des bienheureux autorisés par leur vie antérieure (de sainteté ou de savoir parfait) à *voir la lumière divine*, à partager avec Dieu l'expérience mystique, la connaissance de l'absolu et de l'universel.

Et en effet, en acception bonaventurienne c'est justement le propre de la nature divine de diffuser, de se *donner*, de se communiquer à l'homme: c'est par cette action communicative que l'homme reçoit la chance de participe de la nature divine.[2]

En même temps le *passage* du poète dans le domaine de la connaissance mystique marque aussi son départ définitif du monde des humains. Et ce départ est codifié dans *La Commedia* par la revalorisation fonctionnelle de la rhétorique communicationnelle. Ainsi, l'épisode de l'examen, qui transforme le dialogue convivial (organisant la macrostructure narrative) en dialogue d'épreuve, fait la transition vers une utilisation changée du langage et de ses structures dialogales.

Par conséquent, le message purement sensoriel, sonore et "aural," du texte vient s'imposer à l'attention: par son intensité il préfigure *matériellement* le thème du langage intérieur--de pure et dense signification, dépourvu des paroles--qui aura à se déployer dans l'épisode de la rencontre avec Adam.

De ce point de vue on réalise que le langage emprunté maintenant par le texte engage deux oppositions définitoires: d'une part, sous l'aspect de la figurativité, le renvoi n'est plus à l'histoire trouble des humains, avec leur petites et grandes biographies pré-destinées, mais à la construction mythologique exemplaire, dont le plus commun dénominateur figural pourrait être représenté par

l'iconographie traditionnelle. D'autre part, le discours théologique lui-même n'est plus d'allure thomiste, mais de forte influence bonaventurienne, avec toutes les conséquences d'une figurativité plus fluide et plus visuelle que cela impose.

Au niveau structurel, de la représentation d'ensemble du phénomène communicationnel dans *La Commedia*, on enregistre plusieurs changements dans l'ordre de la constitution sémiotique. Après son dernier regard vers la "terre des hommes," l'entière attention du poète s'oriente vers le spirituel: *la vision* paradisiaque qui fera l'objet de la dernière partie de *La Commedia* remplace la parole par une communication non-verbale, plus directe. La connaissance et son discours épique vont se développer par une méfiance accrue dans le discours oral, de sorte que le langage du poète se fera de plus en plus abstrait pour raconter cette expérience très personnelle qui sort du monde des sens et de la raison.

Or, la solution trouvée par Dante--ainsi que par d'autres auteurs mystiques--comporte la déictisation paroxystique de la parole relationnelle: sous l'aspect du vocabulaire on retrouve ainsi les paroles forgées par Dante (*trasumanar, indii, inlui*). Intensifié sur les axes actif, spatial et notionnel le langage a maintenant la capacité de *montrer* l'avance vers l'ineffable méta-sensoriel. L'*interlocuteur* favorisé n'est plus le lecteur du poème, mais Dieu et la progression du savoir mène donc à une réalité suprarationnelle, qui n'est pas transmissible par l'entretien convivial, mais rendue accessible seulement par le rapport intersubjectif direct avec la divinité.

Fondée sur *l'exemplarisme ontologique* de l'homme avec le Christ, l'acquisition du savoir suprême trouve une dimension nouvelle: celle de l'amour conçu comme phénomène effusif/diffusif. C'est en suivant cette logique d'une communication de plus en plus abstraite que Dante construit la dernière partie de *La Divina Commedia* par un renversement suivi de toutes les fonctions discursives jusqu'alors constituées dans son poème.

Devenue communication intérieure, intégrée à la logique de l'amour charitable, cette relation opère l'absorption totale de la communication orale. Par cela la fonction expressive du langage est dé-socialisée et arrive à se dissoudre dans la fonction communicative--qui à son tour change totalement de signification. La communication se fait maintenant par le parcours sensoriel qui

unit directement le *moi* à *l'autre*. Constituée par l'union intersubjective, la communion personnelle est à la fois but et voie du contact *intrasubjectif* avec la divinité. Dénuée d'oralité, la parole dialogale souffre une nouvelle perte, car après son corps sonore (*flatus voci*), elle sera aussi dépourvue de son corps idéal, pour garder seulement une force de suggestion aurale et visuelle.

Alors l'*ineffable* coïncide avec le non-rationnel, car la pensée--le *cogito*--est perçue en dehors de la dichotomie sensoriel/rationnel. C'est pour cette raison que le moment phatique, de l'établissement du contact communicationnel acquiert une importance majeure, étant souvent conçu dans un atemporel isolé par la présence seule du vécu--qui se suffit à lui-même.

L'intériorisation du phénomène communicationnel a pour effet la destruction des cadres logiques et matériels de la communication. Son statut paradoxal est évident à tous les niveaux et s'achève par la disparition du dialogue homme-Christ; l'annulation de la différence interpersonnelle se fait sur le modèle du rapprochement extatique.

C'est à ce point de partage que le discours de *La Commedia* perd définitivement son orientation explicite vers le lecteur humain pour s'engager pleinement dans la voie exclusive de l'amour mystique qui mène à l'union par l'extase. Le discours se constitue donc par le geste du désengagement explicite du social, pour signaler le début d'un trajet *d'intérnalisation* circulaire et autoreflexive de la parole auctoriale. Mais l'accès sur cette voie a été gagné par un examen/*dispute* qui emporte au Paradis, en les sacralisant, les procédures institutionnelles des communautés intellectuelles médiévales.

La pertinence de l'analyse que je vous ai proposé vise l'emprise sociale de la pratique éducative sur la parole narrative: elle vise ainsi non seulement les rapports intra-narratives engagés par l'énonciateur, mais aussi le rapport figural de l'auteur à son lecteur implicite. Ce rapport, qui passe par le texte écrit, engage aussi une "encyclopédie culturelle "qui inclut l'ensemble des pratiques orales[3] et qui, au sein de la culture médiévale, avaient la fonction de diffuser et de renforcer les liens communautaires. La séquence de la dispute me semble ainsi se poser comme un point central de la sémiotique textuelle; elle est aussi un point central pour une

pragmatique de la lecture, de la communication auteur-lecteur, ce qui fera l'objet d'une autre étude.

NOTES

[1]Pour un très informé aperçu sur les pratiques institutionnelles de la dispute médiévale voir *Les Questions disputées et les questions quodlibétiques dans les facultés de théologie, de droit et de médecine*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1985.

[2]Il faudrait peut-être remarquer ici le fait que, d'une manière générale, c'est S. Bonaventure celui qui pose avec intensité--dans l'*Itinerarium mentis in Deum, De reductione artium ad theologiam* et dans *De plantatione Paradisi*--la question expresse de la coïncidence discursive de la théologie, en tant que discours d'argumentation raisonnée et impersonnel, avec le discours de la foi en tant qu'expérience psychologique subjective définitive. Ce qui relie d'une manière complexe cette *théologie mystique* au grand discours médiéval des *modistes*, qui a produit le modèle théorique le plus cohérent d'une linguistique communicationnelle.

[3]Dans ce sens voir le compte rendu de D.H. Green, "Orality and Reading: The State of Research in Medieval Studies," *Speculum* 2 (1990): 267-280.

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MCLUHAN, TWO MEDIEVAL LITERACIES, AND THE SERMONS OF THOMAS BRINTON

John Chamberlin

Smaragdus' commentary (c. 805) on Donatus' *Ars grammatica* and the *Catholicon* (1286), the great dictionary by Joannes Balbus, are focal points useful for understanding two medieval literacies which together can help to situate within the arts-of-discourse traditions the rhetoric of late fourteenth-century preaching in England, as represented by the sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester. The differences between these two literacies can be characterized in part by the distinction between monastic and scholastic learning, but more fundamentally the two share a purpose of reform undertaken by powerful institutions (a purpose that can be summed up for Smaragdus in the word "observance" and for Balbus in the word "edification") and a view of language that entails what Charles Taylor has called a "semiological ontology."

Literacy as a critical concept has been the site of considerable theoretical disagreement. At the beginning of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan states his intention to show how the "forms of media technology" in the literate culture of the West have modified the "forms of experience and of mental outlook" (65, 9). The work of the classical scholars Parry and Lord in solving the so-called "Homeric Question" had shown how far-reaching were the differences between oral and literate cultures and the poetries they produced. Taking this distinction to be a paradigmatic one, McLuhan goes on to attribute great shaping power to the specific properties of various media technologies. The particular features of the technology of the printing press (for example, its reliance on visual relationships in space and on consecutiveness) thus serve to explain changes in consciousness and the course of history. It is a very formalistic argument.

Raymond Williams has opposed McLuhan's formalist position, saying that such an analysis "desocializes" culture (*Television* 127) and isolates it from "our common associative life" (*Long Revolution* 56). He proposes instead a sociology of culture which finds its explanations for history, not in technological innovation of the

communications media, but in the interactive relationship between individual and society, between the human organism and social organization, engaged in the "long revolution" towards meeting human needs in a participatory democracy (117-118).   Crucial to the sociology-of-culture approach is the placing of cultural activity within the context of the various and overlapping mediating communities that constitute the complexity of society.

Brian Stock, in his book *The Implications of Literacy*, seems to accommodate something of the views of both McLuhan and Williams in his consideration of European Latin culture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.   On the one hand, he sees this period as one in which a society based on an essentially oral "communicative form" (11) is giving way to various combinations of oral and written forms, with written forms beginning to dominate (9).   That these centuries are a time of just such a transition from oral to written is taken as an explanation for a number of historical developments. On the other hand, Stock is interested in the "inter-action" between written texts and what he calls the "textual communities" that interpreted them and gave them social meaning (88).

Looking at the array of orality-literacy relationships that are apparent during the Middle Ages--the "bewildering" array, Walter Ong has called it in a review of Stock's book (108)--is, I would agree, very helpful in interpreting the discourses of medieval culture. However, I would not attribute such explanatory power to the particular forms that those relationships take, but would instead try to complicate Stock's concept of "textual communities" in the light of William's view of mediating groups and on-going social life as a basis for understanding a particular medieval literacy or cultural practice. In James Berlin's terms, then, I would be attempting here a project in revisionary history (51-52, 57).   And I would add yet another factor for consideration: a fundamental assumption underlying the medieval arts of discourse, though manifesting itself in various ways--what Charles Taylor has called a "semiological ontology." In a paper entitled "Language and Human Nature," Taylor argues that both ancient and medieval metaphysics are essentially "discourse dominated," that is, reality is conceived of as "modeled on discourse-thought" (222).   The world presents itself to the understanding in a way that matches the formulations of it in the discourse that strives to rationally express it adequately. In classical

antiquity, the very language of expression does not figure much in the philosophical analysis of reality; but in Christian thought it does take on importance because the act of creation itself is an expression of God's will uttered through the Word to bring forth the world: creation is an articulated discourse which manifests the divine meaning. As Taylor puts it, "The originator of meaning, God, is an expressivist. This sets the framework for the theories of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, what we could call the semiological ontologies, which pictured the world as a meaningful order, or text" (223). I would add that during the Middle Ages the written text of the Latin Bible was also regarded as a manifestation of God's self-revelation articulated in language, a manifestation that is integral with the rest of spiritual and material Creation. Sacred Scripture as a single, specially privileged text constitutes a divinely expressive reality of discourse both in its meaning and in its configurations. The early ninth-century commentary of Smaragdus of St. Mihiel on the Latin grammar of Donatus provides a particularly good illustration of the medieval semiological ontology of language. Smaragdus' arts-of-discourse doctrines situated in the contexts of the Carolingian monastic community and the imperial court will constitute the first medieval literacy I wish to sketch out.

Like his associate, the monastic reformer Benedict of Aniane, Smaragdus came from the south of the Frankish Empire (McKitterick 108). As king of Aquitaine, Charlemagne's son, Louis (when once Emperor himself, to be Louis the Pious), had already allowed Benedict considerable scope for monastic reform in the south, a reform devoted especially to the close observance of the Rule of Benedict of Nursia. Smaragdus also certainly had some contact with Charlemagne's court and the scholars, Alcuin and others, who were connected with it (Holtz xii).

Charlemagne took some official initiatives for the revival of learning in his domains. In a mandated circular letter of about 790, the "De litteris colendis," he emphasizes a number of times the parallel between a faithful adherence to standards of conduct in one's actions on the one hand and a well-informed interpretation and correct oral performance of the divine service on the other: *recte vivendo, recte loquendo*, that is, right living and right speaking, in this special sense, go together (290). Both consist in keeping correct observance.

The concern shown by Smaragdus' various scholarly commentaries to contribute to a more perfect observance of the monastic life is quite in keeping with the reform movement and the renewal of learning. He wrote a commentary on the Benedictine Rule, in which he includes certain specific ideas of Benedict of Aniane about keeping to that single Rule exclusively (Holtz x). He also wrote a commentary on the Psalter, which holds such a central place in the Benedictine liturgy of prayer. His exposition of Donatus' treatise on the parts of speech has as its aim to achieve correctness in performance of the Latin of the divine service, but also to achieve a performance informed by the understanding that, immanent in the system of the Latin language, is the same divine order present in Scripture and the world.

Donatus begins, "There are eight parts of speech." Smaragdus remarks by way of comment that the entirety of the Latin language is confined within these eight parts. It conforms with the rest of reality that the whole of the Latin language should be encompassed in eight categories, for in Scripture eight is associated with figures of the universal church and the promise of redemption it holds out to the faithful. First Peter recalls the Genesis passage about the Flood (1 Pet. 3.20) and makes the point that the few who were saved (the members of Noah's family--Noah's ark is a figure of the Church) were just eight in number; the eight Beatitudes of the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 5.3-10) also offer salvation from destruction through blessings likewise eight in number (Smaragdus 6-7). This explains why there should be eight parts of speech in the language of the church, for that language is the vehicle of Scripture's promise of salvation.

When Smaragdus comes to comment on the various classes of the noun, he begins by making a special distinction between common and proper nouns: only the names of the Creator can truly be said to be proper, in the sense of "exclusive to one's self, unique"; the names of all other things are, on the other hand, multiple and common because they are dependent on God for their being, who called forth all things at Creation by the measure of his speech (13).

The system of the Latin language thus conforms to the realities of the faith that it is ordained to convey. An understanding of this inter-conformity among Scripture, the created world, and language

contributes to a more perfect observance in following the monastic rule and in performing the divine service--*recte vivendo, recte loquendo.* It was a literacy most appropriate to the limited community of the monastery.

In contrast to the monastic community's focus on its own self-sufficient life is the concern of the mendicant orders with the intellectual challenges that the Church met in discharging its responsibilities in Christendom at large. Johannes Balbus, late-thirteenth-century compiler of what was probably the most widely distributed Latin dictionary of the later Middle Ages (Wallis iii), was a Dominican resident at the order's house at Genoa, the prosperous north-Italian city with far-flung commercial interests. One of the names that Balbus gives to his great work, "Catholicon," seems to suggest the universality of reference that is fitting both for the concerns of his order and for the wide-ranging commercial activity of Genoa.

Humbert of Romans, a thirteenth-century Master General of the Dominican order, sets out the purposes to which the accumulation and systematization of knowledge at the universities was to be put by Dominicans and some of the institutional arrangements which would serve to accomplish them. He recommends a list of books which should be in the library of every friary and even specifies that the collection should be organized in such a way that volumes can be consulted quickly (*in promptu*) and easily (*de facili*) (Wallis 15). He also specifies the kinds of knowledge (*scientia*) relevant to the work of the order: knowledge of Scripture, of the natural world, and of history--they are all useful for the purpose of edification (Humbert of Romans 433 d-f).

Utilitas and *edifictio* are both important words in the Dominican view of learning; they suggest a literacy that contrasts with that of Smaragdus, which was patterned on the idea of observance. For the Dominicans, the resources of the written and spoken word are directed in response to the needs of the universal Church in its public life. In his article on *scientia* in the *Catholicon*, Balbus explains away what could be for this work of the Dominicans a rather awkward statement by St. Paul: "knowledge puffs up, but love offers spiritual and moral benefit"; *scientia inflat, caritas vero edificat* (1 Cor. 8.1). Paul is trying to say here (Balbus argues) that what matters is, not knowledge for its own sake, but knowledge useful for

the working out of the salvation of oneself and others--not knowledge to satisfy curiosity and vain-glory, but knowledge for edification. Those who wish to know in order that they may edify others are in fact putting love into practice.

For Balbus, the sort of literacy that needs to be acquired to engage in the work of edification is just what his *Catholicon* provides. In the entry under *literatus* (literate, lettered), he states that the person properly so called is not the one who has lots of books and examines them and tumbles their words over in his mind (as a monk does), but rather the one who, in conformity with the arts of language, knows how to form, out of the raw material of speech, letters into words, words into statements and discourse, and who knows how to present and correctly accentuate that discourse. Correctness in accentuation (prosody) is an important organizing idea in the grammatical supplement to the dictionary; the oral performance of language implied here is not so much repeating the divine service as it is discoursing in Latin in the areas of learning and church affairs.

Balbus' attention to prosody, but also to etymology, in both the grammatical supplement part and the glossary ties together these two parts of the dictionary. Etymology, he explains, gives the truth about words and about the things they signify, so that tracing similarities in the forms of words provides knowledge about the world. Etymology has such importance for Balbus in the analysis of reality that he doubles the number of word classes by distinguishing primary and derived categories for each--primary and derived corporeal nouns, primary and derived incorporeal nouns, and so on. Here is another sort of semiological ontology in which knowledge about the world is gained from investigation of the language system itself, knowledge appropriable for the discourse of edification.

The great compilations of the thirteenth century, which were the achievement of the universities and mendicant orders especially, served as inexhaustible resources for late medieval preaching. Pantin has said that it is "almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the revival of preaching" in the fourteenth century (236); it was a consequence of the church reform movement of the 1300's which undertook particularly to extend religious instruction and participation in the sacraments to all the faithful in the parishes. The movement was given impetus by the efforts of Pope Innocent III; the Fourth

Lateran Council of 1215 enacted a canon requiring every Christian at least once a year both to go to a priest for confession and to take the Eucharistic sacrament at Mass (*Omnis utriusque sexus*). Reform bishops carried on the work in England later in the century, typified by John Pecham, Franciscan friar and Archbishop of Canterbury.

The effort to eliminate abuses in the church and to meet the pastoral needs of the ordinary laity maintained its momentum into the next century. Thomas Brinton was a great scholar, bishop, and Benedictine monk of the last half of the fourteenth century in England who worked energetically to raise the standards of the clergy and to set an example for popular preaching.

Brinton was born in East Anglia and probably attended the grammar school at the cathedral priory at Norwich run by the Benedictines; he almost certainly joined the order there. However, his career reflects not the monastic ideals of the earlier Middle Ages, but rather the new directions late scholasticism was taking in response to its involvement in academic controversies that had clear political and social implications. The black monks of Norwich had established a residence at Cambridge for those who wished to study law; probably Brinton took advantage of this opportunity and later went to Oxford where he received an advanced degree in canon law (Devlin xi-xii). At this time in the English universities there was a turning of attention away from the logical analysis of theological questions towards subjects of more practical application in church affairs, such as legal studies (Courtenay 365-6, 369).

In one of his sermons, Brinton, citing the prominence given in certain papal canons to the office of teaching against doctrinal error (*Quum ex iniuncto*), argues for the importance of knowledge, *scientia*, for the welfare of the Church. "How else," he says "can the clergy instruct others and lead them to justice and edification (*edificatio*), how else expound the Scriptures in intelligible sermons, unless they shine with the light of knowledge?" (*Sermon* 84, 382).

What knowledge Brinton puts to use in his own preaching, particularly, what knowledge about language and its affiliations with the earlier arts-of-discourse doctrines of Smaragdus and Balbus, can be seen in how he proceeds in a sermon delivered to the clergy at London, 1373 (*Sermon* 28). Although following more or less strictly the rules for constructing a sermon in the university tradition as set

out in the scholastic *Ars praedicandi*, Brinton nonetheless brings into the development of his text popular knowledge of the sort his clerical listeners might do well to make use of in their vernacular preaching once back in their own dioceses.

The base text is from Ephesians, "strive to serve the unity of the Spirit," *Sollicite servare unitatem* [Spiritus] (Eph. 4.3). Brinton takes up the words *Sollicite* (out of which comes his protheme) and *unitatem* (out of which comes the main part of the sermon) in a way that does not strictly constitute a division of the text. Instead, the division of the main part is accomplished by a concorded text from Corinthians tying into *unitatem*: "The many of us are one (*unum*) body," the church (1 Cor. 10.17)--but also we are all members of one social body as well. Brinton then proceeds to his bipartite division by choosing to give attention just to the head (rulers, lay and religious) and the heart (prosperous city-dwellers).

In developing the second part, the section about the heart, Brinton begins with an etymology which can be found in Balbus' dictionary: the city (*civitas*) is so-called because it is constituted from a community of citizens (*civium unitas*); this ties back by concordance to the *unum corpus* of the main division and to the *unitatem* of the base text from Ephesians. The preacher continues by introducing an exemplum from classical science, ultimately from Seneca's *Questiones naturales*, regarding the meteorological phenomenon of the halos that appear around heavenly bodies, particularly certain prominent stars. The Latin word for halo is *corona* which falls into place in a sequence of similar-looking words that all represent unity--*corpus* (the one social body), *cor* (the single organ of the heart, representing the community of citizens, which is central to the body of society), *corona* (the circle of faithful citizens joined together around the star--which is Christ, according to Revelations 22:16: *Ego stella splendida*). Seneca explains that when the corona around a star appears broken, it is because wind has torn it, and this portends a storm (1.2.5). Brinton then proposes three reasons (his subdivision of this section) for the analogous disruption of the civic order. Development of these three reasons comprises the last part of the sermon.

Brinton has thus followed out several different sorts of interconnections within and between the system of language and the text of Scripture--etymological derivations, as in Balbus; concordances

of the same word in various places in Scripture (thereby bringing together passages which confirm each other) and setting out sequences of similar-looking words which fall into line as the argument progresses: *corpus*, *cor*, *corona*, implying the inter-conformity of Scripture and the language system, as in Smaragdus. These patterns of associations in language correspond with and mutually inform what the learned disciplines have come to understand to be the nature of reality. Brinton turns to meteorology here, but elsewhere in this sermon he frequently cites from canon law and adduces as well instances from more popular forms of knowledge--vernacular proverbs, fables, and other illustrative stories. The world of learning thus meshes with the sort of lore more familiar to the lay audience that Brinton seems to have in mind. It is as though this is a semiological ontology that goes beyond an essentially text-based literacy and expresses the preacher's pastoral concern (*sollicitudo*) for the faithful people in his charge.

These are three medieval literacies (summed up in the key words, *observantia*, *edificatio*, *sollicitudo*), different, but the same: situated in different educational and social contexts, but all motivated by reform movements and the dynamic of renewals of learning; related to oral forms in different ways, but all showing some version of the semiological ontology that seems to be implicit in the medieval arts of discourse. These literacies successively absorb each other and together elucidate the late medieval preaching of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester.

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VIVES' *DE CONSULTATIONE*
AND THE RENAISSANCE SCHOOLROOM:
DELIBERATIVE RHETORIC AND THE THESIS EXERCISE

Grant Boswell

Juan Luis Vives is known as the greatest Spanish humanist of the sixteenth century and is surpassed in the European tradition as a whole perhaps only by Erasmus (Bolgar 199). He wrote widely on a number of topics and was invited to Henry the VIII's court by Wolsey whereupon he became tutor to Mary Tudor. Among Vives' numerous writings are the well-known rhetorical treatises *De ratione dicendi* and *De conscribendis epistolis*.

The first is unusual in that, although it appears by its title to be a traditional art of rhetoric, it is known mainly as a work on literary rhetoric because it deals primarily with style and the interpretation of literary texts rather than with the production of orations (Vickers 283). The second is not unusual because it falls well within the tradition of rhetorical treatments on letter writing (Vickers 289).

In volume II of Vives' works, between these two longer rhetorical treatises, is the short work entitled *De consultatione* which has not received much attention as a rhetorical treatise. Yet Vives makes a point of treating deliberative rhetoric apart from the other rhetorical genres saying that this work is separated from his other rhetorical works by the request of its addressee, Ludovicus of Flanders (*Petis, Vir Clarissime, ut de genere deliberativo separatim a reliquo artis Rhetoricae corpore scibam. . .*) (238).

The addressee's request aside, Vives' separation of this treatise on deliberative rhetoric from the other rhetorical works is significant for other reasons. The distinction between arts of reception and arts of production is significant in these three rhetorical treatises. The *De ratione dicendi* appears to be an art of literary reception, while the other rhetorical treatises, *De consultatione* and *De conscribendis epistolis*, are both arts of production and are different in kind. This last distinction of genre is intriguing and I would like to enter on a protracted explanation as to why the *consultatio* is interesting as a separate genre. I will first discuss the prose curriculum common in

Renaissance schools then suggest the significance of Vives' treatise for this curriculum and for Renaissance literature.

The most popular prose composition curriculum in the Renaissance was the *progymnasmata* (Baldwin 69, 288). These were a series of exercises, progressing in levels of difficulty, that trained students in various rhetorical genres. They derived from Hellenistic schools and became very popular in Roman and Medieval schools, and Renaissance schools as well. The earliest one known was written by Theon of Alexandria in the second century A.D. Another was written by Hermogenes of Tarsus also of the second century. Around 515 A.D. Hermogenes' *progymnasmata* were translated into Latin by the famous grammarian Priscian. Thus these exercises became part of the grammar that widely influenced the Middle Ages. This translation was also extensively used in the Renaissance (Clark 259).

The latest Greek schoolmaster to write *progymnasmata* was Aphthonius of Antioch, who taught during the late fourth and early fifth centuries. He patterned his exercises after Hermogenes, but his popularity among subsequent schoolmasters can be attributed to the model essays included for each of the exercises (Clark 259). Aphthonius' *progymnasmata* were translated into Latin first by Joannes Maria Catenaeus in 1507, then by the Dutch humanist Rudolph Agricola in 1532, and then were published with scholia by Reinardus Lorichius in 1542 (Clark 261). These Latin versions of the exercises were immensely popular during the Renaissance (Baldwin 62, 288; Clark 261).

The exercises of the *progymnasmata* increased in difficulty and contained fourteen stages. The first two exercises were narrative retellings of fables and tales. Exercises three and four were the *chreia* and proverb, which taught the skills of repetition for emphasis, pithy statement, comparison, contrast, illustration, and example. The fifth and sixth exercises were refutation and confirmation. The seventh was commonplace which taught skills of amplification. The eighth through the twelfth exercises were *encomium* and vituperation, then comparison, next impersonation or *prosopopoeia*, and then description or *ekphasis*. The thirteenth exercise in the curriculum was the *thesis* or *consultatio*. In this exercise the schoolboys practiced giving advice on a general question.

The fourteenth exercise was called legislation and trained the boys in arguing legal cases, usually from ancient history (Clark 260).

It is the *thesis* or *consultatio* that Vives devotes an entire treatise to when he writes of deliberative rhetoric. In order to better understand Vives' treatment, it is important to understand the exercise as it had been recorded centuries earlier by Aphthonius. Here is what Aphthonius says about this exercise:

> The *thesis*, that is the consultation, is the inquiry of some matter to be investigated by speech. Of the consultations, however, some are civic and others are contemplative. The civic are those which have the action accommodated to the state, for instance: whether a wife must be taken, whether a voyage must be taken, whether fortifications must be built. By all these, for instance, the status of the state is maintained. Indeed the contemplative are those which pertain to the reflections of the mind alone. They are, of course, whether the heavens are spherical, or whether there are many worlds. These, for instance, do not come into the use of men, but are perceived by the mind alone. The consultation, however, differs from the hypothesis, that is, from a suit (causa) because the suit is definite; the consultation is indefinite. The definition, moreover, may be in accordance with person, matter, argument, and the rest, as in the example "walls must be built." This inquiry is without person. A suit is for example when the Lacedemonians counsel to encompass Sparta with a wall from the Persian invaders. This indeed has persons: the deliberating Spartans; it has matter: the wall of Sparta; it has a reason: the invading Persians. First of all the tasks, however, consultation exercises objection and response even as examination does. The *thesis* is first divided by that which we call the entrance which you put in the place of the proemium; then you use the final headings for the right, the just, the useful, and the possible. (61)

It is necessary to distinguish between the types of exercises described here. The *thesis* or *consultatio* is a general treatment of a question that is either civic in that it deals with the actions of humans, or it is contemplative in that it deals with the speculations of the mind. A *hypothesis* differs from a *thesis* in that it deals with

the specific. Whether it is better to marry would be a *thesis*. Whether it is better for John to marry Linda would be a *hypothesis*. This is all Aphthonius says about this exercise before he includes a model essay as an example. But many Renaissance editors took the occasion to write commentary about what the exercise entailed.

Vives is unique in respect to the *consultatio* because in lieu of commentary he wrote a separate treatise on consultation published in Oxford in 1523. *De consultatione* is an elaborate explanation of how to give counsel and advice, and harks back to the schoolroom *thesis* exercise. I would like to examine briefly what Vives says in his treatise and suggest why it is useful.

First Vives gives a passing nod to the rhetorical genres saying that he is writing this treatise exclusively about deliberative rhetoric by request. The treatise is organized in Aristotelian fashion after the three modes of proof: arguments from the nature of the case, the nature of the speaker, and the nature and disposition of the audience. He must also follow the prescribed canons of invention, arrangement, and style. Rather than summarize what Vives says about invention, arrangement, and style in logical, ethical and pathetic arguments, I will discuss some of what he says about logical and ethical invention because herein he offers some perspectives emphasized in the Humanist view of deliberative rhetoric.

In his discussion of logical invention, the reader is struck with the applicability of these topics not just to political debates, but to the general conversations one might have on very ordinary matters. When considering the nature of the case, Vives says that matters before, contemporary with, and after the case must be considered. Matters before would include predecessors and precedents, the ancients, that which was done or said formerly: fables, history, oracles, prophesies, witty sayings, opinions, common sayings, and proverbs (239).

Matters contemporary with the case include those things in the mind and in the body and those external to both. Those in the mind are qualities of fancy and memory, talents of nature such as docility and discretion, those things which are improved by industry and use such as disciplines and arts, and those gifts enhanced by training such as prudence and virtue and their opposites.

Those matters contemporary with the case and in the body are strength and weakness, health, stature, proportion, beauty or deformity, age, name, and that which proceeds from all of these. Those matters external to both mind and body are riches, pleasant pursuits, family, things not in our control such as grace and charm, the state, the region, and their qualities: whether they are mountainous, rocky, swampy, flat, passable, impassable, and their parts such as the home, marketplace, fields, and the position of the place whether it is among friends or enemies, near far, below, and above (239-40).

He also considers time contemporaneous with the case in terms of its natural divisions such as hours, days, months; time in terms of the workings of men such as festivals, feasts, planting, or harvest; and time according to the accidents such as famine, plague, prosperity, and peace (240-41).

He likewise discusses the matters to be considered after the case in terms of what is likely to happen and what is able to be affected by human will and skill. This requires a knowledge of the persons involved, their characters, human motives, the external factors likely to be involved, and the way each person is likely to behave in a given circumstance (241-42).

As part of deliberating about the future, the counselor must know what goods are to be sought, for we seek the good and avoid the bad. The chief goods are the useful and the noble. The goods that are useful to the mind are courage, learning, wit, and wisdom. The goods useful to the body are learning, friendship, dignity, power, charm, authority. The most noble things pertain to God such as piety, desire for the highest things, knowledge and adoration of God's omnipotent nature, love, liberality, justice, kindness, temperance, wit, judgment, learning, dignity, honor, praise, glory, charm, authority, power, distinction of birth (242-43).

Vives also offers a list of priorities so as to enable the one giving counsel to recommend the best choice when faced with recommending useful, but mutually exclusive, courses. He states:

> For usefulness, those things are uppermost which are found to preserve life, and are not only prepared in the present, but also can be prepared afterwards .... And then all

profitable and safe things, not so much for us as for them whom we hold dear, or will hold dear. . . . Next are those things which are for delights and pleasures for all our senses, and which are delightful to the mind, which are the best and are very noble and long lasting; then come those which leave in their wake the least bit of regret. . . . The final things are splendid and magnificent . . . which things are greatly to be praised for their utility to the many. . . . (244)

This hierarchy of utilities aids the counselor in recommending the best course of action when all choices being considered are useful.

What is striking about Vives' discussion of logical invention is that these topics of invention seem equally applicable to planning a journey as to planning a military campaign. In fact, this is exactly the design of the civic part of the consultation exercise. Whether one is planning marriage, a journey, or fortification of the city, he must learn the topics to help him conduct his life in all of its demands that concern deliberation about future action. The assumption is that one needs to know how to comport himself reasonably in all of his behavior, not merely in his discussions concerning matters of state.

Vives' treatment of ethical arguments is interesting because it depends upon the presumption of probity and prudence in the one being counselled rather than in the counselor. This alters the traditional notion of ethos because now the ethical presumption is transferred to the audience rather than residing in the orator. In this respect Vives also feels that Christian rhetoric must diverge from Classical rhetoric because for Christians what is decent must precede that which is useful.

> Formerly the Roman people would often employ in deliberations this saying, "May utility prevail," which is reprehended by the wisest and noblest of the people and repudiated by a philosophical school. The Romans probably thought that the same advantage from which the cry was made would also be the most advantageous to the country as a whole. But let us say truly, "May decency prevail," or better, "May religion prevail." (251)

In addition, Vives talks about what kind of relationship is to be had toward each type of person one might advise, whether one's

superior or inferior. He talks of what kind of behavior is suitable for each kind of person and how to decide which choice to make when two noble goods conflict (252).

Beside giving us an interesting look at Renaissance society and its values and customs, Vives' treatise seems to be a lengthy list of all possible considerations when someone gives advice to another. In part this is true, but it is more than that. More significantly, *De consultatione* provides a comprehensive taxonomy of all significant lines of reasoning that can possibly come into play when someone gives advice to another either on a practical or a contemplative matter. The assumption was that if someone could master the *thesis* or the *consultatio* exercise, he would have at his disposal all the necessary mental equipment to give advice in any possible situation. That is, knowing in general the forms of reasoning available would help him give specific advice in a particular set of circumstances. Or knowing how to find all the reasons why one should marry would allow him to give good advice to his friend John regarding why he should marry Linda. This would not involve giving all possible reasons, but only those applicable to the case at hand. In other words the exercise was designed to teach schoolboys never to be at a loss for words and to make those words count. The exercise presumes judgment beyond inventional fecundity.

Vives states that the skill of giving advice extends well beyond the assembly and senate. He says that all these things are of use to the household that deliberates and adds that skills in advising are useful for private cases in which one must counsel irresolute friends as well as for public cases in which one must counsel in the courts of princes (258). This same every-day application is also suggested by Erasmus in his letter writing treatise, *De conscribendis epistolis*, where he devotes a section to letters of advice (199-203).

Evidently giving advice was seen as an ordinary function of life from the most formal to the most casual of settings. And the *consultatio* exercise was designed to meet this discursory expectation. Indeed one of the most common examples of the *consultatio* given in textbooks was not one taken from the assemblies or senate, but from every-day experience: whether it is better to marry or not.

The applicability of advice-giving to all situations is one of the skills the humanist curriculum sought, and I believe that this widespread schoolroom exercise is responsible for the vast advice literature of the Renaissance. Vives' separate treatment of deliberative rhetoric as advice-giving in *De consultatione* is evidence of the importance of this genre in Renaissance society. As examples of Renaissance advice literature Vives' own advice *On the Education of a Christian Woman* comes to mind. But one can easily think of many others: certainly Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Garver has already shown how thoroughly Machiavelli was dependent on the topics of rhetorical argument in that treatise. But one could just as easily add Machiavelli's *Discourses on the First Decade of Livy*. Think also of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* or Erasmus's *The Education of a Christian Prince* or William Bude's *The Instruction of a Prince*. In the English tradition think of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* or Sir Thomas Elyot's *Book Named the Governor* and Bacon's *Essays or Councills* and many more. You may also think of the many exhortations to marry as in Erasmus's book on writing letters or Jeremy Taylor's famous sermon on marriage. And well this claim could be extended to numerous other examples of this genre in the Renaissance.

In some respects Vives' treatment of deliberative rhetoric is interesting in the tradition, namely in placing humanist emphasis on the everyday use of deliberative rhetoric and in presuming the good moral character of the one receiving counsel. The importance of Vives' treatise, however, is not that it is unique, but that it is comprehensive. It gives a full view of the complexity of training that students received in this schoolroom practice, a practice that shaped an entire literature of advice during the Renaissance.

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MARXIST ARGUMENTATION:
THE "PROBLEMATIC" AND PRAXIS

John Stephen Martin

Underlying Marx's ideas of history, which adherents label "scientific," are important rhetorical considerations. Indeed, Marx might be called a theorist of rhetorical argumentation as well as an exponent of scientific history. This is because as with every theory of rhetoric, his theory of history incorporates three key factors: a personal purpose for the public speech situation and act, a process of invention, and a form of argumentation that fulfils and justifies invention.

However, my thesis is more specific: I wish to outline that Marx depended on rhetoric to solve what is termed the "problematic" of his "science" of history and that his method of praxis, or the practical steps one takes towards utopia, is a specific form of argumentation intended to resolve the "problematic."

In brief, I argue that this "problematic" is the situation of defining and clarifying how existing social conditions are deficient because they inherently represent but one historical phase, unjust in nature. It is the Marxist equivalent of rhetorical "invention."

Subsequently, I take up the notion of praxis, the procedures of implementing policies that are supposed to lead to utopia. I contend that because an audience must acknowledge the logic of praxis in order that utopia replace the current historical phase, praxis may also be said to be the Marxist equivalent to argumentation.

Marx's purpose, however, is more than the liberation of the proletariat. The praxis vindicates ultimately the invention of intellectuals who stand opposite to the zeit-geist, or the ideology of a phase of history, and who alone understand history as a process that is moving towards utopia. Thus, if the praxis achieves utopia, then the intellectual can be sure that his vision of the "substructure" is an empirical demonstration of his authentic relationship to the substructural reality.

The awareness that the "problematic" is part of the rhetorical process is negated by social scientists and philosophers of history who

prefer to hammer out the inherent ambiguity of Marx's use of the term "ideology." This ambiguity is present in Marx's study entitled *The German Ideology*. In it, Marx first speaks of "the distorted form in which the sanctimonious and hypocritical ideology of the bourgeoisie voices their particular interests as universal interests" (194). These words suggest that ideology consciously serves class interests and that the bourgeoisie effect a masking of reality to keep the proletariat enslaved. Later in the same work, however, Marx speaks of ideology as a condition of history, as he says that "German liberalism" is "the ideological reflection of real liberalism," and liberalism is "the idealistic expression of the real interests of the bourgeoisie" (214). Here, ideology is a matter of cultural expression or the reflection of the underlying hegemony of power in a single historical phase. Thus, instead of class conflict making for ideology as an instrument, ideology is a neutral battleground where the class conflict shows its existence.

The "problem" here is that if ideology is a system of semiotic signs and behaviour which gives presence in the mind to what is fundamentally materialistic and therefore sub-verbal, how can one ever articulate an alternative to the expression of an age which ultimately reflects the "substructural" realities of material forces?

From the position of metaphysics, the "problematic" is a question of whether the will is free and can choose other than what reality appears to be. And rhetorically, it is whether Marx can motivate the proletariat to take power, and whether he should even try if an inevitable process of history is moving on its own to correct the economic and social injustices enacted by the bourgeoisie during a single phase of history.

More specifically, if the consciousness of individuals is an effect caused by the ideological mind-set of the social reality during a phase of history, how does one gain freedom from the ideological context of the existing stage of history to desire what does not presently exist? Or, yet once more, if consciousness is necessary to decipher the ideological battle between classes, how does one experience a change of consciousness merely by observation of a present moment that is in a process of evolution towards the future?

From a rhetorical perspective, the "problematic" undermines rhetorical argumentation by cause and effect, for there is no room for

persuasion if one can believe only what the belief-system, caused by material factors, permits to exist. Furthermore, because the rhetoric of a political argument reflects only the tokens of an era's ideological consciousness, there can not be any immediate understanding of the non-verbal material forces, which operate in what Marx called the "substructure" of life: we stand, as it were, in Plato's cave gazing at shadows.

This is where praxis comes in. Marx believed that praxis was a "scientific method" to fulfilling history. It tokenized the material forces moving history, so that if individuals accepted history as a process, they would act and implement what was ordained by nature. The "invention" of praxis was actually an insight or means, as I shall discuss, of seeing phenomenal experience as a series of possible options or alternative policies to satisfy the indefinite human impulses, tendencies, or desires, which remain subverbal within the material factors of the "substructure." At this point, Marx satisfies the view of tendacious desire held by the "liberal mind," which one finds in the works of Hobbes, Locke, and Mills. The liberal mind says that tendacious desires initiate policies of making means to attain ends. Furthermore, I would add that one can "prove" policies, not metaphysical arguments, by empirical demonstration because policies can be shown to satisfy human desires which directly express the materialistic "substructure" of life. As says Kenneth Minogue, in speaking in *The Liberal Mind* of this Western Tradition, "wherever a policy existed, there must also be the desire of an individual to sustain it" (23).

A policy is actually an hypothesis about human activities, rather than rational conceptions of truth. In a discourse of policy, individual terms are not linked logically or semantically--as in the statement "all children have parents." Rather the terms gain validity--that is, "apparent applicability"--only when the ends of the entire policy are demonstrated empirically, as when we say that "an acid is present when a material corrodes, and if one desires to etch engravings, use an acid." In other words, an acid is known to corrode, but this "truth" is validated only when an etching is made into a metal plate.

In sum, the liberal concept of policies assumes the direct tokenization of factors of the "substructure," and a policy, expressed as words about actions, is validated when specific factors affecting consciousness are made demonstrably causal. One becomes

"conscious" in the socio-political world, if one follows the analysis of Marx by Joe McCartney, by noting the syntax that conjoins the tokens between sets of phenomena (26-31, 113-14). The "syntactic" relationship is supposedly between the "substructure" *and* the phenomenal images of the substructure which are the basis of policies formulated about the "substructure." Indeed, the syntax is an hypothesis that conjoins the individual phenomena, and lends credibility to tokens used to articulate the phenomena. Syntax is a relationship which Max Weber suggested exists between the rise of Protestantism and the rise of capitalism--whereby examining one set as a phenomenon outlines the other as "substructural" force, and both together manifest a composite synthesis betokening an ideology which can explain either set. In such a manner, Marx thought, he could avoid a "semantic" orientation which made individual terms of one set reflect directly the elements of the "substructure," and which he thought made for an inadequate evaluation of historical change by isolated and idealistic aphorism (2, 26)--in effect, an evaluation of an isolated period through an historian's bias.

To be sure, Marx in a well-known quotation warns us that this process of formulating "social existence" in terms of policies is different from the idealistic tokenization of the world to make one's goals a matter of consciousness: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* 21). Marx objected, one remembers, to "the idealist ontology of the primacy accorded to concepts, and sought a materialist ontology of experience" (McCartney 86).

And Engels is clearer, even when he makes the confusion so human as he writes: "Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Hence he imagines false or seeming motive forces" (*Selected Correspondence* 541). In distinction, Marx's intent is that one must find a syntax of tokens which make the audience directly conscious of pre-verbal experience through a recognition of policies, and not rely on the words which give only an idealistic idea of experience, once removed.

What made this "proof" so believable to Marx was that it raised praxis into a "science." Praxis is above the debate of being a merely contentious policy based on an individual's consciousness and the manipulation of terms which supposedly makes a logical argument "transparent" or self-evident (McCartney 20-1, 63).

The history of ideology clarifies the "problematic," and points to Marx's attempt at a rhetorical solution through praxis. A full study of ideology would begin with Destutt de Tracy's late eighteenth-century understanding of how sensationalism constructs the ideas of the mind in accord with Locke's paradigm of psychological understanding. Here, ideas are not traditional, abstract, and prior to experience; rather, they are irresistible because they are discovered within a field of phenomenal experience. The purpose of de Tracy in studying what he termed ideology was to differentiate truth from what earlier philosophers had called "false opinions" (Cooper 97-99; Barth, 1-16; Manning 1-11). De Tracy argued from cause and effect, implied in Locke's paradigm. In doing so, de Tracy understood that he could speculate about the future because a present "idea A"--assumed to be the "highest good"--could determine an individual's "action A." This meant that if one was inculcated to believe that "idea A" is good, then one must will "action A" to follow, and "sensation A," the ultimate cause, must also be good. He concluded that to know "idea A" enabled one to evaluate "cause A" since "idea A" was just as much a fact of nature as was the sensation that gave rise to it.

De Tracy's argumentation was, thus, a form of "semantic" evaluation, and simply brushed aside the "problematic" of how one could have original ideas when ideas were formed experientially by a political hegemony. Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism, which said that the mind could choose to implement ideas on the basis of "the highest good," was not a true praxis because it lacked a concept of utopia based on a psychological explanation of the will. However, Marx's notion of praxis was a breakthrough because it refashioned the argument rhetorically, positing the notion of utopia not only as a purpose for discourse but also as criteria based on the immediate demonstration of psychological experience.

That is, only an hypothesis of policy could tie related but not identical images of experience together syntactically to reflect a composite picture of an ideology that was limited to a phase of

history. Likewise, only an hypothesis of policy could make the ends justify the means, and so subsume segments of experience to demonstrate for the individual that the flux had evident teleological direction. Besides demonstrable argumentation, praxis is a cognitive demand upon the will of what must be done in order to judge and eradicate the privilege of unjust social, political, and economic conditions and bring society to fulfilment or utopia. Consequently, if an individual is persuaded by praxis as observed experience, praxis thereby becomes the ultimate purpose of ideological rhetoric which makes the present moment meaningful.

Praxis is now rhetorical argument, based on a psychological experience. However, a logical explanation of praxis remained a problem. Relying upon cause-and-effect, de Tracy was compelled to say that "sensation A" made for "action A," since "sensation A" was actually an "effect" of what the hegemony of the day permitted. This, we noted, was a naive view of praxis because cause-and-effect explanations did not explain how a person would receive an "idea A" and yet react to it in a way that could alter the future by causing "action B."

This is where Marx's personal purpose becomes noticeable as a solution. Supplemental to the ostensible purpose of liberating the proletariat, Marx addressed himself specifically to a class of alienated bourgeois intellectuals, similar to himself. These intellectuals are related to the proletariat who are alienated from their work, their products, and the economic and social system of competition. However, since the proletariat are unaware of desires for hypothetical policies of change, they have no adequate consciousness of their condition. In contrast, the intellectual could understand that there are laws of psychology which, allied to the pre-verbal desires we noted earlier, can lead to alternatives for existing social patterns. In sum, the intellectual did nothing but isolate his own subjectivity to rediscover primal desires. Moreover, alienation confirmed, experientially, that some individuals have "fallen between the cracks," so to say, of the contemporary moment of history and actually had different images in mind as the reference for their thoughts. To be alienated from the contemporary moment of history enabled one ironically to find or invent terms which formed a policy and thus duplicated in the mind the process of material history not seen or understood by the oppressed at present. Consequently, such

intellectuals are constantly struggling with signifiers; they bypass the signs that appear natural and commonsensical to most persons and instead invent arguments based on how sets of phenomenal happenings provide a syntax to a discourse for contemporary ideology.

In sum, then, Marx considered that he solved the "problematic" of choices of consciousness by the argumentation of praxis which, in effect, was based on a psychological process of intellectual contrariness, a kind of supreme dramatic irony in which the initiate had a syntax that permitted discourse about the controls restraining history and oppressing the naive individual. This process was a science of the mind that made its devotees enjoy a certitude above or prior to rhetoric, much as Plato's Philosopher King was superior to those rhetoricians who relied on passion or ecstasy, and emphasized semantics. As for the others, the followers, Marx assumed that the study of "scientific" argumentation would make possible a change of consciousness in them, much in the manner in which a psychiatrist might say that the terms of a neurosis are metaphors pointing to its origins, and to understand the origins would free one of the neurosis.

The method, at closer scrutiny, asserts that the psychological processing of ideas begins by noting the anomalies or tendentiousness of desires which cannot be satisfied by the contemporary ideological beliefs. An alienated individual would find such tendentiousness to be referring to his subjective impulses or desires which are contrary and lead to ironic scenarios or policies. However, the follower would explore the impact of ideas structuring history, and from this, would understand how praxis worked. At that point, the method of praxis, pointing as it does to the fulfilment of impulses at the time of utopia, would convince the student that history is a process in which truths change; as such, praxis could prove that greater goods, desires, or impulses can be realized.

What Marx had done, if one notes this aspect of his argumentation by praxis, is that he complemented a causal notion of sensation, ideas, and actions which de Tracy might have presented, by a dialectic of intellectual contrariness, thereby allowing for what Derrida might term "differance" between moments of consciousness in reading a text (26-8). "Differance" too is ambiguous, as befitting a dialectic, especially in Derrida's terms of "absence" suggesting "presence" because "difference" leads a reader to fill gaps in "the

becoming-space of the spoken chain" (27). Mankind, it seems, has a rhetorical urge to make sense of phenomena by utilizing words "semantically," but must, when the words fail, find such words "syntactically." Thus, on the one hand, any moment of sensed "differance"--when terms become suddenly opaque and an apparent obstacle to continuity--compels the reader of a text to explain and smooth out a gap in consciousness. On the other hand, to smooth out the breaks, one has ironically to entertain what was not immediately present but must be summoned up from commensurate experiences (212, 221).

Derrida's similarities to Marxist methods are striking, although Derrida emphasizes reading not historiography, and finds a fundamental difference between literary and spoken language (28). To be sure, Marx did not recognize fully that his method of formulating policy sought to make written discourse able to encapsulate phases of historical change, and so, unawares, used a form of literary language played against spoken language and its communal connotations of the age. Consequently, Marx did not see that the notion of praxis was an ironical--a rhetorical--notion derived from the play between a belief in the continuity of a process working towards utopia and an initial, inventive stage, in which current continuities were broken by sensed moments of "differance" and "presented" new notions, virtually "out of the blue."

For Marx, then, praxis was "scientific," not rhetorical. The means of production had alienated certain individuals who could no longer function according to the ideology of their times, and had so sensitized them to "otherness" that they understood "presences" of implicit policies merely by observing contemporary ideological moments of "absences." In this light, the special feature of his rhetoric is that Marx offers his audience of alienated, or potentially alienated, individuals a scientific equivalent of argumentation by ironic dialectics; its purpose is to acknowledge human impulses or wilful desires to reflect a larger pattern of history, not limited to one individual. The instigating impulse is the desire to eradicate the despair of alienation, of the separation of the self from power and the ensuing sense of being enthraled by the "alien powers" of the bourgeois hegemony (Minogue, *Alien Powers* 41-68).

Marx's praxis, in conclusion, fulfils the three key demands of any theory of rhetoric. Students of rhetoric know that prior to the stage

of invention, there may be a pre-invention stage in which what confronts us is tendentious. That is, before contentions arise which arguments are to work out, there is a situation in which ideas, values, perceptions, and so forth, are equally true or false, equally right or wrong, but change according to contingent factors which give rise to impulses or desires, such as I have noted about Marx and the intellectuals of alienation.

As invention is a turning within to the tendentious possibilities, it resolves itself into contentions which hypostatize factors of possibilities into negotiable tokens of an articulate argument. Invention hypostatizes argumentative points about nature, authoritative texts, cause and effect, analogies, and testimony into terms that allow a speaker to approach an audience with various appeals necessary for persuasion or enlightenment--logos, pathos, and ethos.

The traditional rhetorical stance is that of a speaker who refers to his hypostatized ideas within his arguments as a text which he can elucidate for his audience. However, Marx seemingly downplays the process of invention, preferring to pose a stage of "discovery" since discovery implies a turning to the evidence of direct experience which persons may perceive for themselves. The stance of the speaker is that of one who finds what others may find for themselves as long as they are open and unbiased in their perceptions.

Consequently, if the completion of praxis validates the invention of utopia, and is the ostensible purpose of Marx's argument, praxis also has made the dialectic of contrariness possible for the true initiates. At the same time, this dialectic has led, in turn, to the praxis which validates for the student that an individual may triumph over the phases of history which deny him ontological significance.

The "problematic" and praxis are not simply two separate items of Marx's scientific method, but are, together, the heart of Marx's rhetoric which legitimatizes the wonder-working aspects of "scientific history." They make for an hermeneutical circle, of the ends being proven by the method which allows the hypothesis to get into motion. It unites time present and time future into one moment, and as such, is akin to a religious revelation. What this argumentation does is change the nature of "experience," so that an individual can experience transcendence of one's time and have a experiential vision

of utopia, and yet within historical time, find epistemological, ontological, and teleological significance.

Uniting charismatic initiates and devoted followers, such an insight is the modern equivalent of a religious movement. With ideologues, the praxis is both an argument for the studious to follow to utopia as well as a constant revelation for those who can pierce the veil of illusions, for every moment suggests a dialectic opposite. Praxis is invention to the visionary apostles, but also the major form of argumentation to the studious followers.

To be sure, Marx's rhetoric may not be what a traditional rhetorician expects, and social scientists may remain sceptical that Marx was a rhetorician when he ostensibly theorized about scientific history. In response, I would emphasize that if Marx's praxis is equivalent to a religious experience, it is because he has made it the argumentation to enact a faith as well as to explain a faith about man's place in a material universe. Thereby, Marx has become both Paul and a church father who interprets the writings of Paul, and thus a rhetorician in the older, traditional sense of the word.

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PART II

CRITICAL THEORIES OF RHETORIC

UPDATING CLASSICAL STASIS THEORY: THE INVENTORIES OF CHAIM PERELMAN

David Goodwin

Contemporary scholarship hotly debates whether the classical tradition aids or impedes the development of rhetoric within the modern academy. Some scholars argue that classical rhetoric "must be frontally assaulted and the texts that include [it] must be shown to be foreign to the modern mind" (Knoblauch and Brannon 79); others, that it is the "most completely developed body of rhetorical theory, [and] provides a touchstone against which all other theory and practice can be measured" (Connors, Ede, Lunsford vii.). My own view lies somewhere in between. If classical precepts and practices are revived as points of meditation--that is, as opportunities to reflect on, and by reflecting, question contemporary discourse and communication--then the so-called "tradition" is, indeed, central to our discipline. The converse of this relationship also holds: that part of the value of contemporary thought is its ability to call into question past modes and theories of discourse.

In this vein, then, I plan to discuss ancient concepts of rhetorical stasis. Stasis theory played an important role in the development of classical rhetoric, allowing, as it did, the transplanting of forensic procedures into the more general issues of *inventio*. By briefly outlining this development, I hope to show how current beliefs in diverse world-views--something central to the rhetorical theories of Chaim Perelman and Kenneth Burke-- render the concept of stasis highly problematic. I say "problematic," however, and not "irrelevant" or "impossible" because, as I will argue, a re-examination of Perelman's concept of the loci and Burke's pentadic ratios may well provide the grounds for a new theory of stasis, one which might explain how different viewpoints intersect, conflict with, and modify each other.

I

What remains tacit in everyday conversation must be rendered overt in a court of law. Courts must formalize turn-taking and prerogatives of introduction and closure; must respond to a legal

disagreement with more than an undefined or casual sense of annoyance, relief, or pleasure. They must decide about guilt and innocence, about liability or the lack of it, about sentencing, or, in civil suits, about the assessment of damages. Presumably, legal procedure--and indeed laws themselves--are designed to help judges and juries decide cases fairly and expediently. A fair decision requires a clear charge, not a vague feeling of disagreement between people, or between a person and society; an expedient system requires conflicting parties to locate their differences at the outset of proceedings. Knowing exactly which legal questions need to be asked and answered, what evidence needs to be presented, which side needs to discharge a burden of proof or, conversely, garner presumption--these considerations are all essential to legal reasoning and argumentation.

Take the example of a criminal trial, a murder case. The first issue the courts must resolve is: what evidence exists that a murder was committed? The second issue, does the act fit the definition of first degree murder (as opposed to, let us say, manslaughter)? Third, are there mitigating circumstances or attendant concerns (such as the accused protecting himself)? And fourth, should formal procedural action be taken and is this the right court to take it in? Obviously, the questions are interrelated, with some contained by, or subordinate to, the others. For example, if no convincing evidence is found that a crime occurred, the questions of extenuating circumstances or legal jurisdiction are not only secondary but irrelevant.

Once the courts answer these questions, and if they decide to start proceedings, the accused, too, must identify an issue and develop a defense. The defendant might, for instance, concede the fact as well as the definition of the crime, but plead circumstances: that ten years of physical abuse by the victim compelled him or her to do it. The decision to argue from extenuating circumstances opens up an entire range of secondary issues: questions, for instance, about temporary insanity, the use of reasonable force, and so on.

Classical stasis theory rose out of, and helped address, three fundamental legal needs. First, the need to establish whether a true legal conflict or impasse exists (two people arguing about completely different issues or, equally, taking the same side on the same issue would waste the court's time). Second, to establish the exact charge

by the prosecution or action by the plaintiff. And third, to establish a successful strategy of rebuttal for the accused or the defendant.

Hermagoras of Temnos, in the second century B.C., was the first rhetorician to formalize a series of issues and questions designed specifically to answer these needs (Nadeau 370). Based on Greek concepts of motion, the theory characterized arguments by the resting place where motion meets countermotion, assertion meets counterassertion. When a claim encounters its contrary, the motion halts, and the resulting standstill, or stasis, characterizes and shapes the argument. A conflict that comes to rest--or reaches an impasse--on the issue of whether something in fact happened raises the corresponding question of Being or Existence (is it? did it happen?). Arguments, of course, can rest or stand on other "places": on the issue of Definition (what is it?); of Quality (what are its attendant concerns and circumstances?); of Location (is a formal procedural action necessary?)

Motion is viewed here as rectilinear. That is, contrary forces balance each other, at least temporarily. The place where they meet provides the terrain, and consequently, many of the argumentative options open to disputants. The terrain dictates, for instance, who has the high ground (namely, presumption), and what manoeuvers are most likely to work against the opponent. Obviously, from the defender's position, establishing that no crime occurred or that he was elsewhere at the time provides a better defense than conceding everything and then arguing from a technicality like jurisdiction. If possible, then, stopping the attacker on the beaches--in this case, on the issue of Existence--opens up strategic possibilities not available once the argument shifts to other grounds. But in all cases, stasis marks both the place of impasse and the resulting moment of rest needed before an argument takes a new turn, before one side or the other shifts the conflict in a new direction, usually towards grounds that will favour their cause.

Hermogenes of Tarsus, a Greek rhetorician of the Second Sophistic period, expanded the Hermagorean system in three important ways. First, he cites more examples to illustrate each issue and details more subordinate stases or heads. Stases subsiduary to the main question of Definition (is this a crime?) and Quality (a review of circumstances) would include such sub-topics as the status

of the person charged, the intentions of the person, the rules governing service to the state, and so on (Nadeau 382).

Second, Hermogenes expands stasis theory to apply beyond the courtroom. His treatise, *On Stases*, then, examines not only the writing of forensic *controversia* but of deliberative *suasoria* and epideictic *encomia*. In treating the stases of deliberative rhetoric, for instance, he lists the *tele* governing deliberative speaking--justice, law, expediency, honour, and pleasure and ease. A proposed course of action would be evaluated against these stock issues, so that an action which is not easy might be defended as possible; or if inexpedient, as necessary; or if pleasurable, as unjust (Nadeau 384).

Finally, Hermogenes not only expands the treatment of stasis but of astasis as well, namely, those pseudo-arguments that lack true motion (the argument is so diffused, so unfocused that conflict can not arise); or lack contrary motions (one-sided positions); or lack momentum (two sides so equally balanced that the same charge applies to both). To Hermagoras's list he adds other questions incapable of stasis, most of which are social in nature--questions that raise the incredible, the impossible, the despicable, or the purposeless--as well as questions almost incapable of stasis: questions that are irrelevent, or prejudged, or nearly one-sided (Nadeau 385).

Classical stasis theory makes a number of fundamental assumptions. First, that argument is a form of motion, rectilinear in kind, contrary in character, and definable by the impasse or turning point of opposing claims. Second, that assertions are the primary, if not sole, unit of argumentation. Third, that the landscape of argumentation--the geography, so to speak, of places on which conflict comes to rest--is stable and distinct; that the boundaries separating Existence, Definition, Quality, and Location are clearly marked and definable. Fourth, that Existence is the most comprehensive, and Location, the most restrictive, category of stasis. And finally, fifth, that rhetoric concerns itself with argument--and argument, with opposing claims--reducing astasis to a minor rhetorical consideration at best.

Many of Chaim Perelman's and Kenneth Burke's most important contributions to rhetorical theory represent, I think, an attempt to work out a contemporary theory of stasis. Their theories, however, do not simply adjust or refine the ideas of Hermagoras or

Hermogenes, but radically rethink the assumptions underlying rhetoric and argumentation. They replace the concept of motion, for instance, with that of action, emphasizing the intentional, functional, purposive nature of human acts. And subsequently, they replace a model of interaction based on rectilinearity with one based on circularity, emphasizing the recursive dimensions of human communication. Similarly, they focus on the conflict of contexts out of which assertions arise rather than the conflict of assertions themselves. They question the metaphysical rigidness of, and relations among, any set of categories, and, as I will show, reverse the classical priority of Existence over Location. And finally, they are interested not only in stasis, but in astasis, and in particular, the various rhetorical means by which argument is inhibited or deflected.

II

In his essay, "The New Rhetoric: a Theory of Practical Reasoning," Perelman makes a claim that I think Hermagoras and Hermogenes would have understood and agreed with: namely, that "the new rhetoric is a theory of argumentation" (9). Perelman departs from classical forumulations, however, when he defines and then describes argumentation.

For instance, he claims that all argumentation aims at gaining the adherence of minds, and that this adherence must be based on one of two kinds of agreement: on facts, truths, and presumptions, or on values, hierarchies and loci of the preferable (Perelman 15). The first three are objects of specific and limited agreement. The last three supply reasons for our choices and are, by their very nature, debatable. Although facts are very specific objects of agreement, and loci of the preferable, very general patterns of choice, both bases of agreement depend on and shape each other. People's global sense of significance or value determines what constitutes a fact just as accepted facts and truths shape our general preferences and beliefs.

This circular pattern of mutual interaction departs from the rectilinear motion of classical stasis theory and provides the key to Perelman's theory of stasis. The two most important loci of the preferable--the locus of quantity and the locus of quality--present themselves in arguments from every period of history. The locus of quantity, for instance, guides arguments based on the value of that

which is stable, ordered, regular, enduring, affects the greatest number, and so on; the locus of quality, of that which is transient, irregular, unique, irremediable, concerns the elite (*The New Rhetoric: A Treatise* 85-93). Quantity represents established values and patterns of preference; quality, challenges to those values and preferences. Yet the two loci are mutually dependent: without established values there could be no challenges, and without challenges, no values could be tested and refined.

Argument is as much a contest of conflicting loci as a contest of individual assertions. Indeed, speakers win or lose arguments based on their ability to reconfigure the patterns of preference assumed by the opponent's claims into other, more advantageous patterns. Argument proceeds by the interaction of loci, which, in turn, proceeds by a kind of Gestalt process. Someone invoking the locus of quantity might bring to the foreground the quantitative elements of an opponent's qualitative position. The reverse, too, can occur. Perelman gives us historical examples of both. Classicists, for instance, will grant "the superiority of an original personality [a Romantic concept] . . . by the inexhaustible nature of his genius, the influence of his personality on a large number of people, the magnitude of the changes for which it is responsible." Similarly, Romanticists might reinterpret the superiority of the multitude over the individual [a classical concept] if the group can be described as a unique being, with "its own history, originality, and genius" (*The New Rhetoric* 98-99). In the first case, the locus of quantity reconfigures an argument based on quality, and in the second, the converse occurs.

The ability of the loci to reconfigure--or as Perelman calls it, "systematize"--rival patterns of preference puts a new twist on stasis theory. Classical stasis theory presupposes pre-existent, self-evident categories of Being, Definition, Quality, and Location. With Perelman's theories, the very categories are up for grabs: what Being or Definition is for a Classicist is not the same as for a Romanticist (*The New Rhetoric* 97). Indeed, both will not only try to shift the argument from one category to another, but from one whole set of categories to another, completely different set. If successful, such a manoeuver does not so much resolve a conflict as dissolve the grounds on which it might take place.

Astases--strategies for preventing an impasse--are integral to Perelman's theory of argumentation. He identifies three ways that speakers impede or deflect argument: the rational, the practical, and the diplomatic (*The New Rhetoric: A Treatise* 197-201). Rational astasis prevents conflict by postulating universal axioms and then deducing rules to cover specific cases; practical astasis, by generalizing only as much as needed from previous cases to cover the next one; and diplomatic astasis, by ignoring that any conflict exists. Perelman cites French law and philosophy as an example of rational astasis; English law and philosophy as an example of practical astasis; and, as an example of diplomatic astasis, the Japanese practice of ignoring a guest if the host is not suitably dressed or otherwise prepared to receive a visitor. For Perelman, law, philosophy--and indeed all venues of disputation--incorporate as many strategies for preventing conflict as for resolving them once they occur.

Kenneth Burke's dramatic pentad clarifies concepts latent in Perelman's theories. Whereas Perelman's loci of the preferable implicitly locate and relocate conflict in different contexts, Burke's pentad explicitly designates a term for the process: "scene." For Burke, conflict is action, and all actions are performances whose motivations are discovered in the dramatics of the situation: in its act, agency, purpose, agents, and scene ("Dramatism" 445). "Scene" is the ground, location, or situation in which the action takes place. Change the scene, and the shape and significance of a conflict change. Expand the scene in a defense summation of a murder trial to include, not just the place of the crime, but the environment in which the accused was raised--his family's poverty, his race's deprivation, etc.--and you immediately change the significance of the crime and audience's response to it (*Grammar of Motives* 84-90). Indeed, such a plea would fuse location with the classical stasis of Quality, or mitigating circumstances.

Stasis, then, can be facilitated or avoided by expanding or contracting one of the terms of the dramatic pentad--in this case, "scene." But stasis can take place among the "ratios" of all five terms. A shift from an act-agency ratio (one that emphasizes the power or ability of the actor to do something) to an act-scene ratio (one that emphasizes the influence of the environment or surroundings on an action) fundamentally changes what conflict is and how it is conducted. A Hegelian will define conflict and negativity in terms of

the progress of Absolute spirit, and by doing so, will emphasize agency above all else; a Marxist, in terms of the progress of dialectical materialism, emphasizing instead the predominance of scene in human interaction. A conflict between the two, like Perelman's conflict between classical and romantic loci, will take place, not only between rival assertions, but between different ways of constructing meaning and experience. The Hegelian might find the Marxist's emphasis on scene to be mechanistic, crass, and anti-intellectual, and ascribe motives of agency to such error (an inability to deal with pure ideas, for instance). Conversely, the Marxist might find the Hegelian's emphasis on agency to be abstruse and abstract, mere mystification of ideological realities and ascribe motives of scene—an inability to escape the bourgeois milieu that confuses world markets with world spirit (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 107-108). Here, the differences between the ratios—act-agency and act-scene—generate the conflict, produce conflicting definitions of "conflict" itself, and determine a strategy for resolution peculiar to that ratio.

For Burke's pentad, as with Perelman's loci, the very existence of stasis, its definition, character, and contexts change according to the enacted dramas or worldviews of the speakers. In a way, they have made the classical categories of Being, Definition, and Quality dependent on Location, on the place or vantage point from which each person and society organizes experience. Put simply, the concept, as well as the performance, of motion, argument, and stasis now depends on which perspectives you take and which perspective you confront. Such a view of stasis would be unwieldy in a courtroom, where the questions assume, rather than probe, metaphysics; would cloud the translucency of rhetorical situations assumed by classical rhetoric. But such a view might help to explain the far more complicated impasses experienced in the world at large, where no formalized system of argumentation is or could be in place, and where the plurality of viewpoints renders opaque much of the commonality required to make difference meaningful. For Burke, the common ground is the drama surrounding all human action; for Perelman, the loci and other bases of agreement we inherit socially and, in turn, bequeath to other generations.

III

Whereas the theory of classical stasis was a response--at least originally--to a special set of needs (namely, to clarify the argumentative process within the courtroom), the theories of contemporary rhetorical stasis are responses to notions of identity and difference. A new theory of stasis must be as comfortable analyzing the subtle, sometimes unspoken, intuitions of difference that pervade our daily conversations as examining the formal accusations and defenses of the courtroom. This process, of course, has already begun with the work of Perelman and Burke. They have expanded the units of rhetorical consideration, have considered the conflict of contexts, of worldviews and terministic screens, out of which disagreement arises, and within which resolutions are sought or incompatibilities are encountered.

But all stasis theories--classical or contemporary--raise a similar issue, one that requires, I think, some discussion, if not public debate: namely, knowing how argument happens has always been part of making it happen a certain way. This, indeed, is part of the rationale for developing a theory of stasis, and equally, the dream of both rhetorical idealists and opportunists: of idealists, because they believe knowledge improves human behaviour; of opportunists, because they make others believe anyone can win a dispute with a bit of help. Either way, as our knowledge of rhetorical interaction becomes more astute, and our understanding of contexts and processes more exact, our practice, too, will change to take advantage of this. What the phrase, "take advantage" will mean to us, however--to our institutions such as law and government, or to our personal everyday discourse with others--depends, I suppose, on the moral dimensions of our theories, and especially, on the ability of our theories to serve not only as tools but also as sources of discipline for their use.

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WHY DOES RHETORIC
NEED A THEORY OF READING?

Douglas Brent

Throughout history, rhetoric and poetic have always been intimately related, easily trading theory and technique. These borrowings have tended to occur most easily in the canon of *elocutio*: the figures have been passed back and forth between the two discourse arts to such an extent that a "rhetorical" view of literature often means no more than an attention to the use of tropes and schemes (Vickers' *In Defense of Rhetoric* is the most recent example of this tendency). This paper will argue that modern rhetorical theory and literary theory should be connected through the canon of *inventio* as well. Because new views of knowledge place reading at the centre of the inventional process, we must expand our notion of what invention means. In order to do so we should look in part to literary theory for inspiration, because literary theory has for years been inquiring actively about the structure of the reading process in ways that rhetoric has only recently realized are important.

This paper is a part of a much larger study that I am undertaking in order to build a theory of reading as rhetorical invention. Toward the end I will sketch briefly what some of the components of this theory might look like. However, the main purpose of this paper is agenda-setting: I want to explain why I think we need such a theory and where I think we should look for the elements of it.

Let me illustrate the need for an expanded theory of invention by examining the theory of one modern rhetorician. In *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent*, Wayne Booth argues that modern philosophers have taught us to believe one of two extreme points of view. Knowledge originates either in scientific, objective observation of the "real" world, or in emotional, highly personal apprehension of values. Both extremes--both "modern dogmas"-- preclude rhetoric: objective observations do not need to be argued for, and emotionally apprehended values cannot be. As a result, "Passionate commitment has lost its connection with the provision of good reasons" (xi).

His answer is to recast a very old idea--that knowledge is discovered through dialectic--in a new form. To do this he uses modern ideas on the social construction of knowledge, particularly those of Michael Polanyi. For Booth as for Polanyi, knowledge is not created through the isolated self interacting with the physical world, nor even by groups of selves attempting to achieve Platonic certainty through the discursive testing of logical propositions. Rather, knowledge is developed communally "through a willing assent to the process of making an intelligible world with my fellow creatures" (105). Thus the self is "a field of selves":

> It is essentially rhetorical, symbol exchanging, a social product in process of changing through interaction, sharing values with other selves. Even when thinking privately, "I" can never escape the other selves which I have taken in to make "myself," and my thought will thus always be a dialogue. (126)

I choose Booth to illustrate this attitude to rhetoric not because he is the only or even the main exponent of it, but simply because he does so with particular clarity and insistence. This interactive view of knowledge interpenetrates every dimension of modern rhetoric. In *Invention as a Social Act*, for instance, Karen Burke LeFevre argues for social construction as a basis for composition theory. It is also at the root of Burke's vivid metaphor of the "unending conversation":

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And

you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (*The Philosophy of Literary Form* 110-11)

My point is that the use of the term "rhetoric" for this process of building a world through symbolic interaction extends its meaning in some important ways. Persuasion is not the end of rhetoric but a necessary means. As Booth puts it,

> The supreme purpose of persuasion in this view could not be to talk someone else into a preconceived view; rather it must be to engage in mutual inquiry or exploration. In such a world, our rhetorical purpose must always be to perform as well as possible in the same primal symbolic dance which makes us able to dance at all. (137)

This definition of rhetoric essentially collapses rhetoric and dialectic into one process with social interaction, not deductive logic, at its core.

This view of rhetoric as essentially dialectical (or perhaps of dialectic as essentially rhetorical) destroys forever any possibility of a two-stage model of rhetoric in which knowledge is discovered by some other means and then transmitted by rhetoric. This model is associated most closely with Plato, but we also see a form of it in Aristotle, who treats rhetoric primarily as a means of discovering arguments to support a point of view, not as a means of discovering the point of view itself. It survived through the eighteenth-century in the "managerial" view of rhetoric espoused by Blair and Campbell, and in the twentieth century can be recognized in composition textbooks that tell students to go to the library first, then come back and start writing. This last incarnation is not quite on the same level as Plato's progression from dialectic to rhetoric, but it has the same effect: it severs rhetoric from discovery of knowledge.

Collapsing this into a single process of rhetorical inquiry impels a radical revision of our view of invention. Invention is traditionally seen as a forward-looking process. It funnels out from the single rhetor toward the audience and moves forward in time from the framing of a discourse toward its delivery. If we see rhetoric as part of an epistemic conversation, however, we can see that it also involves another movement, from the rhetor back into the vast network of conversation that helps him develop his views. In other words, a full

account of rhetoric must take account of the fact that the rhetor is himself an audience. Before he comes to the point of attempting to create belief in others, he has created belief in himself through interaction with countless other selves. If the inventional stage of rhetoric is to have any meaning now, it must mean more than the devising of arguments to support a point of view. It must mean constructing the point of view itself through the consumption of others' rhetoric.

Having brought the problem into the arena of rhetoric, we commit ourselves to answering the sort of very practical questions that rhetoric, as a fundamentally practical art, is always prone to ask. We must ask not just "What is it?" but also "How does it work?" Booth phrases this problem as the question, "When should I change my mind?"

Part of this inquiry involves constructing a rhetorical theory of reading. In our modern literate world--or at least, in the world of educated and intellectually mature adults--it is through reading that we make contact with many of the other selves, some long dead, through which we build our own selves. If we are to explain this type of invention, we must be able to explain how a rhetorician reading is able to take a disparate group of claims made by individuals, each with her own perspective on the world and her own reasons for seeing it as she does, evaluate them, and actively construct a single view satisfactory to himself. In short, we must develop an account of how readers sort through the bids made for their assent.

The problem with building such an account from within rhetoric is that rhetorical theory is not particularly expert at asking how we do this. Deciding when to change our minds on the basis of other people's texts implies at least two steps. We end by evaluating claims, accepting some and rejecting others. But first we must *interpret* others' texts, for we cannot judge another's beliefs until we think we understand what they are. Rhetoric, a process that "has its end in judgement" as Aristotle puts it, has developed quite a few ideas about this second stage, but says very little about the first.

Traditional rhetoric simply had to have faith that an audience could interpret accurately. Rhetoric is traditionally defined as the art of using language to influence others' behaviour and belief. This implies that discourse is a reasonably reliable means by which one

person can affect another. The rhetor must know that what he puts into his discourse will be roughly reflected in what the audience takes out. Otherwise persuasion is meaningless, for the rhetor has no predictable influence on his audience. To do his job, the rhetor must believe human beings act not at random, but rather for reasons that he can predict and use.

This assumption, however, has been treated simply *as* an assumption, an article of faith. The idea that it could be otherwise never occurred to the ancient rhetoricians. The idea occurs to Wayne Booth, for he spends quite a bit of space in *Modern Dogma* insisting that meaning is shareable:

> Not only do we talk and write and create art and mathematical symbols and act as if we shared them: we really do share them, sometimes. Sometimes we *understand* each other. . . . In short, we know other minds, sometimes, to some degree. That we often do not, and that the knowledge is never complete, is at this point irrelevant, though it has sometimes been talked about as though we were hopelessly alone. (114)

Booth never tells us who it is that talks about it this way, but it is not hard to guess who he wants us to think of: Bleich, Fish, Derrida, de Man, and all the other literary critics who solve the problem of unstable interpretation by denying that texts have any stable meaning, or that it matters.

This is an attitude that, if sincerely held, would make rhetoric impossible by denying its most fundamental postulate: that we can influence each other through language. Booth is certainly right to argue that we simply know, without needing proof, that it can not be so. We could not get on with our lives if it were so; to believe otherwise is, in the words of Bertrand Russell, "one of those views which are so absurd that only very learned men could possibly adopt them."

But for rhetorical theory as opposed to daily practice, this common-sense assertion of faith finally will not do. A theory requires not just an assertion that, but a model of how. In addition, the relationship between rhetoric and literature is too close for us simply to wave away theories of indeterminacy. In fact it is now

closer than it has ever been. In *A Speech-Act Theory of Literature*, for instance, Mary Louise Pratt shows fairly convincingly we can not locate the difference between literature and non-literature in formal features of the text or in the presence or absence of fictivity. Every attempt to do so is undercut by countless counter-examples. Louise Rosenblatt makes the same case in *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*. If there is any difference between rhetoric and literature it is not in the thing itself but in its use. The point is that if literary texts may have no stable meaning, and we cannot reliably distinguish literary from non-literary texts, then we have to ask how *any* texts have stable meaning. If we are trying to expand the canon of invention to include reading, we have to account for the way reading can be a reliable basis for changing one's mind.

Let us review the argument as developed so far:

1. To remain relevant in a social-constructivist age, rhetoric has to be able to absorb the social-constructivist view of knowledge.

2. To do so, we must develop a theory of how we construct knowledge through consumption of others' rhetoric, a process that includes reading.

3. To explain reading as part of rhetorical invention in turn requires dealing with--not just denying--arhetorical theories of reading that are too powerful to be ignored.

We have opened a Pandora's box that the ancients had the good sense to leave closed.

But just as certain branches of literary theory can create problems for an epistemic rhetoric, other branches can help build solutions. Whereas rhetoric has until recently dealt with the problem of indeterminacy largely by taking determinacy on faith, literary theory has been forced to grapple with problems of interpretation directly. Interpretation is the main business of literary criticism, and the differences of interpretation that even the simplest work of literature can generate so dwarf the problems generated by most rhetorical texts that it seems safe to declare literary theory the undisputed expert in this area. I wish to stress, however, that I am not primarily interested here in explaining the rhetorical effect of specifically *literary* texts, an inquiry that dominates the work of rhetorical critics such as Wayne Booth. Rather, I am after something

much more general. I want to borrow from literary theory some of the insights that can be applied to the building of a general theory of the rhetorical effects of *all* types of texts, including those which are typically described as "non-literary." Rhetoric needs to be able to explain how all the textual voices in the great conversation, from literary works through scientific, philosophical, and historical works, down to everyday instances of rhetorical influence such as the daily newspaper, get themselves interpreted in ways that allow the rhetorical building of self to occur.

There are two main bodies of reading theory that can help explain how readers construct meaning. One is discourse processing theories of comprehension. These theories use empirical data to build cognitive models of meaning-building. These can be a rich source of insights about interpretation, and are especially interesting because they deal primarily with non-literary texts. In my larger study I will deal extensively with such theories. Here, however, I want to narrow my scope to the other body of theory that can help us build a model of rhetorical reading: "reader-response" or "audience-oriented" theories such as those of Louise Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser. This body of theory is particularly interesting because it deals with the extreme case of interpretive difficulty, that is, literature. If these critics can find ways to account for stable meaning in the notoriously unstable world of literature, then *a fortiori*, their methods should help us explain meaning-building in all texts, literary and non-literary.

As a first step toward a rhetoric of reading, I believe that there are at least three concepts from reader-response theory that rhetorical theory should take note of: the "virtual work," the "repertoire," and the "wandering viewpoint." Let us begin with the concept of the "virtual work."

Rosenblatt argues that interpretation involves more than a reader and a text. The reader creates a third entity, which she calls the "poem" as opposed to the "text":

> It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals his resources and crystallizes out from

the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. (12)

She calls this process "evoking" the poem.

In *The Act of Reading*, Iser takes a similar view. For Iser, texts "initiate 'performances' of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves" (27). This "performance" of meaning, like Rosenblatt's "poem," is not identical with either the text or the reader:

> [It] must be situated somewhere between the two. It must inevitably be virtual in character, as it cannot be reduced to the reality of the text or to the subjectivity of the reader, and it is from this virtuality that it derives its dynamism. (21)

Although Iser argues that the meaning of a text is evoked by the reader, this "is not the same as saying that comprehension is arbitrary, for the mixture of determinacy and indeterminacy conditions the interaction between text and reader" (24).

This concept gives new focus to a model of rhetorical reading. Once we see the process of reading as a process of evoking a virtual work, we stop asking what is "in" texts or "in" readers. Rather, we ask about the nature of the *transaction* between readers and texts. More precisely, what about this transaction is determinate and what indeterminate?

Iser's concept of the "repertoire" helps answer this question. Iser defines the repertoire as "all the familiar territory within the text. This may be in the form of references to earlier works, or to social and historical norms, or to the whole culture from which the text has emerged" (69). This repertoire, Iser argues, is different from the reader's mass of personal associations. It is organized as "schemata," pre-existing patterns which condition the way the reader forms meaning:

> The text mobilizes the subjective knowledge present in all kinds of readers and directs it to one particular end. However varied this knowledge may be, the reader's subjective contribution is controlled by the given framework. It is as if the schema were a hollow form into which the reader is invited to pour his own store of knowledge. (143)

The important feature of schemata is that they are shared. By providing a hollow form into which the reader's personal store of knowledge is poured, they act as a structure of constraints, giving public form to the reader's private associations. In one sense, these schemata are clearly also "in" the reader: it is the reader's familiarity with this territory that allows it its power to shape meaning. Yet these schemata are sufficiently stable across readers that Iser can speak of them as being "in" the text, forming a mould for the reader's more personal associations. They are actually "in" the transaction between text and reader, guiding the individual act of evoking a virtual work through powerful social forces.

The third concept that I want to point to is Iser's "wandering viewpoint." Although a text is linear, the virtual work is not. The virtual work is not on the page but is a construct in memory. We cannot attend to an entire work, even an entire virtual work in memory, at the same time, so the reader's focus must continually change depending on which segment of the growing work she is attending to at a given moment. Iser uses the term "theme" for the view of the work that the reader is involved with at a given moment; the other potential viewpoints, which continue to affect the reader but are not currently focal, constitute the "horizon." As the reader's viewpoint moves through the work, the present theme becomes horizon as another view becomes focal.

The wandering viewpoint helps explain not only not only how interpretation varies, but also how those variations are systematic. Remember the larger rhetorical situation in which the act of rhetorical reading is situated. The reader reads not merely for the proximate goal of evoking a meaning from the text, but for the more long-term goal of updating knowledge and belief. When trying to decide what to believe, the reader will actively search for specific pieces of material that relate to the questions she is asking. The viewpoint wanders in response to the kinds of things the reader wants to know.

Of course these questions are unstable. The act of acquiring answers, or partial answers, to some questions throws up new ones. This is like the well-established concept of the "research cycle": the reader, armed with a very general question, explores sources to find answers that modify and refine the question, which leads him to

different sources and back into the same sources with a new focus. But the wandering viewpoint puts a new edge on this old idea. It suggests that the reader's questions guide not just which texts he will go to, but how he evokes a virtual work from those texts.

Like the repertoire, the reader's questions are neither entirely predictable nor entirely unpredictable. A writer knows some of the sorts of questions that his text is intended to answer, for he knows something about the portion of the human conversation in which it is intended to take its place. Each part of that conversation revolves about certain questions that occupy a certain discipline at a certain period of history. The writer who understands the ongoing conversation in which his work will be read can predict--though without certainty--the general shape of the questions that readers will be using his text to answer. The rhetorical situation, then, is a vital part of the transaction between writer, text and reader.

This is far from a complete model of interpretation. It does suggest, however, some of the ways in which the interpretation of a text depends on a mixture of public and private forces. This in turn suggests what the rhetor can know about the audience that will enable him to predict response, and inversely, what the audience knows the rhetor knows.

I wish to stress that meaning can never be seen as totally determinate. Every minute we are confronted by minor and major cases of mismatch between what a writer intends and what a reader understands. As Kenneth Burke points out in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, rhetoric must always exist in the quarrelsome realm between perfect identification (in which perfect interpretation would be inevitable but unnecessary, since there would be no differences between people) and complete division (in which no correspondence between intention and reception could ever occur except by random chance). But I am not arguing for a theory of complete determinacy. Rather I wish to do for interpretation what Booth argues we must do for knowledge. The logical positivists, he argues, "have saddled us with standards of truth under which no man can live" (xii). To be able to say we have any knowledge at all, argues Booth, we must set the standard of knowledge lower, so that the variable, contingent understanding that rhetoric produces can still merit the label "knowledge." We must do the same with interpretation. We can never be sure that we know exactly what another means, and the

other can never be sure she knows that we know. But if we set ourselves rhetorical rather than ideal standards--that is, if we can be content with a mixture of determinacy and indeterminacy--we can begin to build models of how it is that "we know other minds, sometimes, to some degree."

As I indicated at the beginning, this paper is preliminary to a much larger study in which I build and illustrate the model that I have barely suggested here. This model is constructed from insights combined from reader-response criticism, discourse processing theories of comprehension, and rhetorical theory. All I have done in this brief paper is to argue for two preliminary claims: that a modern epistemic rhetoric cannot be complete unless it includes an account of reading as an inventional process, and that literary theory can offer us some important insights that we can use in building such an account.

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WRITING HISTORIES
OF THE RHETORICAL TRADITION:
HISTORIOGRAPHY AS STRATEGY

Takis Poulakos

I am using the word "strategy" in the title of this essay partly because I wish to emphasize the rhetorical character of all historical accounts of the rhetorical tradition. As Hayden White points out, "[t]he contemporary historian [approaches the past] not as an end in itself, but as a way of providing perspectives on the present that contribute to the solution of problems peculiar to our own time" (41). I should note that there are two perspectives at work here which ought not be conflated into one: first, the theoretical perspective from within which we recount the past and second, the societal perspective from within which we evaluate the present. The gap between these two perspectives is as wide as the gap between theory and practice. The historian of rhetoric must take note of the discontinuous and asymmetrical relationship that obtains between a theoretical and a societal perspective, and negotiate the gap between a theory of history (on the basis of which the past is recounted) and an advocacy of social practice (on the basis of which a future direction for society may be advanced). "Strategy," in this context, refers to the type of necessary adjustments that must be made so as to facilitate the task of shifting gears from theory to advocacy. It is this kind of adjustment Gayatri Spivak addresses when she remarks: "knowing that such an emphasis is theoretically non-viable, the historian then breaks his theory in a scrupulously delineated 'political interest'" (207). This is a crucial moment, a moment through which the act of writing history shifts into an act of political intervention. Because I take political intervention to be more closely akin to a provisional politics rather than to a political program, I also use the word "strategy" to suggest a sense of provisionality. Edward Said's public remark, that he was working for the Palestinian state to establish itself so that he could then become its critic (cited Spivak 124), captures for me poignantly the kind of provisionality that "strategy" implies when it is tied to advocacy. Writing histories of rhetoric, then, is strategic when the historian's account of the tradition can make the shift from theory to practice, from a historical account to a political intervention.

Current Historiographies

Today, one of the most central issues facing historians interested in producing auto-critical accounts of their disciplinary traditions is the role that historical accounts play in disclosing the voices of oppressed subjects in the distant past. This issue pivots on the larger question of intellectual practices in the Academy and the capacity of intellectuals to make the discourse of society's other known—a question that has been raised frequently in the past, and by various theorists. Theorists associated with the Frankfurt School, for instance, questioned the dominant tendency among intellectuals of the times to organize their scholarly activities around the values associated traditionally with canonized texts. Walter Benjamin's great dictum, "[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (256), exposed canonized texts (which the Academy had endorsed and continued to celebrate as true embodiments of the original values of Western Civilization) as works whose "universal message" reflected the particular interests of an oppressive regime or helped sustain a dominant group in position of power. Far from disclosing the discourses of the oppressed, in other words, traditional intellectuals were charged with amplifying discourses backed by oppressive regimes and, as such, with perpetuating, wittingly or unwittingly, structures of domination and exploitation. Thus, the perspective opened by the Frankfurt School made it possible to regard historical accounts of a given discipline as so many efforts to validate anew texts whose messages were judged, by authoritarian groups of one time or another, worthy of dissemination and preservation. In our own discipline, for example, George Kennedy's *Art of Persuasion* could be seen from such a perspective not only as an account of rhetorical theory in the classical age but also as an attempt to canonize texts which had been endorsed, circulated, and preserved for posterity by those very same forces that had ensured the total exclusion of women and slaves from the classical *polis*. In this manner, the historian's desire to preserve the historical record and to reanimate its spirit in our age could also be taken as a gesture whose net result is none other than the effective reinscription of exclusionary valuations of the past onto the present.[1]

Under the Frankfurt School, then, the question of the intellectual's role in disclosing society's other was addressed by means of an interpretive program patterned after the dual movement of negative and positive hermeneutics, as expressed by Paul Ricoeur.[2] To fulfill both requirements of hermeneutics, interpreters of canonized texts would have to serve the double function of ideological demystification and utopian affirmation. In Fredric Jameson's formulation, an interpreter was to serve a demystifying vocation whose mission would be "to unmask and to demonstrate the ways in which a cultural artifact fulfills a specific ideological mission, in legitimating a given power structure, in perpetuating and reproducing the latter, and in generating specific forms of false consciousness" as well as an opposite vocation whose mission would be "to project [a cultural artifact's] simultaneously Utopian power as the symbolic affirmation of a specific historical and class form of collective unity" (*Political* 291). For the historian of Rhetoric, such a program would require the dual project of exposing Rhetoric's ideological import *and* revolutionary potential, its capacity to perpetuate prevailing social arrangements *and* to challenge the sovereignty of dominant valuations. In other words, the historian of Rhetoric was to assess a past text by noting simultaneously the support it provided and the opposition it incited to specific structures of domination, its confirmation and contestation of existing exploitation, its capacity to veil and unveil the operations of power. Let Roland Barthes' recently published notes on Classical Rhetoric—notes based largely on a conception of rhetoric as a "privileged technique (since one must pay in order to acquire it) which permits ruling classes to gain *ownership of speech*" (13-14)—act as a marker of the first part of this double movement. Meanwhile, Terry Eagleton's history of Rhetoric completes both facets of the hermeneutical program, first positively, by grasping rhetorical instruction of citizens in the classical age as inextricably connected to judiciary and political practices, as conscious efforts at "intensifying common verbal effects for concrete political aims" (107); and, second negatively, by examining how rhetorical instruction was subsequently "encoded by the pedagogical apparatuses of later ruling classes" (102) which reduced rhetorical treatises to so many "handbooks of ruling-class power" (101).

The version of marxist theory associated with the project of ideological demystification and utopian affirmation places the task of

disclosing the voice of the oppressed on the interpreter's capacity to get beneath the surface structure of the text (understood as the site of ideological mystification) and to recover the deep structure of the text (understood as the locus of the inalienable other). To the extent that an interpreter can bring out into the open what a given work has tried to suppress (i.e., the work's "political unconscious"), he or she can be said to have uncovered "the repressed and buried reality of [a] fundamental history" which, for Jameson, is none other than the history of society's other (*Political* 20). In this way, the struggles of the oppressed are grafted onto a narrative account, and the historian can retell the various stories of society's numerous oppressed subjects in the unified narrative of a single story: "the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity" (*Political* 19). Thus, marxist historiography, as practiced by the Frankfurt School and as carried out most recently by Jameson, answers the question of the other by means of a grand narrative of the continuous struggle between the classes throughout the ages. In this emancipatory narrative, the gap between the historian's account of the past and his advocacy for social change in the present is covered over.

Under French post-structuralist theory, the project of disclosing the voice of society's other becomes infinitely more complex. To begin with, structures of domination and exploitation are construed by post-structuralists neither as identifiable and recognizable forces nor as discrete phenomena whose historical specification the interpreter can ascertain. Let Foucault's various inquiries into the heterogeneous workings of oppression in the prison, the asylum, and the clinic act as a cautionary note against the presumption that power is homogeneous or that its effects are identifiable. For Foucault, there are no discernible forces governing or directing the exercise of power, no identifiable holders of power. The heterogeneous character of the networks of domination and exploitation renders their reduction to a coherent narrative of class-struggle counterproductive and, as such, challenges the marxist version of history as a grand narrative. From within the post-structuralist notion of power, then, Jameson's proclamation that the story of the past needs to be "retold from within the unity of a single great collective story" (*Political* 19) and that past texts must be seen as so many "syllables and broken fragments of some single immense story" (*Political* 105) appears as reductive and monolithic as does his restriction of rhetoric to a "precapitalistic mode of linguistic

organization" and his subsequent relegation of rhetoric only to that period of human history (classical antiquity) that saw the existence of a "relatively homogeneous public" (*Ideologies* 122).

While Foucault's formulation of power links domination to chance-events with indeterminate effects, Derrida's notion of identity as "difference" challenges the sovereignty of the subject and questions the plausibility of its coherent representation. Derrida's by now famous proclamation that "there is nothing outside the text" (*Of Grammatology* 158), that there is "nothing before the text, no pretext that is not already a text" (*Dissemination* 328) is an outright rejection of the notion of language as a stable system of signification. Such a rejection, along with a concomitant cancellation of the autonomy of the signified, turns language into a process in which "every signified is also in the position of a signifier" (*Positions* 20), the signifier no longer maintaining any determinable relation to extra-linguistic reality. The impossibility of signifying any intentional meaning carries over from the general domain of language to the specific domain of rhetoric: "Rhetoric," writes Paul de Man, "radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration" (10). In Derrida as well as in de Man, the irreducible heterogeneity of *différance* opens the way for a critique against all forms of identity and all acts of historical representation. With this, the historian's effort to disclose the oppressed subject in the past becomes nothing more than a practice in self-delusion.

So far, I have tried to offer a brief sketch of the two most prominent models of historiography in our time, and to outline their respective positions vis-a-vis the intellectual's role in disclosing the voice of society's other. Situating the past text in causal relationship with the historical conditions underpinning its production, limiting subjectivity to an identifiable effect of determinate operations of power, marxist historiography projects the identity of the oppressed onto the texture of a grand narrative whose mission is to represent "the irrepressible voice and expression of the underclasses" (*Political* 105). In an interpretive program that equates identity with presence and representation with adequation, the literary act of representing the oppressed is all too often conflated with the political act of representing their interests, and the intellectual projecting the oppressed onto a utopian narrative erroneously understands himself to function as their political representative. According to marxist

historiography, then, the society's oppressed can be represented, and the historian who gives presence to oppressed subjects becomes their political representative. On the other hand, the post-structuralist insistence on identity as difference and representation as radical alterity underscores the exclusionary character of all forms of identity and underlines the heterogeneous character of all acts of representation. The historian's representation of the oppressed is a fiction that has nothing to do with the oppressed, let alone with their political interests. With no access to society's other, the historian confronting the radicality of post-structuralist claims of difference and alterity stands impoverished across the future, incapable of giving a voice to oppressed subjects or to affirm any definite form of otherness. Clearly, both historiographical models make evident each other's limitations vis-a-vis their contradictory stances across society's other. While marxist historiography finds its energy in the illusion of representing the oppressed politically, post-structuralist historiography relinquishes the dream of representing anyone at all, politically or otherwise. While the former affirms politics in the name of the other, the latter stands utterly immobile, incapable of intervening politically, bereft of a will to affirm.

Historiography as Strategy

What I have called for in the introduction to this essay can now be re-expressed as a call for a historiography which would accept the radicality of post-structuralist difference and alterity but which would also historicize this radicality by way of a provisional affirmation in the here-and-now.[3] Let me explain.

To begin with, the historian would frame his or her account of the past neither by a conception of events as they supposedly happened in the "real" world nor by a vision of an oncoming emancipation. Instead, the historian would begin by situating a past text within the sign-system operative during the time of the text's production, and by noting what changes, if any, the text under question may have effected in the dominant system of signification. Initially, then, the historian proceeds from within the tracks of a well-known post-structuralist procedure: any change in signification-function is at once an addition and a supplement, a repetition and a rupture. As Derrida remarks, "[t]he movement of signification adds something . . . but this addition . . . comes to perform a vicarious

function, to supplement a lack on the part of the signified" (*Writing and Difference* 289). Following this double movement of supplementarity, the historian takes note of the dominant signification system and its repetition through the text, but also of the text's effort to displace the hegemonic sign-system by charging it with a new function. In this way, a given text becomes the simultaneous site of repetition and rupture, the effect of a dominant system of signification and the condition for its crisis.

By way of an illustration, I turn to Gorgias' famous defense of Helen. Constructed around a series of plausible alternatives (was it divine fate, human force, *eros*, or *logos* that caused Helen's departure?), Gorgias' defense follows a familiar pattern: the enumeration of a series of alternative events, each one of whose occurrence rules out the possibility of the defendant's guilt.[4] Like other court-defenses of the times, this type of defense derives its significance from a very basic form of argumentation--argument from probability--a form which, ever since the rhetorical/legal practices of Corax and Tisias, had remained most fundamental to practices of dicastic rhetoric. Insofar as the *Helen* puts forth arguments that appeal to reason and make reasonable inferences, then, the *Helen* works within, and perpetuates further, the dominant system of signification. Yet, at the same time that Gorgias repeats the dominant system of signification, he charges it with a new function: to display his own dexterity as a rhetorician. In addition to their ordinary, inferential coding, arguments in the *Helen* are also invested with a rhetorical force and acquire a playful and ostentatious dimension. The net result of this additional function, this supplement in signification, is a confusion as to what falls within and what falls outside the auspices of legal argument, what constitutes evidence and what constitutes play. "I want to give an accounting in my speech," says Gorgias, "and relieve this woman who has been ill-spoken of from the charge, demonstrating that those who blame her are misled and showing the truth so as to end this ignorance" (2). In the original, the phrase *psebdomenous epideixas kai deixas talethes* juxtaposes the act of exposing a false case with the act of proving the true case, though the former act is associated with *epideixis* (self-display, show off) and the latter is associated with *deixis* (proof, evidence). Placing the oratorical act of self-display within the connotative domain of legal proof, the phrase makes demonstration

as much a matter of rhetorical self-display as it is a matter of legal proof.

How are we to interpret the effort made by the *Helen* to supplement legal argument with linguistic playfulness? How are we to read this change in the dominant chain of signification, this momentary interruption and relinking of the chain, such that terms like "proof," "evidence," or "demonstration" no longer exclusively signify a legal practice but can now also signify rhetorical expertise?

It is at this juncture that the historian can plot the text's effort to displace the system of signification as a gesture of confrontation against networks of domination and exploitation. The change in the function of legal argumentation effected by this text can now be read as a sign of the necessary changes that local forces of domination and exploitation had to make in order to continue to exert their rule. Produced under the patronage of aristocracy, the *Helen* embodies the changes in legal argumentation aristocrats must make if they are to remain in a position of power. The *Helen*, then, suggests two things: first, that aristocracy is encountering an opposition which has reached the point of crisis; and, secondly, that to get out of that crisis, aristocracy must reconceptualize legal argumentation. The specific recommendation of the text is that aristocrats stop thinking of legal argumentation as the exclusive domain of reason and begin revitalizing dominant notions of valid proof and reasoned evidence with the energy of rhetorical playfulness.

Such a reading is made possible when we take a given text of the past to be not only what post-structuralists have termed a "subject effect," the effect of discontinuous and heterogeneous networks of domination and exploitation, but also the condition of change produced in these networks. The detection of a rebellious gesture does not necessarily presume the affirmation of a given identity, and the historian asserting the presence of a rebellious gesture is not obliged to affirm an essential identity. It is possible to assert, in other words, that subjectivity manifests itself by virtue of the crisis it produces--the oppressed other leaves its trace on local forces of oppression by necessitating their changing configurations. Asserting the identity of the other through the changing configurations of oppression is a move in line with the general post-structuralist conception of identity as never fully recoverable, always under erasure, irreducibly discursive. Admittedly, the act of projecting the

identity of the other onto the oppressors does require that the historian construct a negative consciousness and, thus, make a recognizably essentialist move. Nevertheless, the historian's reconstitution of the identity of the other does not amount to a claim "this is how things really were," but to a quite different claim: "given the changing configurations of oppression and domination, this is who the other might have been."

A theory of change in terms of a new function in the signification system opened up by the text, a displacement of the function of signs, sets into motion an active transaction between past and present. The net effect of such a transaction is the historian's realization that the instruments he or she brings to the study of the past are themselves constituted by the hegemonic system of signification active in his or her day. If the possibility for action lies in the displacement of function between sign-systems, the breaking and relinking of the signification chain, then, the historian is obliged to disrupt the sign-system which made the production of his or her history possible to begin with. Post-structuralist suggestions of a way out of this crucial dilemma come in the form of a persistent self-questioning: all the historian can do is to be suspicious of his or her own authority as an investigating subject, to place the presuppositions that have made his or her project possible under perpetual critique. But as Spivak has pointed out, this is not always enough. Effecting a change in the function of current historiographical writing amounts instead to making a decision, on the part of the historian, to enter into a theoretically non-viable space. This means the decision to enter into the space of political intervention by making, in Spivak's words, "a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (205).

In such a procedure, the positing of an identity becomes a methodologically necessary fiction, invaluable to the project of critiquing historically contingent processes and their role in shaping particular forms of identity. Once again, the positing of a collective identity is offered by the historian not in the name of historical reconstruction, the act of having uncovered the "real" identity of some group, but in the spirit of provisional affirmation, the act of having arrested momentarily the endless flow of signifiers. When collective identities are thus affirmed, the writing of history acquires a practical dimension with real consequences for society in the present. Through

his or her perspective on the past, the historian opens up what Foucault termed a "subject position" for his or her interlocutors, a "vacant place that may in fact be filled by different individuals" (95). In other words, the discourse of history provides an occasion for readers of history to assume a given identity in the present, to feel part of a collectivity, and to engage themselves in the political sphere. In this way, the historian can be said to have opened a cultural space for those prepared to commit themselves to the improvement of the social, even though such a commitment can only be carried out under provisional identities, fictional collectivities, and tentative politics.

To return to the example I have already used. Insofar as the *Helen* embodies the changing configurations of aristocracy, the subjectivity made manifest by the work is a "subject effect," an effect of aristocratic domination. Insofar as the *Helen* embodies the crisis that necessitated changes in the configurations of aristocracy, the work also manifests the trace of those who produced the crisis, i.e., the agents of change. Naturally, we cannot know who these agents were and any inferences we choose to make about their identity must remain provisional. My own commitment to the teaching of public speaking leads me to constitute those agents of change as members of the underclasses who used their gift of eloquence as the sole weapon against aristocratic rule. To constitute the identity of the oppressed this way says less about the nature of the oppressed in the fifth century BC than it does about the type of intervention I am prescribing to members of this society and at present time. In choosing to view the *Helen* both as an effect of the aristocratic class and as a condition of its change, I am also choosing to affirm the power of public deliberation to change the inequalities of this society. To be sure, the move that links public deliberation and democracy is an essentializing move. But from within the perspective of a teacher desiring to constitute students as social agents, this move can be also be regarded as the strategic use of an essentialism.

The model of historiography I have offered was meant to dramatize the tension that ensues when the writing of history is pulled in one direction by theoretical difference and in another, opposite direction by a provisional essentialism. Such a pull checks both the marxist desire to grant the oppressed an expressive subjectivity and the post-structuralist desire to posit their total unrepresentability. Historiography as strategy suggests the need to

choose strategically one's own essentialisms as a necessary way of inaugurating people's provisional entrance into the arena of cultural politics.

NOTES

¹ See also Todorov's historical account of classical rhetoric, which equates the persuasive aspect of classical rhetoric with the imperialist-democratic *polis*: "All that is possible only in a state where institutional constraints are weak and where the power of a deliberative assembly is very strong" (63).

² See *Freud and Philosophy*: "Hermeneutics seems to me to be animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen" (27).

³ It finds its theoretical source in several of Spivak's works but most prominently in her essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," *In Other Works* 197-221.

⁴ This form of legal argument was frequently used by Antiphon; but it was also used by Gorgias in his defense of Palamedes.

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PART III

APPLICATIONS OF RHETORIC

LES FONCTIONNEMENTS DE L'EXEMPLUM DANS UN DISCOURS DE PRESSE

Maryse Souchard

A partir des travaux récents de A. W. Halsall et de la tradition rhétorique que définissent les écrits d'Aristote, nous voudrions montrer quelle est la place de l'exemplum dans un discours de presse moderne, en l'occurrence dans le discours sur les syndicats au Québec en 1982-1983.[1]

En effet, la portée autant que la fonction de l'exemplum est loin d'être innocente; elles encadrent de près la production idéologique des textes qui l'intègrent. En ce sens, l'ancienne rhétorique ne peut qu'assister le chercheur dans son étude des textes modernes et l'aider à mettre en place une méthodologie cohérente pour l'analyse de ces textes.

Récit allégorique, c'est-à-dire suite d'élément descriptifs ou narratifs dont chacun correspond aux détails de l'idée qu'ils expriment, l'exemplum porte, de plus, un enseignement. Il est une manière d'être qui peut être imitée, une action en devenir. C'est, à proprement parler un apologue, une mise en scène d'exemples fictifs ou réels, réalisables, donnés pour changer une attitude considérée comme négative.

Ce genre didactique établit un rapport particulier entre le texte et le lecteur. Ce qui est visé, c'est le bien de l'interlocuteur, son bien-être et son bien-faire. Dans le discours de presse sur les syndicats et, plus largement, dans le discours médiatique, l'exemplum est réalisé dans des formes différentes de langage, de longueur, de rapport au réel ou à la fiction.[2] Mais il contient toujours une histoire, parfois une interprétation explicite, quelquefois une injonction explicite. Ce qui m'intéressera particulièrement, dans le cadre de cet exposé, c'est le soutien que l'exemplum apporte à l'idéologie du discours sur les syndicats, la représentation qu'il donne de l'organisation sociale et de la place que les syndicats y occupent ou devraient y occuper.

Il faut préciser d'emblée que les discours sur lesquels je travaille sont des discours politiques--des discours du pouvoir. Ils ont donc[3]

une finalité d'ordre pragmatique qui paraît évidente--ils visent un faire-faire; mais ils n'ont de chance de remplir leur programme, qu'il s'agisse de "mobiliser les masses" dans l'optique de la lutte politique ou de "manipuler l'opinion" en vue d'un consensus social, qu'en racontant des "histoires" crédibles et en mettant en scène des "sujets autorisés," c'est-à-dire en instaurant un faire-croire reposant sur une syntaxe de la persuasion et donnant du sens à l'histoire que ces discours contribuent d'ailleurs eux-mêmes à produire précisément sous la forme d'actes de langage. Je cherche donc, pour reprendre les termes d'Albert Halsall, les conditions de l'examen de la praxis rhétorique.

Ces discours particuliers établissent aussi un rapport particulier avec leurs lecteurs au sens où ils visent l'action et, à travers elle, le contrat social. C'est par là que ces discours politiques se démarquent d'autres types discursifs, le discours publicitaire par exemple où le contrat mis en cause sera davantage individuel voire intersubjectif. Cette différence est importante car elle permet à la fois de marquer la spécificité de ces discours et les fonctions particulières des formes qu'ils intègrent. L'exemplum prend alors une nouvelle valeur au sens où il fait plus que de montrer le bon chemin; il incite à poser le bon geste. Autrement dit, il passe de l'illustration à l'incitation.

Le discours médiatique semble favoriser à la fois des énoncés de récit et une pragmatique discursivo-argumentative, installant sur des niveaux différemment marqués les relations du récit au discours. Le discours de presse raconte du vraisemblable. Le discours sur les syndicats (et, je crois, l'ensemble des discours politiques) mettra donc en place une présentation des faits et des événements dans la relation aux protagonistes qui contribuent à leur réalisation.

Bien sûr, cette narration ne peut être le seul principe organisateur de ces discours. Mais, cependant, elle est ce par quoi s'instaurent d'une part les relations à l'auditoire et, d'autre part, le dit et l'interdit du discours, dans la mise en place et la diffusion du discours social. La narration, ce sera ce que raconte le discours de presse qui l'installe en discours. Ou encore, la narration, ce sera le récit dans le discours, indépendamment des relations instaurées

entre les énonciataires, le locuteur et le récepteur, mais en corrélation avec le narrateur et le narrataire.

Dans cette optique, et du strict point de vue rhétorique, l'exemplum dépasse largement le cadre de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler les figures du discours. Pourtant, on posera qu'il opère les mêmes bouleversements sur le déroulement discursif, qu'il relève de la même activité: vouloir convaincre, mettre en cause le narrataire, l'interpeller, le séduire, le troubler, l'émouvoir comme le dit R. Barthes, c'est-à-dire "penser le message probatoire non en soi, mais selon sa destination, l'humeur de qui doit le recevoir, mobiliser des preuves subjectives, morales."

En brisant le rythme du discours, en faisant appel à l'imagination du récepteur, en le sortant du monde réel auquel se réfère le texte, les exempla agissent sur la sensibilité du narrataire. C'est par là qu'ils acquièrent leur efficace, qu'ils trouvent leur pertinence. Mais ils étonnent le chercheur parce que, dans un discours qui tend à "exprimer et à communiquer des informations," "à assurer une communication rapide et sans équivoque des messages,"[4] les exempla installent de l'ambigu, de l'incertain, du clair obscur, ils travaillent l'interdit du discours. Cette perversion discursive va plus loin car l'exemplum redéfinit (resémantise) les fonctions clivées du narrataire et du récepteur du discours. S'adressant au premier, c'est le second qu'il presse d'agir et que, du coup, il réinscrit dans un discours qui chercherait pourtant à neutraliser les relations énonciatives.

De plus, il ne faut pas l'oublier, en même temps que cette rupture que l'exemplum instaure dans le déroulement discursif, cette ambiguïté, c'est aussi mais à un autre niveau une clarté maximale du message qui est visée.

Ce qui distingue l'exemplum d'autres formes rhétoriques, c'est qu'il n'existe que pour donner naissance à une interprétation. "D'un fait particulier (l'histoire), on accède à une généralisation (l'interprétation), qui permet d'accéder à un autre fait particulier, mais exprimé sur le mode impératif (l'injonction)."[5] Mais cette vérité exemplaire reste problématique. L'enseignement peut être mal compris; les faits mal interprétés. Plus le récit est long, plus ce

risque augmente. C'est pour y pallier que l'exemplum contiendra, souvent très explicitement, sa propre interprétation, qu'il fixera le sens, qu'il utilisera des comparaisons courtes.

Des trois éléments de sa structure, l'histoire est le seul que l'exemplum ne "saurait taire," sans lequel le texte ne saurait agir sur son destinataire. Elle est indispensable à la compréhension, à l'interprétation et à sa mise en oeuvre, à l'émergence d'une règle d'action. Si l'histoire exemplaire parle d'elle-même, si elle suscite, elle impose son interprétation, c'est qu'elle contient les indices de cette interprétation.

Ce que l'exemplum définit, dans le discours sur les syndicats, c'est le point de vue qu'il faut avoir sur les syndicats. Souvent, pour que ce point de vue soit clair, pour que l'interprétation soit valide, l'énonciateur reprend la parole et précise la morale de son histoire. Dans la plupart des cas, il s'agit de micro-récits, une phrase, parfois deux.[6] D'autres textes comportent une histoire longue, plus complexe. Enfin, certains textes sont entièrement exemplaires, ne revenant pas au mode discursif ou maintenant tout au long l'élément exemplaire. C'est le cas du texte suivant:

A l'école de la réforme, Jean Francoeur:

Deux hommes montèrent au temple pour prier. L'un était président de la centrale de l'enseignement et l'autre, chauffeur de taxi à Montréal.

Le premier se tenait à l'avant, debout, et priait ainsi: "Dieu-le-père qui est à Québec:

"Je te rends grâce, seigneur, de ce que je ne suis pas un de ces ambitieux. Tu le sais, cette présidence, je ne l'ai ni voulue ni recherchée. Elle m'a été imposée. J'ai même prié pour que le calice s'éloigne de moi, mais il me faut le boire jusqu'à la lie.

"Je te rends grâce aussi de ce que je ne suis pas comme le reste des hommes, capitalistes, exploiteurs, et qui ne paient pas leurs impôts. Je ne suis pas raciste non plus, comme celui-là qui se tient derrière. Il est vrai cependant qu'à la présidence de la

C.E.Q. ce n'est pas tous les jours que je suis en concurrence avec un Haïtien.

"J'ai déjà écrit longuement sur la triste condition enseignante dans un article du DEVOIR la semaine dernière: vous me pardonnerez de revenir à la charge.

"Bien des gens nous reprochent nos salaires, nos vacances, notre sécurité d'emploi et le niveau de la pension que nous touchons à l'âge de la retraite. C'est lourd à la fin d'être constamment dans le colimateur, de se sentir jugés, pesés, condamnés sans appel.

"Car, toi, Dieu-le-père qui est à Québec, tu le sais que ces conditions de travail nous ne les avons jamais voulues. Nous les avions même carrément refusées et nous nous étions mis en grève. C'est toi qui nous les a imposées par décret, et même quatre fois plutôt qu'une.

"D'ailleurs ne sommes-nous pas à l'heure actuelle dans la situation de ton serviteur Job, sur la paille et raillés par nos prétendus amis: tu nous avait tout donné puis, avec la loi 70, tu nous as tout ôté, que ton saint nom soit (pardon, excuses, j'ai failli là lâcher un bien vilain mot!)

"Tous ces avantages matériels nous les méritons par contre par une assiduité exemplaire au travail. Rarement aura-t-on entendu dire qu'un enseignant se soit absenté, sinon par force majeure tels la pluie, la neige ou le beau temps. Ponctuels aussi, nous ne quittons jamais la salle de cours avant 11h07 et sommes de retour à 13h07 juste.

"Le total de ces minutes accumulées constitue une solide prestation de travail qui devrait nous épargner le reproche d'avoir si peu de temps à consacrer aux parents d'élèves.

"Ces parents, seigneur, tu les connais. Tous les mêmes. Issus des petites élites locales, ils cherchent à nous imposer leur idéologie dominante. Mais les valeurs dont nous sommes les incarnations vivantes, nous la C.E.Q., sont celles de la véritable

majorité prolétarienne, celle des gagne-petit, des faibles et des opprimés.

"Aussi quand nous avons appris que ton archange Camille envisageait une réforme scolaire qui ferait des parents les rois et maîtres de l'école, nous ne pouvions que nous rebeller contre cette sournoise tentative pour renforcer un système déjà oppresseur et perpétuer un désordre établi foncièrement injuste. Nous, à la C.E.Q., nous sommes pour les Soviétiques, mais contre les soviets."

Et le président de la centrale rentra chez lui, justifié.

Pendant ce temps, à l'arrière, le chauffeur de taxi, n'osant lever les yeux, se frappait la poitrine:

"Je ne suis qu'un pêcheur, disait-il. Je pêche par envie lorsque je compare ma situation à celle faite au président de la C.E.Q. Par paresse, j'ai négligé d'apprendre les mathématiques modernes, ce qui m'empêche d'aider les enfants à faire leurs devoirs. Par orgueil national mal placé, je continue à attacher de l'importance aux fautes de français dans leurs compositions, tout en sachant que cela brime le droit de mes enfants de s'exprimer sans contraintes.

"J'ai même succombé à la colère le jour où les enseignants ont fait une grève spontanée laissant les enfants dans la rue alors que ma femme faisait des ménages dans Westmount.

"Mais je paie mes impôts. Ce n'est pas beaucoup, je le reconnais, après avoir calculé mes charges familiales." Sur ces mots, un fracas de tonnerre éclata, le voile du temple se déchira en son milieu, et dans la lueur des éclairs, on entendit une voix venue des Cantons de l'Est qui disait: "Malheureux, très bientôt ta duplicité t'attirera un juste châtiment! Que fais-tu de tes pourboires?"

On le voit, la référence parabolique n'est pas unique dans le discours sur les syndicats. Toutefois, l'exemplum qui précède est différent au sens où il construit, sur le modèle de la parabole évangélique, une parabole moderne, inscrite dans l'univers de la fiction, sans intervention directe, explicite, du narrateur. Le texte en

acquiert une plus grande force persuasive parce que l'argumentation y est implicite. Et ironique. Les références au contexte--C.E.Q., l'archange Camille, les Cantons de l'Est, . . .--visent à montrer le ridicule d'une situation que le récepteur, encore une fois, ne peut vouloir soutenir sans faillir à la morale sociale. L'interprétation est donnée implicitement par la référence à la parabole évangélique, élément culturel qui est posé comme étant connu du récepteur. De même, l'injonction est celle de l'évangile, "les premiers seront les derniers." Quant à l'histoire, certains de ses éléments ne sont pas innocents comme le choix du chauffeur de taxi de Montréal: le narrateur inscrit là un tout autre conflit, teinté de racisme, qui survenait à Montréal dans un tout autre contexte. Il faut donc croire que l'amalgame a ici une fonction, et que le mélange des valeurs qui s'opère--syndicat et racisme, par exemple--re-sémantise le texte. En même temps, parce qu'il s'agit d'une caricature, d'une farce, il est difficile au récepteur de rejeter le texte sans signifier du même coup qu'il est dépourvu d'humour: le travail de l'ironie dans un discours idéologique vient désarmer celui qui s'y oppose. Mais on est ici à la limite du récit exemplaire qui, normalement, ne se joue pas des situations car il cherche à préserver sa clarté pour assurer qu'il sera justement compris, pour éviter l'ambigu.

Ces exempla participent à l'unification sémantique du discours sur les syndicats. Ils sont une redondance argumentative par rapport aux organisations actantielles et aux métaphores. Leur pouvoir de conviction tient tant à leur étrangeté dans le discours qui les porte qu'aux histoires qu'ils mettent en scène. Mais ils ont une fonction qui leur est propre: exiger des syndiqués qu'ils mettent fin à la crise. Les injonctions ne s'adressent pas pour autant directement aux seuls syndiqués. Dans une petite société comme le Québec, chaque récepteur potentiel connaît personnellement au moins l'un des 300.000 employés de l'Etat en grève (du moins, statistiquement). C'est à lui que l'exemplum confie la tâche de faire circuler l'injonction, d'en surveiller la réalisation.

De la crise économique au conflit de travail, ces exempla font dériver l'événement vers la crise sociale, en plaçant individuellement chaque récepteur en situation de pouvoir forcer le règlement de la crise et en lui enjoignant de le faire.

La rhétorique du discours sur les syndicats, parce que l'enjeu est important, multiplie les formes qu'elle emploie pour assurer la force de l'argumentation mise en place: métaphore, témoignage, exempla, faisant appel à l'évidence, à l'expérience, à la confiance, afin d'atteindre l'objectif, c'est-à-dire l'action sur le contrat social.

NOTES

[1]Pour une étude plus approfondie de cette question, on se reportera à M. Souchard, *Le discours de presse--L'image des syndicats au Québec*, 1982-1983, Montréal, ed. du Préambule, coll. "L'univers des discours," 1989.

[2]Cela veut dire qu'a priori, je n'établis pas de distinction entre les exempla historiques et les fables inventées, comme le fait Aristote.

[3]Je me réfère ici aux travaux d'Eric Landowski.

[4]Dubois, *Rhétorique générale*.

[5]Suzanne Suleiman, *Le roman à thèse ou l'autorité fictive*, Paris, PUF.

[6]"Mon grand-père me disait qu'on ne corrige pas une injustice par une autre injustice. C'est cela, à mon avis, que vous avez fait en adoptant la loi 105 et les autres lois spéciales du même genre qui ont précédé: 72, 70 et 68" (*Le Devoir*, 4-2-83: 7) ou encore: "J'ai appris tout petit, par l'exemple de mes parents, qu'une solide formation était le plus bel héritage qu'on puisse laisser à ses enfants" (*Le Devoir*, 11-2-83: 9) ou enfin: 'Le Postillon, par exemple, se serait cru déshonoré de ne pas livrer une lettre à o,o3$ dans le Rang 4, en voiture à cheval, en hiver. Je prends ce symbole pour signifier qu'il y a civilisation quand un certain nombre de conventions sont acceptées par tous. Disons la chose autrement: il

y a civilisation quand le contrat social est connu et stable" (*Le Devoir*, 13-12-82: 13).

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THE INTERACTIONAL ORGANIZATION
OF NEWS INTERVIEWS IN CANADA

Robert M. Seiler

Over the years the news interview has acted as an important forum for the generation of news.[1] Many media analysts have studied the content of individual news broadcasts and the institutional frameworks in which news is produced (Glasgow Media Group, Tuchman, and Golding and Elliott), but few have investigated the basic interactional practices which constitute the news interview. Until recently, determining how interviewers (IR's) and interviewees (IE's) organize their interactions with one another has meant consulting the anecdotal reports produced by professional broadcasters, including Frum, Gabereau and Gzowski; politically informed commentators, such as Wedell and Whale; and authors of broadcasting manuals, such as Yorke.

The Research Problem

My paper examines this neglected aspect of news production in Canada from a conversation analytic perspective. This approach yields new insight into the interactional practices that constitute the news interview. I am interested not in the specific details of individual styles of interview conduct (Beattie) but in the general properties of news interview interaction. The preliminary analyses outlined in this paper are based on a corpus of materials I collected, i.e., tape recordings I made of a variety of news interviews that were broadcast on CBC AM radio, during the second week of November of 1988.[2]

Analysts who adopt the conversation analytic perspective try to describe the procedures speakers use, i.e., orient themselves to, when they organize their conversational interactions (see Atkinson and Drew 34-61).[3] Originally developed as a mechanism for analyzing ordinary conversation, conversation analysis can be applied to interaction that occurs in a range of settings, including classrooms (Mehan), courtrooms (Atkinson and Drew), medical interviews (West and Zimmerman), and news interviews (Heritage, and Clayman).

At the center of this approach is the view of language as a vehicle for accomplishing social action. What interests the analyst is how language is used by speakers to achieve a variety of ends (Sacks 26-27). What this means is uncovering the seen but unnoticed procedures used by speakers to produce their own actions and to interpret the actions of others (Heritage 110 and 241).

The concept of "adjacency pairs" has unlocked a number of formal procedures used to inform interaction (Schegloff and Sacks 295-96). The idea here is that certain activities, including extending greetings or bidding farewell and asking questions and giving answers, are organized in pairs. Normally, the production of the first member of the pair, i.e., the first pair part, projects as well as requires the production of the second complementary action. Adjacency pairs, then, function as a "normative" framework, i.e., they shape the expectancy as well as the understanding of the interactants (Heritage 247).

An analysis of the turn-by-turn procedures by which these activities are accomplished will result in an understanding of how, moment by moment, a range of sequentially organized discourse activities, e.g., asking questions and giving answers, initiating and changing topics, opening and closing a conversation, are accomplished (Heritage 280-92).

I analyze such interactional procedures in two ways. First, I produce detailed transcripts of the talk in question and then I look for the regularities that unfold. Second, I demonstrate how these regularities are "oriented to" by the participants involved (see Schegloff and Sacks 273). I try to show that participants use the same patterns in producing and reproducing the regularity in question.

Results

For reasons of space, this paper focuses on three of the basic activities that were examined in this study: (a) Opening the Interview, (b) Displaying Objectivity, and (c) Closing the Interview.

a. **Opening the Interview.** Opening sequences, like interactional openings generally, serve two purposes. First, the participants are identified in opening. Second, the type of interaction to follow is indicated in the opening. As Schegloff put it, this is the place where the type of conversation being opened up can be constituted by the parties to it (25).

News interview openings thus project an agenda for the subsequent interview. The agenda indicates the topic to be discussed and the perspective from which the interviewee will comment on it.

In this way the opening sequence makes available all the materials needed to appreciate the relevance of particular questions, to assess the significance of interviewee's responses to the interviewer, and to anticipate the general drift of the interview. Consider the following opening sequence, which is typical in terms of its basic components (see appendix for "Transcript Conventions"):

[1] [Morningside 15/11/88]

IR:	This morning they may be::coming afraid of
1-->	losing their years their professors are on strike the strike is now in its second full week .hhh
2-->	Joining me now from halifax sandy young who's past president of the dalhousie faculty association .hhh and
3-->	robbie shaw who's the former vice-president of finance and administration at dalhousie. .hhh Gentlemen good morning.

We can identify three components here. First, we see the "agenda projection," which overtly indicates the type of activity to follow. In this instance, it provides a formulation of the topic (see item 1: the professors at Dalhousie are on strike) and indicates something about what will be done with the topic (see items 2 and 3: two professors will tell us what they think about the topic).

Second, we notice the statement of background information. Here the background information is supplied by the intervierwer, but it may be presented by means of recorded material. In this instance,

the statement (although short) indicates the stress surrounding the issue.

Third, each of the interviewees is introduced. In this instance, the introductions include information about their status, i.e., the perspective from which the interviewees will be commenting on the topic.

I should comment on two features of interview opening. First, the preliminary remarks are addressed exclusively to the listening audience. Second, in addition to resolving identification problems (the introduction of interviewer and interviewee), the preliminary remarks project the agenda of their subsequent interview and provide background information. Usually the interviewer's identity is established at the very outset of the program:

[2] [As It Happens 4/11/88]

IR1:	I'm alan maitland.
IR2:	I'm michael enright.
	This is (.) as it happens.
	((music))
IR1:	Tonight =
IR2:	= Hearts and minds. How the campaign of '88
	has become an emotional tug-of-war over fre::e
	trade.
	.hhh Our pundits tell all.

The audience distinguishes interviewers and interviewees by the discourse identities they adopt, i.e., as those who ask questions and those who provide answers.

Let me say a few more words about this component. The introductory component generally consists of utterances which describe the interviewee. Frequently, the interviewee is named and given some kind of title.

[3] [Basic Black 12/11/88]

IR:	One of my favorite ne::wspaper pastimes fer
	(.) a good long while has bin reading

1-->   globe and mail reports out of moscow. That's
        because up until just a short while ago
        lawrence martin was the globe's man in moscow
        .hhh and lawrence martin went out of his way
        to bring you a moscovi::te in the street feel
        for the soviet way of life. Not just kremlin
        gossip his stories were just as likely
        to emanate from a soviet subway station or a
2-->   meat market .hh or a hockey arena .hhh which
        is why we've invited lawrence martin to basic
        black this morning to have a peek at hockey
        night in moscow.
        Welcome lawrence.

We hear this person-description as "introductory" in the sense that the person (Lawrence Martin) is spoken of as a participant in the interaction (see item 2). Moreover, the prefatory remarks (see item 1) indicate the perspective he will be offering on the topic. These components serve to present the description as more than idle commentary; in fact, they usher the person into the interview.

b. Displaying Objectivity. As we have seen, interviewers are required to design their turns as questions. This practice appears to be a function of the need to display objectivity. Interviewers may depart from the routine of producing simple questions, but their non-questioning turn components can be heard as in some way part of the question. While initial utterances may be formatted as statements, they are fitted to the question as prefaces to and thus an integral part of the question that follows. Consider the following extracts:

[4] [Morningside 15/12/88]

IR: I note some activity from the government this
       morning and I don't know if thats means th (.)
       th (.) the settlement is more likely now th
       than it (.) its has bin or is this a good
       turn d'ya think.

[5] [Gabereau 4/12/88]

IR: Well take a book uh a little book called am
I the only one which is uh dennis foon and
brenda knight and uh .hhh it's about sexual a
(.) sexual abuse and they're (.2) cas::e
histories so to speak
[ ]
IE: Yes
IR: .hhh and uh I mean would you have published
that ten years ago.

In these instances, the initial statement-formatted components can
be heard as utterances preparing the way for a question, i.e., by
providing background information that makes the specific question
relevant. Thus, the turn as a whole is understood as question-asking.

It can be argued that these attempts to maintain the appearance
of "questioning" are bound up with the need to avoid injecting a
personal opinion into the interview process. Consider the following
extract.

[6] [The Entertainers 30/10/88]

IR: .hhh I saw a new canadian movie last week (.)
1--> it's called martha ruth and edie. It's a
good picture about the three ladies in th
the title three ordinary canadian women three
different stories from three classic canadian
short stories. Guilt by betty lambert .hh
california aunts by cynthia flood and how I
met husband by alice munro. Eight women
combined to write and direct the picture but
the whole thing was the brain child of deepa
mehta saltzman .hh and she's here in the
studio to talk about it. Deepa .hhh the
stories you use the kinda canadian stories
most of us were force fed in high school it's
interesting because you didn't grow up and go
through high school here so you didn't
discover these stories till you were an adult.

> 2--> What was it about the three stories that
> grabbed your attention.

By restricting themselves to turn styles that are at least minimally recognizable as questions, interviewers like the above demonstrate that they are "eliciting" information from others.

As Clayman has pointed out, interviewers use another set of devices to sustain an "objective" stance in non-questioning situa- tions, e.g., in soliciting information and formulating prior responses. This set of devices is analogous to what Goffman describes as shifts of "footing."

Goffman argues that the terms "speaker" and "hearer" fail to capture the variety of ways in which the parties to an interaction participate in that interaction. Speakers, he points out, adopt a variety of footings in relation to their remarks. These are "animator," "author, and "principle." The animator is the person who utters a sequence of words; the "author" is the person who coins them; and the "principle" is the person whose position or point of view is expressed in and through the words that are spoken. It is not uncommon for interviewers to reject one or more of these footings, and thereby distance themselves from their remarks. These shifts of footing usually occur during the production of non-questioning turns. Consider the following sequence:

[7] [The House 12/12/88]

IR: .hhh politicians have such a terrible
      credibility rating I'm sure you're .hhh well
      aware of that .hhh maybe just a (.) either
      step above or below journalists
      [   ]
IE: Well that's uh that's arguable.
IR: .hhh but uh pierre trudeau uh held on to power
      saying zap you're frozen and introduced wage
      and price controls .hhh brian mulroney came to
      power saying social programs were a sacred
      trust .hhh now you're making promises about
      the trade deal and people are saying why

should we trust you why aren't you a
politician just like all the others shouldn't
we bewar::e.

Here the interviewer produces an assessment designed to challenge the interviewee's position. However, the assessment is attributed to someone else, i.e., people generally ask the question: Why should we trust John Turner? In Goffman's terms, while the interviewer adopts the footing of the "animator" she rejects the footing of the "author."

By means of this device, then, the interviewer demonstrates that she methodically orients herself to at least one conception of objectivity, namely, she eliminates her own personal opinions from the interviewing process.

c. **Closing the Interview.** Two problems must be overcome when ending any sort of spoken encounter (see Schegloff and Sacks). I will talk about ending ordinary conversation first and then I will say a few words about ending the news interview.

One difficulty is to end the encounter in a way that is recognizable as a closing of the conversation. To stop talking altogether is no solution to the problem, since this silence may be heard as a "pause" in the conversation.

This problem, Schegloff and Sacks argue, is posed by the operation of the turn-taking mechanism for conversation. It will be remembered that this mechanism consists of options, e.g., current speaker selects next speaker, next speaker self-selects, and current speaker continues, by which next turns are allocated to specific speakers at transitional places. Speakers may not take up a given option when it becomes available; silence is generated as successive options are declined. The implication is that, unless the option cycle is suspended, any silence will be hearable as silence in the conversation, i.e., hearable as speakers declining to take the next turn, rather than as choosing to end the conversation altogether.

The problem, then, is to suspend the option cycle so as to provide a recognizable closing of the conversation. The solution that is routinely employed is to exchange conventionalized formulas, such

as "goodbye/goodbye." This terminal exchange, when issued by each speaker, exhibits a mutual orientation to the encounter's completion and thus accomplishes what the absence of talk does not: this exchange renders the conversation recognizably closed.

The terminal exchange is only a part of the closing procedure, however, for its use raises another problem. At any point in conversation, speakers may want to raise additional matters. These matters have been described by Schegloff and Sacks (300) as "unmentioned mentionables." These matters are a function of the unconstrained character of ordinary conversation.

Thus, when a speaker initiates a terminal exchange at this point in the exchange he interferes with another speaker's ability to realize his as-yet-unspoken agenda.

The other problem is to establish a "warrant" for initiating the terminal exchange as an appropriate next action, that is, as an action which does not infringe on speakers' rights to initiate further talk on topic or to initiate new topics.

This problem is solved by uttering a pre-closing exchange, the simplest being a pair of "passing turns," such as "so," "well," or "ok." These are turns at talk, but only in a minimal sense because they lack topical content.

Hence, speakers who utter these passing turns indicate that they have nothing more to add to the conversation. They have run out of things to say, as it were. When all the speakers take a passing turn like this they mutually demonstrate that they have completed their conversational business. This signal is the warrant for initiating the terminal exchange.

The pre-closing exchange, then, is designed to respect speakers' rights to introduce new lines of talk. When one speaker gives up a turn and thereby initiates a pre-closing sequence, another speaker may add something to the previous topic or initiate a new topic, i.e., reopen the conversation. Thus, the pre-closing section gives each speaker opportunity to initiate additional conversation if he or she chooses to do so. Only when every speaker has declined this option may the closing be initiated.

It should be obvious by now that news interview closings differ from ordinary conversation closings in a number of respects. As we have seen, turn content is not open to negotiation. Also, turns are restricted primarily to questions and answers, which are preallocated to interviewerss and interviewees respectively. These restrictions combine to shape the format for termination.

1. The terminal utterance in a news interview is ordinarily produced by the interviewer. It usually consists of "thank you" addressed to the interviewees. The following extracts are typical.

[8] [Morningside 15/11/88]

> IR: Gentlemen thank you for doing this
>   morning.

[9] [As It Happens 9/11/88]

> IR: Brian, thank you (.2) for talking about our
>   friend.
> IE: It was my pleasure.

Such thank-you's may be returned by an interviewee, as in extract [9]. However, they need not be reciprocated, as extract [8] demonstrates. In most instances the interviewer quickly moves on to other business.

2. (a). It can be shown as well that the terminal component is usually preceded by one or more pre-closing items which prepare the way for termination. These occur in two distinct forms. In some instances, as in the following, it is produced by the interviewer as a preface to the terminal component.

[10]   [The Radio Show 12/11/88]

> IR: Allright uh peter gzowski it's been good uh of
>   you uh to talk with us on your uh saturday
>   afternoon uh your day off. . . .

"Well" and "allright" function as generic coherence markers. These tokens set off the previous exchange from what follows.

2. (b) Alternatively, the closing preface may project termination in a direct and unequivocal manner. In whatever form, closing prefaces are initiated by interviewers just prior to the terminal component. Normally, interviewees offer no response. Interviewers simply produce the closing preface and launch into the terminal "thank you."

The pre-closing component can take another form. Instead of issuing this component as a preface to the terminal component, the interviewer projects the forthcoming closing in some prior questioning turn. These "closing projections" may be explicit, as when the interviewer announces in some fashion that this will be the last question of the interview.

[11]   [Inside Track 12/11/88]

IR: Well we're sorry about that (.4) and before
      you go we want to know what he wore on the
      back of his t-shirt.

In some instances, the closing is made up of a closing projection and a closing preface as pre-closing components.

Concluding Remarks

The data I studied suggest that the organization of the news interview is shaped by the interactional as well as the institutional constraints that are posed by the context in which the interaction takes place. In saying this I reaffirm one of the conclusions reached by Heritage and Clayman. My analyses of the turn-by-turn procedures by which the requisite activities are accomplished yield an understanding of how it is that this social institution is composed, moment by moment, of particular social actions and organized sequences of them. I would argue that studying how the above procedures affect the way the listening audience makes sense of interview talk would be a fruitful area for further investigation.

NOTES

This project was inspired by and is heavily indebted to the work of Harold Garfinkel, John Heritage, Don Zimmerman, and Steven Clayman, as will be evident to readers familiar with the study of naturally occurring conversational interactions.

[1]As Heritage and Greatbatch have argued, until the middle of the 1950's the broadcast interview (in the United Kingdom especially) was of little importance as an instrument of journalistic inquiry or as a medium of political communication. Until this time broadcast journalists on Canada understood broadcasting the spoken word as a matter of reading the printed word aloud (Whale).

[2]The programs selected for this study--they had to be aired nationally--utilized the interview as the essential vehicle for news production. I judged that on the AM network for the period in question 34 out of 96 programs per week (or 35 percent) were organized around interviews and that on the FM network 27 out of 87 programs per week (or 31 percent) were organized around news interviews. I taped 15 interviews for a total of 2.15 hours of interviewing time. The interviews thus collected are fairly representative of "soft" as opposed to "hard" news output (see Tuchman). I transcribed these interviews (to preserve the details of the conversations) so that I could illustrate the formal procedures used by IRs and IEs to organize their interactions with each other and generate news accounts for the listening audience.

[3]Sacks et al. point out that forms of talk can be arranged along a continuum in terms of their turn-taking structure. Ordinary conversation, with its locally managed system of turn taking, can be placed at one end. Ceremonies, whose turn-taking systems specify order as well as size and content of turn, can be placed at the other. Obviously, news interviews can be placed near the "ceremonies" end of this spectrum.

TRANSCRIPT CONVENTIONS

The notational conventions employed in my transcripts are taken from a set of conventions developed by Gail Jefferson. The most recent version of these conventions can be found in Atkinson and Heritage (ix-xvi). The symbols are designed to capture the verbal as well as the prosodic details of speech as it naturally occurs.

(word)	Parentheses surrounding a word indicate uncertainty about the transcription.
(0.8)	Parentheses around a number on a line or between lines indicate silence, in tenths of a second.
((cough))	Items in double parentheses provide characterizations of events not fully transcribed.
[	Open brackets indicate the onset of simultaneous talk between utterances.
]	Closed brackets indicate the ending of simultaneous talk between utterances.
=	Equal signs indicate the "latching" of utterances or words with no intervening silence.
?,.	Punctuation marks indicate intonation contours. They do not indicate grammatical status, e.g., a question.
out	Italics indicates emphasis.
WORD	Upper case indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.
::	Colons mark the prolongation of the preceding sound.
.h	The letter "h" preceded by a period indicates aspiration in the course of a word, commonly laughter. Without the period, the "h" indicates outbreath.

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